

THE ARTISTS LOOK AT THEMSELVES

Art Centre

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Two things immediately strike the viewer: first the immensely higher quality of the paintings done lately, than those of the thirties and forties, and the overwhelming mood of despair. This may be a Canadian, Western, or universal condition, but in the work of some artists a specifically N. B. or Maritime desolation may be observed.

In the work of Jack Humphreys, compare the conventional self-portrait of '36 and the recent individualistic abstract.

Both the sensitive honest portrait of Fred Ross and his melancholy lyric 'Young Girl' exude the same wasteland atmosphere.

The violent coloration and expressionist distortions of Brigide Toole bring out the dignity of a robe more than some of the other academic portraits.

The Double portrait of Marjory Donaldson treats the artist's image as a mother by emphasising with more brilliant color the boy's importance. The directness of the frontal pose depersonalises the work.

Molly Lamb Bobak's body and face of her self-portrait dissolves in the background

as if the artist's personality is absorbed by the work of art. The juxtaposition of pure bright colors enlivens the picture by the impression of airiness. 'The Flowers' is fluid but more controlled with a movement in mild tonal poetic harmony.

Lucy Jarvis' magic wand yokes fauvist colors and art nouveau undulations to animate a comic vision. The landscape with fairy tale colors and toy houses humorously (apparently incongruously) depicts rushing speed and luminous airiness of the clouds and the pool.

In the self-portrait of Mary Carson Pacey the well-emphasized colors of the eye and mouth regions are repeated in the blue sky and red pull-over, and the yellow of the face and the hair by the light brown trees, thus unifying the composition. The watercolor presents a tonal harmony of contrast in the darker swaying branches and the more fluidly treated gate and the light green foliage.

Miller Brittain's early self-portrait and his Mirror of '54 show his late development into a major artist. Now he has cut the glitter of the oil to achieve more sensuousness with pastel, and he has

simplified the inner undulating frame. The nudes have developed into Giacometti's elongated forms, but the genital symbolism of the flowers is unchanged. He now has escaped from the preoccupation with controlled-convoluted fleshy ear, blank bloody eyes and metallic glow of the skin into the world of flowers, nudes, balls and suns on the beach.

Bruno Bobak's self-portrait with the composition of the circle of the arms, head, and shoulder bisected by the white of the shirt and the black tie presents an image of the artist transformed by the environment as the background colours change the face and the coat. His visage is of a serious critical route. The Tamaracks picture the counterpointing music of the greyish ochre and sombre green and the poetry of the surging light in the turbulent sky transforms the apparently morbid work to a symphony of the wilderness.

Edward Pulford shining like polished brass is trapped in a geometrical prison which he contemplates with curiosity. Everything is unstable and shifts, slides, falls.

Alex Colville's magis realism and all that and clouds of torn bits of rags and trompe l'oeil technique of micropointillism are just too good in his empty not airy world.

Rosamond Campbell's self-portrait recalls Dali's monstrosity in the Gallery. The head hand owl and brush in the holes and her body melting into the landscape is as good a metaphysical conceit in painting as I have ever seen. The landscape is nice.

Thomas Forrestall is the best depicter of rural drought: he records the manless desolate wastes with dry paint, yet he imposes artistic control by thematically arbitrarily cutting off the tops of trees, houses, and showing only parts of men. The morbid white wreath faces not the viewer but the dry singing grass in an abandoned cemetery with stunted forests in the background.

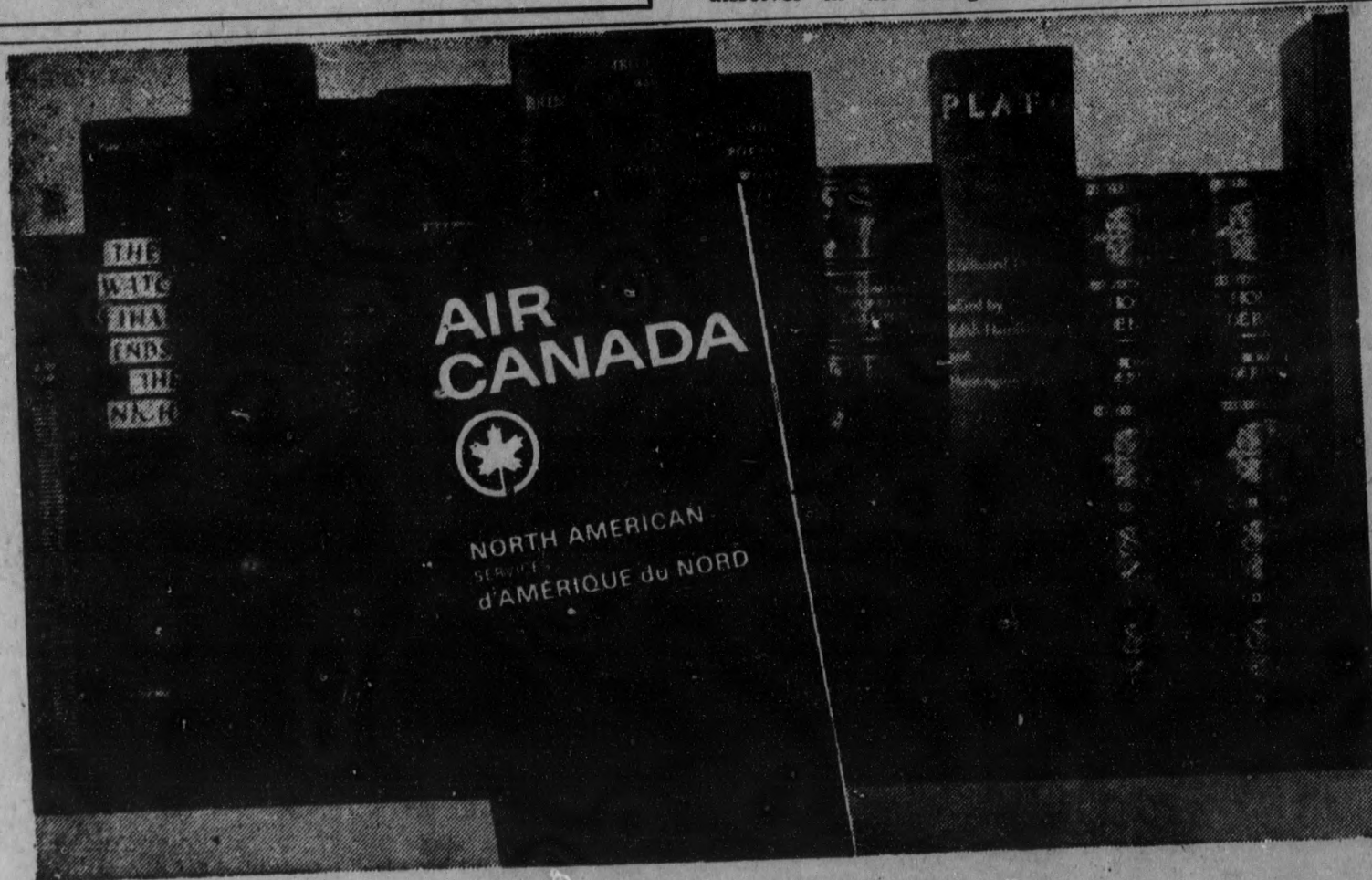
David Silverberg uses a stock method of the self-portrait in the artist's studio. His abstract Vivant surges in a spiral of bright light and dark strong blues, greens and reds.

John Maxwell presents two solid pictures: an earthy still-life and an individualised self-portrait.

Kashetsky's mechanistic self-portrait shows his experimentations and the influence of commercial art. His drawing is more spontaneous.

The exhibit will be open until January 7th and students will have a chance to see not only their visions of themselves, but also of our immediate condition.

— Alex Jablanczy



required reading

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