

May 26, 1976

# Public invited to Prison Arts '75 at Monteith

Monteith Correctional Institute invites the public to share the first international inmate art exhibit -- Prison Arts '75 -- which opens at the Centre on June 3.

Works from ten countries will be on display along with the collection of Canadian prison arts. These countries include Greece, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, Switzerland, Chile, Japan, Barbados, Thailand, U.S.S.R and Canada. The show will tour Canadian cities and prisons until the spring of 1976.

Each year, Prison Arts collects art, writings and crafts from all Canadian adult correctional institutions for viewing by a panel of professional artists. Winning entrants receive awards and scholarships. A selection of the best visual art is then assembled for a tour of major cities and prisons across Canada.

The Prison Arts Foundation is involved in other programs with the accent on greater opportunities for inmate training in academic, vocational and trade areas. The Foundation is also launching 'Catalyst', a prison writers' monthly, to encourage incarcerated poets and authors via the exchange of information, experimental ideas, and new fiction. 'Catalyst' is distributed nationally and in several foreign countries.

One of the ideas behind Prison Arts is to help nurture a healthier more positive climate of opinion towards prisoners.

More than forty inmates of correctional institutions across Canada were awarded prizes totalling \$4,185 in the Prison Arts Foundation's annual competition for excellence in art, creative writing, music and crafts. It is these winning entries, which, along with the collection of works by the inmates of ten other countries, are going to be shown on June 3.

Most of the scholarships are used to further educational programs undertaken by inmates upon their release from the institutions. In many cases, such studies are initiated during the incarceration period by correspondence.

Some of the judges are famous in their field. The Canadian artists Harold Town and Guy Montpetit are among the judges for art, with Ms June Callwood of the Canadian Writers' Union one of the creative writing judges. Louis Applebaum of the Ontario Arts Council helps judge music entries.

Prison Arts all began as a single contest for a Christmas card design seven years ago. Now the year-round program is a fact of life welcomed by thousands of men and women serving time in adult correctional institutions in all ten provinces and in the Territories. The exhibition, which travels to major Canadian cities and prisons, includes arts, crafts, poetry and music.

As one of the founders of Prison Arts put it, "....we've seen concrete evidence that the

sense of accomplishment and the reward of recognition are genuine first steps on the road to recovery. In all our work, the focus is upon the inmate."

Although there are no entries from Monteith Correctional Centre in the '75 exhibit, a dozen

poems, a covered wagon lamp, and two oil paintings have been entered for next year's Prison Arts '76 competition.

At Monteith the Prison Arts '75 exhibition will be open to the public between the hours of 10 a.m. and 9 p.m. on June 3.

Superintendent of Monteith Correctional Institute, D. B. Griggs, says he hopes the public will feel welcome to come and view the exhibit. Assisting in organizing the display is Nelson Smith, recreational director at the Centre.