

ARTS

'Prague' painting captures the old, historic city



John Sommer
IDEAS AND THE ARTS

Last fall I returned several times to the Campbell House Gallery on Main Street in Georgetown to look at a large painting there titled "Prague." The painting depicted the historic city as a labyrinth of dagger-like spires, steep roofs and narrow lanes, a spiky and spooky organism resembling a colony of corals. I was told that the artist lives right here in Georgetown and that the Campbell House Gallery had scheduled an exhibition of his paintings, drawings and etchings from March 30 to April 30, 1990. Two weeks ago I made an appointment to meet Zsolt Selmecei in his tenth-floor apartment in the old part of town to look at the preparations he has made for his show and to ask him about his life up to now.

Remembering the painting I had seen I expected him to be lean and brooding, but the young man who opened the door to let me in is better described as jolly and outgoing. He has a full head and beard of very red hair and his big blue eyes take in the world around him with an expression of amusement. His life however, judging by what he told me about it, has not exactly been an easy one.

He was born in Hungary in 1955. His childhood was overshadowed by the aborted revolution of 1957, with the result that he became a bit of a misfit and longed to leave his country when he got older. But first, after he finished school, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest and became, after graduating, a graphic artist at the Archeological Institute there. All the while he drew and painted on his own and exhibited his work in 24 group- and one-man-shows in his native country!

In 1983 he and his wife left for Vienna in Austria and there they applied for emigration to Canada. In 1984 they arrived in Calgary and experienced both what it means to come to a free country, in particular one as "free" of the spirit of enterprise as the depressed Alberta of 1984 was. They did not expect to find jobs in their professions (Ms. Selmecei is a teacher for handicapped children) but the situation was so bad, they could not find any job. With their last money they went to Los Angeles where a friend offered Zsolt a job as a restorer. Unfortunately their stay in Los Angeles came soon to an end because they could not get a work permit. Saddened they returned to Calgary where they finally got hired as janitors, he in a theatre and she in a hotel.

In 1986 they moved to Toronto and Zsolt found work as a designer and draftsman in a Brampton firm. He also took a course in etching at the Ontario College of Art. Twenty months ago a daughter was born to them. Last fall they moved to Georgetown. Ms. Selmecei is a homemaker here, visiting seniors and keeping them company. Her mother is here on a long visit from Hungary, to be a nanny to the little granddaughter.

As an artist Zsolt Selmecei will need a bit more time to find his feet fully. His best paintings are filled with expressive force and have a stained glass color intensity, his lesser paintings show strain, as if they were created in a fit of frustration. His drawings and etchings are the most accomplished part of his production. Sly symbolism, subversive story telling and lots of drawing ability come together to make his handcolored etchings quite irresistible. I hope that this promising artist will be welcomed into our community by artists and art lovers alike.

May I remind my readers that "Hidden Bounty," an exhibition of a selection of artwork from the collection of the Halton Hills Public Libraries will be opened this Sunday, April 1 from 2 to 4:30 p.m. at the Cultural Centre on Church Street with a big reception. Regional Chairman Peter Pomeroy and Mayor Russ Miller will deliver opening speeches and "The Friends of the Halton Hills Libraries" will delight you with their usual delicious refreshments. The exhibition contains artworks by Robert Bateman, David Blackwood, Frank Black, Charlotte Brainerd, Gerard Brender a Brandis, Ken Danby, Blake Debassige, Yosef Drenters, Ken McCauley, Marjorie Nazer, Pauta Salla, Jack Reid, Harold Town and many others. There will also be a raffle of a painting by Frank Black. A ticket purchased for \$2 might make you the lucky winner of "Calm Day, Bermuda," valued at \$180.

Couple wed

By KAY WILSON
Norval Correspondent
NORVAL-A community presentation in honor of Gary and Tracy Johnson, RR2 Norval, who were married recently, was held at Norval United Church on March 21.

The evening was hosted by Jack and Mary Crawford and Don and Carolyn Crawford. Euchre and crockinole were enjoyed for around 60 people, during the first part of the evening. Winners for euchre were Lois Reid, Betty Johnson, Harry Carmichael and Spencer Wilson. Crockinole winners were Mae Brander and Joe Van Leeuwen.

Don Crawford chaired a short program and introduced Gary and Tracy. Following a few well-chosen words, he presented the couple with a barbecue and a purse of money.

Gary, on behalf of Tracy, thanked all for the gift and the evening, and a beautiful lunch followed.

Euchre night

NORVAL-Halton Plowmen are holding a euchre at the Boyne Community Centre April 3, 8 p.m. Lucky draws, prizes and lunch.

Pinegrove euchre

NORVAL-Pinegrove euchre had four tables last Monday. Winners were Vivian Shaw, Vi Preston, John Hunter, Enrico Carouso. Lucky draw (courtesy of Webbs Flowers): Mable Brownlow. Committee was: Carouso's and Brownlow's.

Brampton W.I.

NORVAL-The Tweedsmuir History books were on display at the Brampton West Women's Institute Grandmothers meeting, at the home of Margaret McClure.

President Mae Dixon opened the meeting with a poem "What is a Grandmother?", the Opening Ode, and Mary Stewart Collect. Secretary Mary Garbutt read the minutes of the February meeting and the correspondence. A letter from the Peel Social Service was read which thanked the members for the donation presented to them at Christmastime, and explained how the money was used.

Mae Dixon reported that the District Euchre was a success with everyone enjoying a delicious lunch and an afternoon of euchre. Roll call "Bring a pie-

ture of older times and tell about them," was answered by all present.

Portraits of ancestors, family groups and weddings, were the subjects in the photographs.

Handmade baby clothes which had been worn by family members were displayed. A nightgown, over 100 years old, made of white cotton with lace inserts and having very intricate hand stitching was displayed by Isabelle McClure.

Mary Janet Walsma modelled an outfit that had been worn by her great grandmother, being well over 100 years old.

Isobel McKay gave an informative talk on information that can be found in the Peel Archives, and how the Tweedsmuir Histories and scrap books are important in retaining the past for the future.

Lunch was served by Margaret McClure, Wilma Archdekin, Catherine Laidlaw, Esther McClure and Billy McClure.

The Annual Meeting, April 10, will be held at the home of Mae Dixon at 11 a.m.

At the library

Preschool programs are now underway

Preschool Story Programs - Registration for preschool story programs began on March 22, in person or by phone.

Preschool Storytime - March 27 to May 17 (Please note: no programs on April 18) - A thirty minute program of stories, songs, and games for children three to five years old.

Sessions - Acton - Tuesdays 10 a.m.; Wednesdays 2 p.m. Georgetown - Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. or 2 p.m.; Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.

Tales for Twos - March 28 to May 5 (Please note: no program on April 18) - About 25 minutes of songs, stories and games for two year olds and a parent. This program is designed for adult and child participation.

Sessions - Acton - Fridays 10:30 a.m. Georgetown - Wednesdays 10:30 a.m.; Saturdays 10:30 a.m.

GOLF GIFTS & GAGS

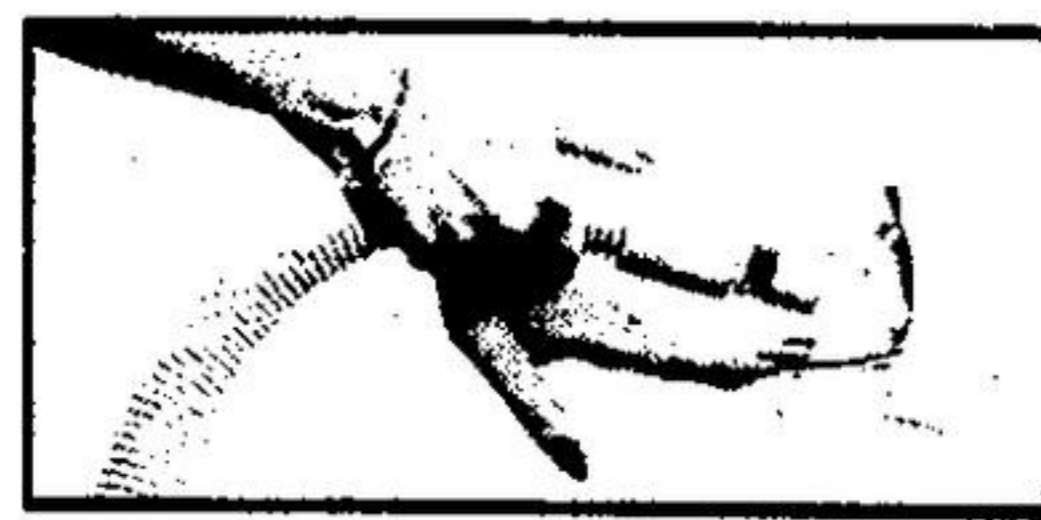
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