

Halifax artist opens show

JOSEPH SLEEP BORN MY MOTHER AND FATHER WERE FROM ENGLAND I WAS BORN ON THE BOAT COMING AT SEA. THE GOVERNMENT HAD ME BORN IN THREE DIFFERENT YEARS 1914, 1916, 1918. EDUCATION EAST ST. JOHN SCHOOL NEW BRUNSWICK I WAS A DEVIL I NEVER WANTED TO GO TO SCHOOL WENT AS FAR AS GRADE 2 I GO BACK THE SECOND YEAR TO GET ME BOOKS VARIOUS JOBS I HAD FISHERMAN (POGOLOGAN, N.B.) JACK OF ALL TRADES (1930 WORKED FOR \$5 A MONTH FOR MACKENSIE KING) 1949-1970 - WORKED WITH THE BILL LYNCH SHOWS, AS JACK OF ALL TRADES AND TRAVELLED THE ATLANTIC PROVINCES 1973 - WHILE AT THE HALIFAX INFIRMARY THEY GAVE ME POSTERS TO COLOUR AND I STARTED DRAWING MY OWN AND I AIN'T STOPPED SINCE. DONE ABOUT 500 PICTURES THIS YEAR.

Joseph F. Sleep (425-5447) 2087 Gottiger St. Halifax, N.S.

by Eric Wood

Yesterday, Joseph F. Sleep opened his showing of over 90 paintings in the Art Education Building of the Nova Scotia College



Joe Sleep

of Art and Design. This show marks the end of one year of successful painting since his first showing in December of last year.

With about 60 years of interesting life behind him he has really had a match held to his ass this last year. Joe is super storyteller and to sit down with him over a few beers at the Ocean or to bump into him at a party is a treat. He'll be up during the band's intermission at a party in Simon's Warehouse spontaneously telling jokes and stories. He has a great outlook on what he is doing and especially nice is the fact that he seems more interested in pleasing people with his pictures than pushing himself to become a great success. He's always in high spirits and you'll probably find yourself smiling too when you're with him or his pictures.

With no previous experience in art he only started painting and making lamps and flower pots out of popsicle sticks while hospitalized last year. (The flower pots even have real plastic flowers and coloured lights that twinkle beneath them.) The first piece he did was a large printed drawing that he was given to color in at the hospital and since that he has been drawing and painting his own pictures.

After one year of operating as an artist, Joe has done quite well. He's had at least a half dozen shows including a show with the Joseph Howe Festival and an auction in aid of the Greenpeace II. (Joe likes whales.) He has managed to sell all but 90 of the 500 or so pictures he has done this year.

He started using felt markers and

then turned to water paint, house paint or whatever he could get his hands on, and on any surface from cardboard to plywood. He now prefers acrylics and water paint on rice board or masonite.

His subjects were primarily flowers but since he has done "wierd animals and tame kittens, all the dogs, horses and little rabbits and the little birds in trees". There are also some pictures of fishing boats with the "fishes" in the water below. The pictures have a pleasing blend of solid colors and usually white space. The colors are bright and cheerful. The plants and animals etc. are most often arranged bi-symmetrically with the picture surrounded by a colorful border. Joe says that most people want kittens in their paintings since he has been using one that he met at a birthday party not long ago.

Last summer Joe got a grant from Ottawa to continue his work and has since had some exposure in Ottawa which resulted in many requests from that area for more of his pictures. The store front litho-

graphy shop in the Art Education Building is now printing some of his work and Joe said they will be sold all over Canada.

A great deal of help has been given to Joe from Harold Pearse, Chairman of the Art Education Division of NSCAD, and Ken Pittman, Assistant Professor of art there. Bruce Ferguson, Curator of the Dalhousie Art Gallery has also been instrumental in Joe's career as an artist. Thanks to Bruce's efforts a couple of Joe's pictures now belong to the National Gallery in Ottawa.

Joseph Sleep has "come under the wing" of the college (NSCAD) and you can find him down there every day in the Art Education Building painting, teaching children and making everyone happy. Kids come in from city schools and hospitals and the provincial hospital and Joe helps the Art Education students show the kids the fun of ceramics, painting and building stuff. He blends well with the casual home-like atmosphere of that division. Joe enjoys working with

the children at the Nova Scotia Hospital in Dartmouth once a week. The patients like doing the work so much that they seem to forget their sicknesses. He's also a part-time soldier in the Salvation Army. "I try to go to the service every Sunday ya gotta be good sometime you know."

Students really should go down to the show because the prices are reasonable enough that young people can afford them for Christmas presents and such. The exhibit runs from December 3-19 in the Art Education Building of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design at 5143 Duke St. The open hours are Monday 10-5, Tuesday 1-5, Wednesday 10-1, Friday 10-4 and Sunday 12-5. Closed Thursday and Saturday. For further information call 422-7381 ext. 149.

Joseph Sleep says he wants all to come down. He said "All students are invited to come and see the pictures and all children with parents is allowed to come and each school can bring the class down to see the pictures."

