

Mi Makir an exhibition of "faceless faces" of war

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lost, but by no means forgotten. "I never knew my grandmothers or grandfathers, any of my uncles, aunts, or cousins," he says. "They were all killed in Auschwitz. So while my mother listened to the radio, I tried to visualize, if some relative were alive, how he would look. But it was impossible to put a face to a name."

The result is that the subjects of Chaki's portraits appear curiously incomplete. A documentary film plays in the West Gallery to introduce viewers to the exhibit before they enter it. In it, Chaki references his "faceless faces": indistinct dark gray or brown ovals that hover in the darkness of the canvas, barely seen but strongly felt.

Others have one or two sharply defined features that individualize them: white teeth, or curly auburn hair. Chaki explains, "I wanted some faces to disappear in the darkness of the colour and I wanted some faces to be emphasized."

Each portrait features a number in the upper left-hand corner of the canvas, the numbers taken from a registry of real Holocaust victims and survivors. The faces themselves come from Chaki's imagination, but they were built upon solid proof of each subject's existence: their name.

Also included in Chaki's installation at the UNB Art Center is his collection of old and unwanted books, which have been enhanced with sculpture and collage to visually represent contemporary ideas. Says Chaki, "People who have seen these books over the years think I

saved them from a fire. But there was nothing special about them except that no one wanted them anymore."

Given their arrangement within the exhibition, it's not surprising that viewers have long assumed them to be the salvaged remains of a life or home that has been consumed by fire. The books are layered in a circle on the floor, and almost seem to be lying in wait for gasoline or a match, as though they are fuel for a bonfire of history. This format is deliberate, to support Chaki's intention to "express something beyond their content."

"Things can happen to books," he says, "like Kristallnacht - you know, the burning of the books. They don't have to be read for them to take part in history."

Surrounding the central pile of books are Chaki's portraits, which line the walls in orderly rows and columns from floor to ceiling, their darkness bordered by almost unbearable white space. The anguished faces appear to gaze out from between the bars of a prison cell, begging the compassion of onlookers.

Initially, Chaki sent a catalogue and a PowerPoint presentation about his installation in other galleries as a proposal to the Art Center.

"He was looking for a place to exhibit in New Brunswick," said Lori Morse, a gallery assistant at the UNB Art Center who had a hand in organizing *Mi Makir* and consulted directly with Chaki during the installation of the exhibit. "We were really inspired by his presentation and his proposal. Art is a really powerful way to

make an impact and get people thinking. Sometimes there are no words, and for people who aren't writers, I think that it's a different form of communicating and touching people."

Given that 2005 also marks the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust, *Mi Makir* seemed like the perfect exhibit with which to set an awareness-raising precedent for the season. It is the first in a series of Holocaust-themed installations that will be exhibited at the Art Center between now and December.

Chaki is pleased with the Art Center's vision for his installation, which includes the traditional central arrangement of his books, and four complete walls of portraits that completely surround and overpower the viewer. "He was really happy with the space, because it engulfs you," said Morse.

The process of obtaining and sharing Chaki's work with the university community has been a powerful experience for Morse and others who were involved in the organization of the installation.

"Actually handling these works was so emotional and just heart-breaking," Morse said. "You're handling works that represent a life that was just completely washed out of the world."

The 200 lives depicted in Chaki's portraits may have been physically obliterated, but their extraordinarily imagined faces nakedly express their aching desire to be not forgotten, but continuously found.

Mi Makir: A Search for the Missing will be exhibited in Memorial Hall until October 28.



Michele Legendre / The Brunswickan

CAROL'S FATHER'S TRUCK

by Stephanie Yorke

"Annette, I do not need gas money."

"Yes. It's fair. You're doing all the driving. It's a lot of work."

"I don't mind. Driving a standard makes me feel all ... rugged. I like driving the truck. We couldn't have gone in a truck, if you'd driven."

"We could take my Dad's car. He doesn't charge me for gas."

"Mine neither. Can you imagine how much gas we use? He really wants me to find a job."

Carol and Annette were hunting for jobs. Stalking jobs, with their lassos at the ready. They were driving around cottage country in Carol's father's half-tonne truck. Though no one in Wilston liked the cottage crowd, everyone hoped to work for them.

Carol and Annette hoped to see a sign in front of one of the golf resorts that said "Help wanted. Need only apply." The signs they actually saw said "No Vacancy" and "Ice." The golf course had a big vinyl banner, "Tee Off for War Amps."

"I could work at the smokehouse," Carol suggested, gritting her teeth.

Annette added 'smokehouse' to the 'Carol' column of her list. Then she suggested, "I'll apply at the bottling factory."

Carol said, "I think they hire people who can lift things. Think around customer service."

Carol had taken a personal plunge this summer. She wasn't over her head in risk, but she was drowned up to the abdomen. Carol had given up her old job.

She had worked in an off ramp ice-cream greenhouse for three summers while she was in high school, but had decided to find a new job this year. She'd had her fill of potting soil in plastic trays. She'd had her fill of describing tomato varieties to dallying retirees. She'd even had her fill of the 39-flavour ice cream in both official languages. So when the ice creamers called Carol to offer her a job renewal, Carol declined. She had confidence in herself. She had the



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"If Carol had been a fetus, she would have said, 'glory favours the bold' and cut her own umbilical cord."

sort of confidence they teach in 8th grade PDR.

If Carol had been a fetus, she would have said, "glory favours the bold" and cut her own umbilical cord.

By the end of their drive, Carol and Annette had listed over twenty possible employers. The jobs in the 'Annette' column included desk reception and catering assistant. Customer service, *your wish is my mandate*.

Carol wanted something with a little more grit to mill - u-pick supervisor, or recreation coordinator. Customer service, *here's how it's going to be*.

They flushed the community with resumes. A bare spit of interviews returned.

Then, there was manual labor.

Annette ended up at a bakery. The hours, of course, were grotesque, but at least it wasn't a franchise. She didn't have to wear a shirt with a false double-collar. In fact, in the two 'baking' hours before customers were allowed into the shop, she was allowed to knead the bread in her sports bra. It was a hot bakery, but the uniform policy was very humane.

Annette didn't make much money at the bakery, but she did

strike a fiscal agreement with her parents. Annette was an expensive child to feed. So, she stopped getting breakfast and lunch at home, and just broke a lot of cookies at the bakery. She was allowed to eat damaged product.

Occasionally, when she was feeling health-conscious, she would collapse a loaf of multi-grain bread, and eat that instead of the cookies. Her parents paid her forty dollars per week for not opening their fridge.

Carol ended up polishing saddles at the country club. Country-clubbers like to sit on leather, but they don't like to perk it back up afterward. Carol didn't like to lather leather either, but she did like working behind the barn. She got to scrub with the radio on, and she was perfectly secluded. She didn't have to see the asses who smudged up her saddles. It was customer service without any customers.

Carol found that she could polish equally well with either hand, whereas she'd only been able to scoop ice cream with her right.

"This summer," she vowed, "I'm going to have two biceps the same size."

Carol really liked symmetry.

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OPEN
8-2

LIVE DJ 10-2
STUDENT BODIES
Survivor Premier on the big screen 9-10
MASON JAR MADNESS - \$6 00 well doubles, domestic beer, well liquor suds & draft - \$5.50 all night
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SEPT 16
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4-10
HAPPY HOUR

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10-2
featuring in-house DJ's

THUR 10-12
FRI 9-11
SAT 9-11
Ryan Lamie & Friends performing LIVE

SATURDAY
SEPT 17
OPEN
8-2

9-2
HOUSE HEAVEN

SUNDAY
SEPT 18
OPEN
4-7/10-2

4-7
SUNDAY SOCIAL

10-2
OPEN DECKS
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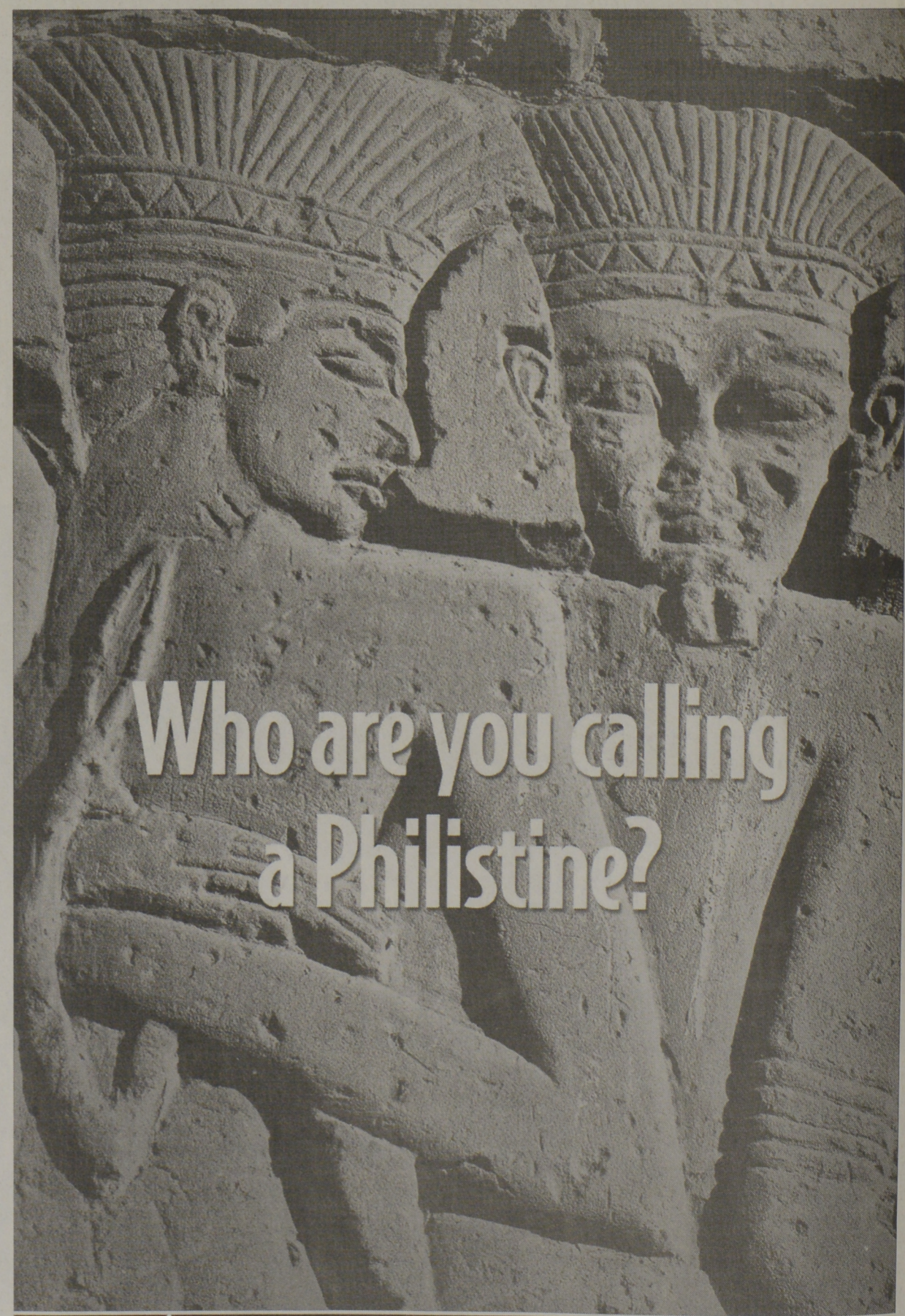
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