

Visual memories must be retold

By JOHN SOMMER
Herald Special

I went to two nearby community galleries recently - the Burlington Cultural Centre and the Art Gallery of Hamilton - and I

returned with so many extraordinary visual memories that I want to tell you about some of them.

I have often been to the Burlington Cultural Centre, but I am



Palette to palette

Using a palette knife, artist Carole Wennington of Acton paints a scene on a palette in Cedarvale Cottage where many artists gather Tuesday afternoons to create and paint. The artists are members of the Palette and Pencil club and they're creating new works of art to display during the club's annual art show to be held Feb 5-March 1 at the Halton Hills Cultural Centre on Church St. in Georgetown. (Herald Photo)



Ideas and
The Arts
by
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always impressed anew, about how well this building is sited on a very irregular property.

Inside, this edifice, with its many windows serving also as display cases, its large and small galleries, its studios for a great variety of artistic activities, its fabulous greenhouse (so surprising on a cold winter day), and a large art rental and gift shop, is the most user-friendly community centre I have come across anywhere.

The main exhibition right now (to February 16) has the title "Masters of the Crafts". It was organized (and later circulated) by the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Ottawa in 1989, to inaugurate the museum's Fine Crafts Gallery.

The exhibition focuses on the award recipients of the Saidye Bronfman Award for Excellence in the Crafts from 1977 to 1986. These selected artisans represent the very peak of the many excellent craftspeople working in Canada right now, and their exhibited works in Burlington are spectacular throughout.

From Micheline Beauchemin's glamorous 'tapestries, to Lois Etherington-Betteridge's finely-wrought silver objects, to William Hazzard's life-like wildlife carvings, to Wayne Ngan's cerebral ceramics, and Michael Wilcox's one-of-a-kind bookbindings, the exhibition contains masterpieces only.

Other artisans represented are Monique Cliche-Spenard, Doucet-Saito, Robin Hopper, Bill Reid, and Joanna Staniskis.

One walks out of the exhibition with the certainty that, while our time might not be the best of all times for painting, sculpture, and architecture, it does produce luxury objects on a par with the greatest work of this kind from other times and cultures.

The Burlington Cultural Centre was given the mandate by the people who started it, to collect contemporary ceramics. A small part of this, in the meantime, substantial collection, is given exhibition space in the showcases of the hallways and in between the dense, foreign foliage of shrubs and trees in the delightful greenhouse.

Looking at these often quite large and complicated museum pieces, the viewer realizes that ceramics is a lot more than cups and plates. It is, in fact, anything the artist wants it to be. Do go to Burlington and see for yourself.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton also works well as a building. The interior spaces are lofty, and large loggia-like openings between the different exhibition levels, make it possible to look at art works from vantage points not usually available.

The main feature at the Hamilton Gallery for another month (to March 1) is a large Retrospective of paintings by Ronald Bloore. For more than 30 years, Bloore has played a vital role in Canada as a curator, educator, painter, and graphic artist.

He was director of the Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery in Regina from 1958 to 1966.

From 1966 on he has been a professor in the Fine Arts Department of York University in Toronto.

Bloore had a classical education in the humanities, in addition to studies in the visual arts, and a degree in archaeology. His pain-

ings are the result of his studies. They are Apollonian.

With few exemptions, his palette is restricted to white and black, his imagery is non-figurative. But within these severe, self-imposed boundaries, he ranges far and wide through human history and experience.

He is one of the greats of international abstractionism, and yet, his large, pale canvasses are as Canadian as anything by the Group of Seven.

Inspired, and feeling akin to the reductivist credo of the Constructivist movement of 70 years ago, he has expanded the Constructivist pictorial language to the point where the viewer is reminded of walls drenched with sunlight; of the translucency of the night sky; of wind patterns in the snow; of decorative fragments unearthed by archaeologists. The possible associations are endless.

Ronald Bloore will give a talk at the Art Gallery of Hamilton on Thursday, Feb. 6 at 7:30 p.m. The Art Gallery of Hamilton is located on 123 King St. West and the Burlington Cultural Centre is located on 425 Brock Avenue.

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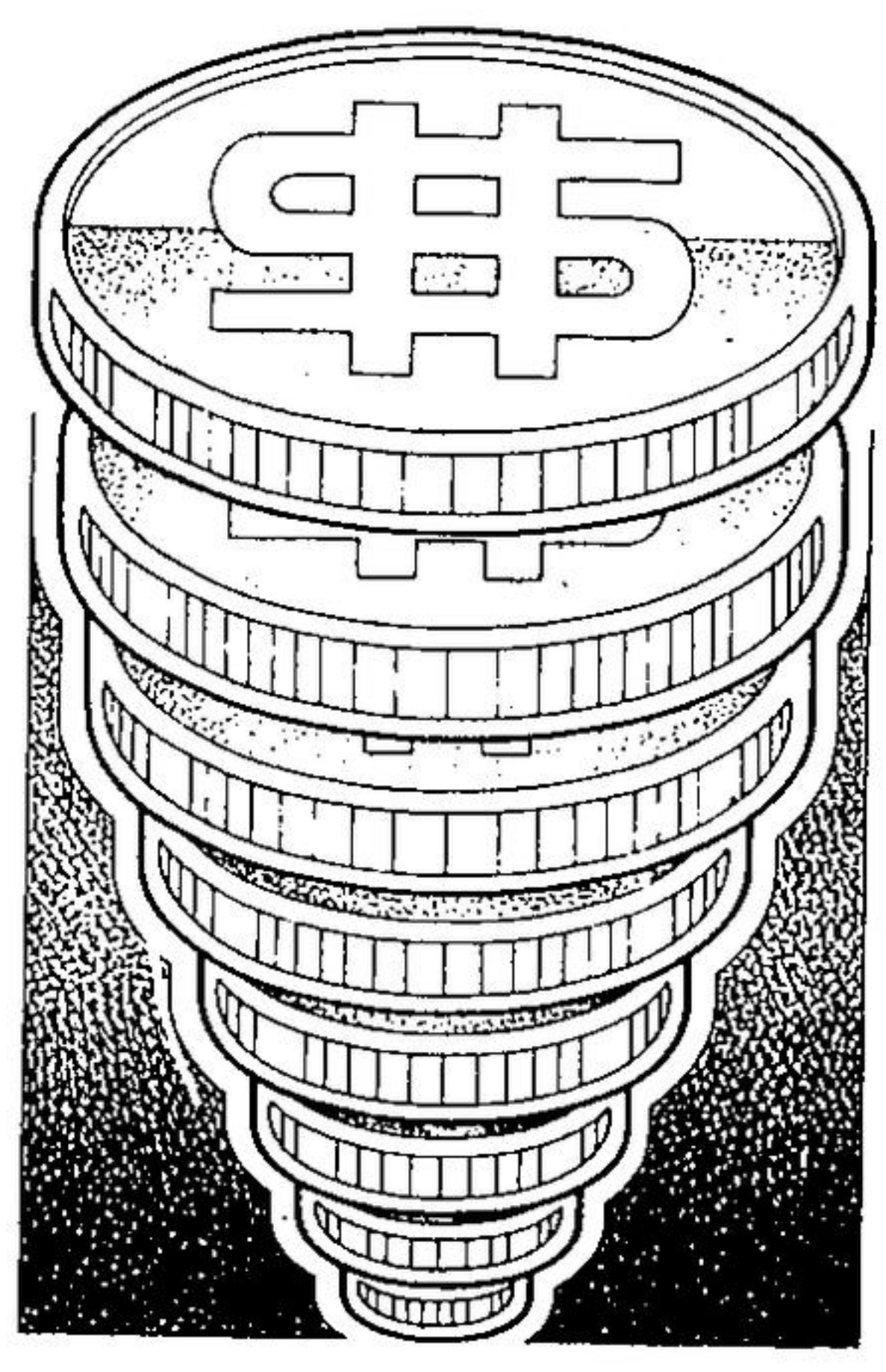
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