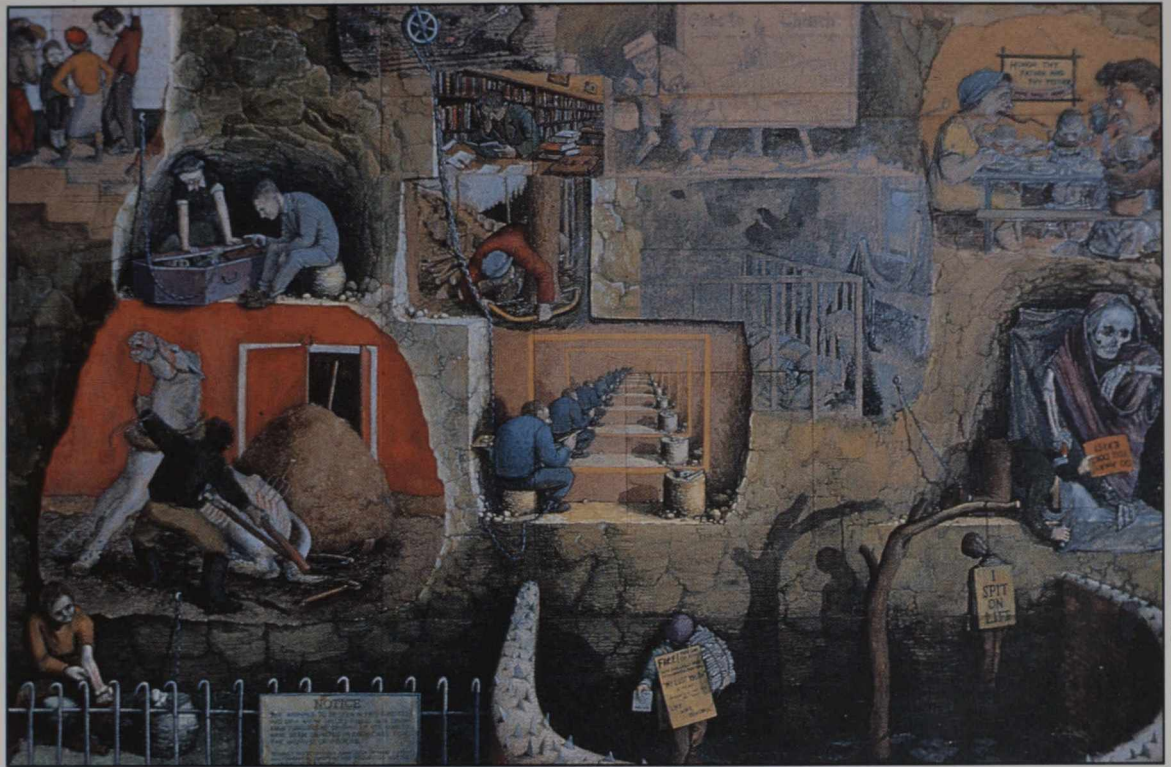


# William Kurelek and Jahan Maka



William Kurelek  
*'I spit on Life'*  
no date  
Adamson Collection

Photo: Adamson Collection

*This summer sees the opening of an exhibition of works by two of Canada's leading artists: William Kurelek and Jahan Maka. It will be held at the Canada House Gallery in Trafalgar Square, starting July 4 and running until September 21.*

The works of two distinctive Canadian artists – William Kurelek and Jahan Maka – are to go on show in London this July. Kurelek is regarded as one of Canada's most important landscape artists; while Jahan Maka's work is an unorthodox blend of folk art and symbolism.

William Kurelek (1927-77) was born in Alberta of Ukrainian parentage and moved with his family to Manitoba at the age of seven. His parents were often dismissive of their highly strung and imaginative son, and his childhood was far from happy. However, it was during these years that he developed a fondness for the vast prairie landscapes that were to figure so prominently in his paintings.

Kurelek came to Britain in the mid-1950s where he succumbed to a nervous breakdown and was hospitalised. While there, he met the art therapist Edward Adamson, who encouraged patients like Kurelek to release their creative powers in an effort to speed their recovery. A number of the paintings in the Canada House exhibition are from the Adamson Collection at Ashton, Northamptonshire.

Kurelek returned to Toronto in 1959 where he met Avrom Issacs, who invited him to put on a one man show at his gallery. This was the break that

Kurelek needed. 'The show was an immediate success both in sales, attendance and newspaper criticism, and my financial worries suddenly all vanished,' he later wrote. 'I couldn't believe my eyes, ears or anything.'

From then on Kurelek gained an enthusiastic and devoted following which stimulated his creativity. He took up book illustration for which he won a number of awards, and while many of his contemporaries moved into abstract art, his painting remained representational. In the 1970s



William Kurelek  
*The King of the Castle*  
no date  
Adamson Collection

Photo: Adamson Collection