

News of the arts

Guyanese mural for Dalhousie

Guyana's Prime Minister Forbes Burnham was pleased to receive an honorary degree from Dalhousie University, Halifax, at fall convocation last year, but was surprised that the walls of a main dining room, where he attended a convocation dinner after the ceremony, were bare.

So, on his return to Guyana Mr. Burnham telephoned noted Guyanese artist Aubrey Williams at his home in London, England, and commissioned a mural for Dalhousie as a gesture of thanks and goodwill.



Guyanese artist Aubrey Williams told Prime Minister Burnham, who agreed to pay the artist's expenses, that he would do the painting "for Guyana and for Dalhousie".

Mr. Williams, who won the Commonwealth Prize for Painting in 1964 and was awarded the Golden Arrow of Achievement from Guyana in 1970, has had 30 one-man shows in Canada, England, Ireland, Guyana, France, the United States, Italy, Jamaica and Nigeria. Some of his works are held by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco among others.

The 480-square-foot, three-sectioned "Dalhousie Mural" is done in the pre-Columbian style, Williams' speciality. One section incorporates themes and motifs of the Carib people; another represents sym-

bols of the Warrau tribe; and the third is representative of the Arawak people. The Carib, Warrau and Arawak were pre-Columbian Guyanese tribes.

The work is done in oils and is an expansion of three "cartoons" or plans which were painted by Mr. Williams in his London studio and approved by Prime Minister Burnham, who will receive the cartoons for his own collection now that the Dalhousie mural is completed.

The mural was officially presented by High Commissioner Dr. Robert J. Moore of Guyana at the spring convocation dinner, May 12, at which the artist was present. Also attending were senior university officials, members of the Guyanese community in Halifax, and other representatives of the High Commission.

Tutankhamun to Toronto

The Treasures of Tutankhamun, a collection of some of the most beautiful and precious artifacts from the tomb of that King, is coming to Canada. The tomb's discovery in 1922-23 is the most important find in the history of Egyptian archaeology.

Though opening date is 17 months away, staff of the Art Gallery of Ontario are already at work on the complexities of bringing the exhibition to Toronto, where it will be shown during November and December 1979.

Gallery director William J. Withrow, who recently returned from Cairo where he negotiated details of the loan, believes that Tutankhamun will have the greatest public impact of any exhibition ever seen in Canada.

"We shall have the show for only two months," he says, "but our target is for an attendance of one half million. I'd say that's minimum."

In the United States, where the duration has been four months in each city, attendance has surpassed all expectations — Chicago, New Orleans and Los Angeles have all posted figures well in excess of a million, while Washington was just short of that mark.

Mr. Withrow said the complexities of organizing the exhibition ranged from safe transportation for a collection valued at many millions of dollars to far more mundane matters like ensuring that cloak-room facilities are adequate. "There are a thousand and one details so the staff must start work now."

Private collection on view

An important Canadian private collection of nineteenth-century art is the major part of an exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, which closes on July 9. It includes works by artists who were renowned in their time, all but forgotten in the first half of the twentieth century, and only recently awarded the attention many critics feel they deserved.

The 71 French and English paintings, and 17 French, German, Italian and Belgian sculptures belong to Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tanenbaum of Toronto.

Some of the painters enjoyed an extraordinary international reputation and patronage in their lifetime. Those now returned to favour include Gérôme, Bouguereau, Meissonier, Ribot, Alma-Tadema, Boldini, and Leighton. Other artists to whom public recognition came more slowly, including Bonvin, Fantin-Latour, Carrière and Albert Moore, made original contributions to the major artistic trends of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Twenty-five experts from Canada, the United States and Europe have contributed to a massive 248-page catalogue containing 105 illustrations, ten of which are in colour. A thorough study of sculpture of the nineteenth century has been contributed by scholar Horst W. Janson.



The Mandolin Player, 1862, by Théodule Augustin Ribot, of France. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Tanenbaum of Toronto, Ontario.