

McMichael collection adds native art treasures

There is interesting news from the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in Kleinburg, Ontario. This popular museum has been for many years a shrine to the painters of the Group of Seven and other Canadian artists of the same period.

On March 21, it became the custodian for one of the largest collections of native art anywhere. The extensive archives of the West Baffin Eskimo Co-operative in Cape Dorset were handed over to Kleinburg Museum.

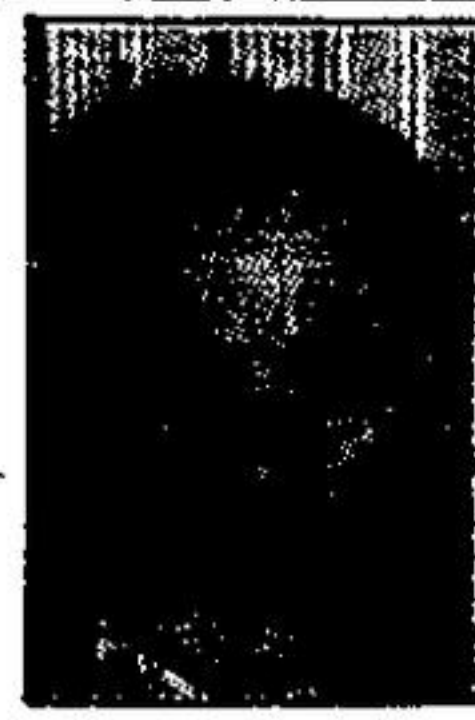
Thirty years worth of original prints, drawings, and sculpture, representing over 100,000 pieces of Inuit Art, will be documented at Kleinburg by means of photography and video disk. Eventually, parts of it will be exhibited at the Kleinburg Museum. The first selection of works drawn from the archives will be shown from December 15, 1991 to March 29, 1992.

Up to now, these works were housed at the Co-operative in Cape Dorset, in a space without the room to properly document, conserve, or display the collection. The Cape Dorset archive is the oldest and largest of its kind in the Arctic, and the Kleinburg Museum expects that it will take at least 10 years to complete the documentation and preservation of the rich artistic material in the archive.

Members of the Eskimo community of Cape Dorset will be trained at Kleinburg for some of the art conservation jobs. The collection forms a comprehensive record of works done by over eighty Cape Dorset artists, including such celebrated names as Parr, Pudlo, Kenouak, Lucy, Pitseolak and Kananginak.

Inuit drawing and printmaking began in the community of Cape Dorset in 1957 when James Houston was sent to the Arctic to encourage carving and other traditional crafts. Houston started a group of men on relief and stencil printing methods, using improvised equipment and a variety of local materials. In 1959 the first 41 Cape Dorset prints were released. In the same year the Co-op was established to manage the production and sales of locally made Inuit prints and crafts.

The loan agreement between the Cape Dorset Co-operative and the Kleinburg Museum provides for a minimum loan period of 15 years, after which all, or parts, of the collection may be returned to a new cultural centre that is planned for Cape Dorset. Barbara Tyler, the Director of the McMichael, said in a press release: "We envision our role as that of custodians of this historic national treasure. While it is in our possession, we plan to make it accessible to Canadians from



Ideas and The Arts
by John Sommer

coast to coast. And we want to ensure that it is properly documented and conserved for prosperity."

Here in Georgetown a remarkable exhibition opened last week at the Gallery of the Cultural Centre. The exhibition combines the works of two ceramic artists, Carol-Ann Michaelson and Monica Johnston, and one painter, Janice Gittings, all of them living and working in Halton Hills.

The stars of the exhibition are the two ceramists. Their work is a challenge and a joy.

The colors, the forms, the techniques used, all demand skill, high concentration, and a sort of adventurous leap into hitherto unexplored areas.

I am particularly fond of the wall plates, and wouldn't mind

owning a collection of them.

Many of the pieces are purely sculptural, and these are the ones that challenge the viewer the most. These two ceramists are not hobby potters, but dedicated artisans, and I urge you to not walk past these pieces too quickly. Stop and look, and, if possible, purchase.

The paintings by Janice Gittings are, by comparison, uneven. I read on the invitation to the exhibition, she is a wallpaper and jewellery designer, which might not leave her much time for painting. And yet, some of her

paintings, in particular the beautiful "Fish in Flight," make me wish she could find the time to paint more. The delicate oriental balance of this painting made me think of Japanese screens I saw a few years ago at the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

The exhibition is nicely arranged and displayed. At one point the asymmetrical labels started to bother me, but I decided to treat them as a minor irritation. The exhibition will be at the Cultural Centre until April 22.

Artisans garage sale

One man's junk is another man's treasure, or so the saying goes. The Credit Valley Artisans hope that this saying rings true when they hold their first Garage Sale on Saturday, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Cedarvale Cottage in Cedarvale Park.

Members have spent their entire winter gathering those items which they no longer want but are sure to be treasured by their new owner. You all know the items I'm referring to; the lamp that doesn't match the new sofa; the record player that still works but has become outdated by CD's; the books we read once and once was enough. These items and many others can all be found at the Credit Valley Artisan Garage Sale.

This Garage Sale will be held indoors. So, rain or shine, come out and make this your first garage sale of the season. There will be bargains galore under \$10.00. Remember the day - April 6 - and remember the time - 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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