

Pen&Inc.

Newsletter of Hamilton Artists' Inc.

Vol. 2 Issue 3

July-August, 1990

Do you write comments at Exhibitions?

By Jane Gordon

On my last visit to Montreal I visited a few galleries. You've probably done the same thing yourself - collectively we've no doubt done this in dozens, if not hundreds of cities and towns. When you were in those galleries did you look in the book kept to record visitors comments? Was it full of names? Were there lots of interesting comments? Did the comments set up a running dialogue between visitors and artists? If so, you weren't in "The Bay Area." (I mean Burlington Bay not San Fransisco.) On the aforementioned visit to Montreal the first show I saw was a solo of Celine Suprenant's work at Powerhouse. Powerhouse has a particular political agenda, and I thought that might explain the pages and pages of long thoughtful comments. The phenomenon continued, however, at Dazibao, Article and beyond. Have you ever wondered why this doesn't happen here? If you have an explanation or comment send it in to the newsletter. Is the artwork shown in our area not worthy of comment, or is it so concise in its use of visual language that nothing needs to be said? Are art gallery patrons in our region illiterate, over-educated, or at openings solely in search of free cheese? I am raising this issue at this time because something unusual happened at the first members' show of Bay Area Artists for Women's Art-pages and pages of comments creating a dialogue between the artists involved and visitors to the exhibition. A few examples will be reprinted at the end of this short article. Is this the beginning of a new trend, or an isolated incident? Is this an important process? Is this process of any significance to visitors to the gallery? To artists? As an artist in the BAAWA exhibition the following are only some of the comments which were significant to me.

For some reason I made a stop over in Hamilton (on my way home to visit my family at Easter) in order to "see the shows" on at your galleries. I am learning to trust my intuition more now. My reward this time has been this modest heart-felt-heart-spoken exhibition on the third floor of Artists Inc. Thank you all, O.P.

I came because I am a woman, an ex-Montrealer and a art lover. I am leaving an enlightened woman, a Montrealer not so ashamed because I can see that the results of Marc Lepine's actions are not all negative, (this show was wonderful!) and convinced that art can help us heal our souls of things which disturb us. Thank you all. K.M.

I am a man who sees the evil that some men do and I fail to understand what brings them to it. Your show moved me. Your feelings are ones that need to be expressed more often, to be seen by more. I enjoyed your letters very much, A.M.

Cont. on page 3



Gayle Young, David Prentice and Rienhard Reitzenstien performing at Earth day 1990

Shopping for a gallery

The artist may not see the hidden price tag

by Kelly Hilton

Galleries generally fall into one of three categories: commercial, public or parallel. In examining some of the Hamilton galleries from each of these categories, we discover some of the less salient features in what might have seemed a pat process of gaining a gallery exhibition.

COMMERCIAL GALLERIES

From the commercial gallery sector we examined the Moore Gallery and the Beckett Gallery. The mandate of this sector, for the most part, is profit. Success therefore is measured by the number of people who visit the gallery and the number of sales.

The process by which an artist gains entry into the commercial gallery sector is precise. Firstly, the artist familiarizes himself/Herself with the gallery, sends in slides and photos, follows up with a phone call and an interview is arranged. If the gallery accepts an artist, and this is where we must pay attention, a 30 to 60 day hanging period is set up as a trial to indicate salability of work. If, during this

trial period, the clientele reaction to the work is favorable (ie. purchases are made) the artist may be granted a group showing. From this point, if the artist sells 20 to 25 pieces (approximately a two year task) he / she will have earned a solo show.

Its a methodical financial transaction. What is significant about this process, especially to the artist, is that control has become a financial dialogue between the investor and the gallery owner. It is the art purchaser (often an entrepreneur-class client) who creates, directs, and perpetuates the commercial market. Concurrently, it is this same group of buyers which have created their own meaning and criteria for: value, quality, and the worth of commercial art. So when the artist learns that according to New York one should paint 'slick' to be a success or that the current local trend is wildlife the Artist he has to consider, and question, how these ideas were formulated, or perhaps more importantly, by whom these ideas were formulated. In short, he/she must see the 'catch'.

Cont. on page 4

The Hamilton Artists
Inc. Exhibition
Programming Schedule

Cecilia Varga(Solo)
Anne Marie Cosgrove(Solo)
June 29 to July 28

Closed
July 29 to August 18

The Place of Work
Fax Machine Show
August 24 to September 22

Zone Programming

ArtSound: June 22, Weins Perera Duo
Poetry Readings:
July 13, Beverly Daurio, Gay Allison

Letter to the Editor

I've spent the last 63 hours trying to come up with a name for your newsletter, and finally in hour 64 I came up with "Artifacts". I'll be sleeping for the next few days, let me know if your interested in the name.

Insomniacly yours,

Phil Capobianco, Hamilton

Sorry Phil, Artifact is the name of a gallery in Vancouver and several other publications. Looks like Pen & Inc. stays -but thanks for the letter. Ed.

Pen&Inc.

Hamilton Artists' Inc. Newsletter

Pen & Inc. is published bimonthly by the Hamilton Artists' Inc., 145 James St. N., Hamilton, Ont., Canada L8R 2K8.

If you would like to advertise in Pen & Inc. Please give us a call at 529-3355. Opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily shared by the H.A.I. membership.

Please address letters to the editor care of Lawson Hunter at the above address. Writers in Pen & Inc. must be H.A.I. members. Deadline for next edition submissions is August 20/90

Editor Lawson Hunter

Production Carolyn Bell

Peter Stevens

Contributing Jane Gordon

Writers Kelly Hilton

The Hamilton Artist Inc. Gallery is a charitable, non-profit artist run centre which belongs to CARO and ANNPAC. Membership is open to artists and patrons alike.

We now are operating 900 square feet of exhibition space as well as general office space and The Printmaking Studio one door north on James Street. Gallery hours are Tuesday to Friday 11a.m. to 5p.m., Saturday 11a.m. to 4p.m.

Editor's Notes

Lawson Hunter

As the summer approaches many arts organizations slow down their schedule of public activities to concentrate on planning the new season, accommodate staff vacations and do some work behind the scenes in preparation for grant applications due in the fall.

The Inc. also has it's traditional summer schedule (Closed most of August). But that doesn't necessarily mean it will be a slow period. The Inc. is in the process of hiring an administrative co-director to assist the Board of Directors in presenting a positive public image and to handle most of the administrative duties for the organization.

The hiring of a new staff person and the pressure of determining the future location of the Inc. makes this good time to reflect on past performance of the organization and explore new possibilities.

The recent success of Theatre Terra Nova to secure a \$225,000 interest free loan from the City of Hamilton has prompted other arts groups, (the Inc. included), to wonder if they could get such financial assistance. And what they would do with the money?

To help the Inc. Board during this period of analysis we are urging our membership to complete the questionnaire included in this newsletter. Even if you're not a member fill out the form, but please make a note of your status. You can return the

survey form either by mail or dropping it off at the Inc. office at 143 James Street North.

Also included in this edition of Pen & Inc., Jane Gordon, in her article, "Do You Write Comments at Exhibitions?", wonders if the gallery going public and artists themselves have become to complacent or maybe just to lazy to communicate thoughts and feelings to other artists. We shall see first hand when we count the responses to our survey.

Kelly Hilton takes a look at what it takes to get an exhibition at local art galleries. Private, public and parallel galleries all have their advantages and disadvantages. The secret to success, according to Kelly, is to be aware of each of the pitfalls and choose the gallery that suits you instead of the other way around.

And as usual in our newsletter, we have news and notices and other tidbits of information. Please remember, this is your newsletter, your source of communication in the arts scene. Make use of it by writing in and letting your opinion be known.

Have a good summer. "Til next time

Late breaking items!

The Dundas Valley School of Art requires a part-time technician to look after teaching studios and firing. The position is from October 1, 1990.

Studio workspace and firing facilities will be available for the technician's own use and salary is negotiable. Contact the Registrar at 416-628-6357 to arrange an interview.

The screening of films by members of H.A.I. which was scheduled for Friday, June 8 has been postponed. We would like to reschedule, so call Ray at the gallery for more details.

Anne Marie Cosgrove

"Anne Marie Cosgroves new big paintings"

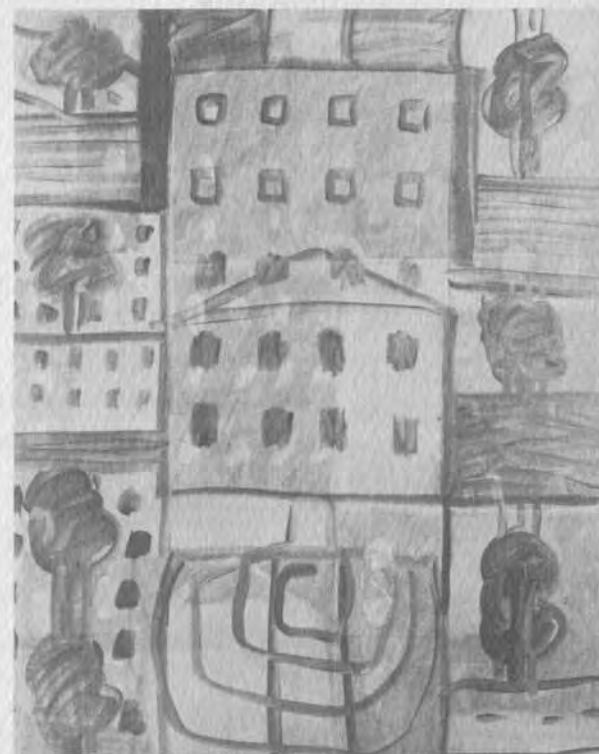
June 29-July 28

"I use painting within a feminist strategy of recuperation and fully aware of its previous modernist associations in order to posit, display, and make visible specific references to the real conditions of existence in which I find myself.

Using the large format I juxtapose ambiguous and contradictory elements that work to suspend final judgement, deferring to a multiplicity of references for its meaning.

This aspect of multiplicity refers to the seeming impossibility of any language to construct reality for the other, precisely the impossibility of knowing that reality except through difference."

A.M.C. 1990



Very interesting, you represented it very clearly, so that, even I, a thirteen year old girl understands. I now am sure that I am going to go for what I want out of life. H.P.

I don't have any words left - all your work brought back that event like it was yesterday again (and again and again). T.G.

Brave and thoughtful work. S.G.

Very moving letters, what everyone has to say about their work hits deep. H.R.

The box with its locks and chains is not everybody's box, it is man's box. Marc Lepine was a misogynist who made a choice. He is not alone. The Montreal massacre was not an isolated incident. Through the memory of the 14 Women I hope we can work towards ending violence against women, and that some day there will be no more Marc Lepines. A.R.

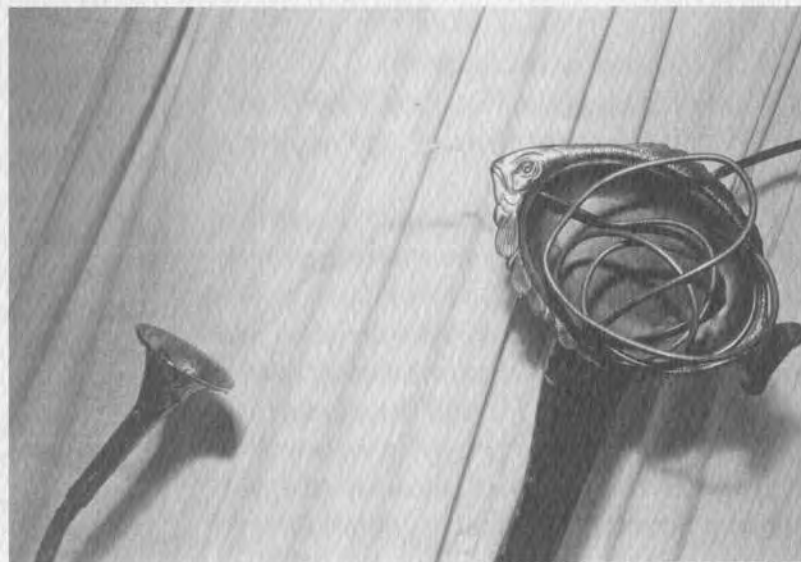
Comments are signed with initials only because signatures can be so difficult to interpret. The BAAWA members show hung from March 23rd to April 22nd, at H.A.I. third space month. The exhibition was dedicated to the victims of the massacre Dec. 6th, 1989, at the University of Montreal. Participating artists were Jane Adeney, V. Jane Gordon, Jim Hart, Donna Ibing, Mary Keczan-Ebos, Maureen Steuart, Janet Tulloch.

Cecilia Varga

"Running Pitcher"

June 29-July 28

The exhibition consists of a series of interconnected fountain sculptures that are made up of constructed and found objects, formed plaster, tiles and metal basins for pools, several diameter sizes of copper tubing, valves and a water pump. The meandering lines of copper tubing mimmick and channel the water throughout the sculptures. The objects and forms, such as drapery, boat, teapot, pitcher, pull the everyday and familiar into the work. Adding mixed uses and stories, they allow one to play with the imagery. Water spurts from under a rug, up through a wall light socket and scissors cut the water.



Vargas intentions are to create continuous gestures of lines and forms, an atmosphere of sound and movement to encourage people to spend time, linger and sit.

The work stems in part from a desire to

parallel in sculpture the process of drawing on paper by using a more immediate and instinctive method; working through the sculptural process more loosely. Varga draws with the copper tubing and objects.

Thank you!

We would like to thank the following members who volunteered their time for installations

- Don Drury
- John Kinsella
- Barry Hodgeson
- Gary Spearin
- Bob Mason
- Keith Sills
- Sandy Mason
- Ray Cinovskis

The Inc. Survey

Please take a bit of time to fill out this survey. You don't have to be a H.A.I. member, (Although you should mention your status). All responses are very important to us.

Which of the following services/ activities offered by the Inc. are you aware of?

- Exhibition of contemporary artists works
- Printspace
- Zone film/ Video presentations
- Artsound presentations
- Assistance with grant applications
- Curatorial workshops
- Member of ANPAC/CARO
- Lobbying Municipal and Provincial Gov.

The Inc. will someday have to look for a new location. What are the features of the Inc's present location that you feel are positive?

- Visibility
- Parking
- Exhibition Space
- Access to downtown
- Access to other arts groups
- Other (Specify) _____

Have you visited the Inc. (143 James N.) for any of the following reasons?

- Exhibition opening
- Renewal membership
- Audience for performance/Film
- Other (Specify) _____

Have you volunteered for any of the following?

- Bingo
- Newsletter
- Gallery sitting
- Committees

Rank the following in priority of importance to you (1 being most important 2,3,4,5 least))

- Programming/ Exhibition
- Information/ Resource
- Exhibition of members works
- Government Liason
- Social contact

Are there any other areas you think the Inc. should get involved in? _____

Rate the performance of the Inc. for the following. G (Good) F (Fair) P (Poor)

- Newsletter
- Printspace
- Zone programming
- programming/Exhibition

What features would you look for in a future location? Comments

Please mail or bring your survey to us at 143 James Street North, Hamilton, Ontario L8R 2K8

Our Mistake

In the last edition of Pen&Inc, we omitted one line from Jane Gordons review of Peter Karuna's Exhibition "Lookalikes" at the D.V.S.A. Dofasco Gallery.

Our apologies to Jane and Peter. The following sentences should read:

Profoundly ontological questions are raised by the tension between the ordinaryness of the portraits and our need to construct artificial appearances. After floating in the gallery space, in front of the mirror eyes we are left with the necessity of constructing a self in a culture where shared cultural concepts of "appearance" alienate and make of the self an "other".

PARALLEL GALLERIES

The intent of the average parallel gallery is to give artists an open forum to express, explore and manifest their own artistic destiny.

There are, however, only two parallel galleries in Hamilton: NIIPA (Native Indian/Inuit Photographers' Association) and our own, Hamilton Artists' Inc. An artist interested in showing work at the galleries should send in titled slides representing their work, along with a brief history about themselves and their artistic endeavors. A submit kit is also available at the Hamilton Artists' Inc. gallery outlining the procedure of applying for a gallery show.

The works submitted are examined by a selection committee made up of gallery members. Selection is achieved by selecting work through three rounds of slide viewing. In the first round the artist and work remain anonymous. In the subsequent rounds this information is included and the elimination process begins. Any vote expressed by a committee member (for or against a work) must be validated. In this way the selection process adopts an open forum atmosphere where decisions are achieved through a democratic dialogue. If an artist is granted a show the question of solo or group exhibiting remains particular to each case.

The 'catch' within the parallel sector of galleries of Hamilton is that there are so few. Hamilton has fewer artist co-operative galleries per capita than London, Winnipeg or Toronto. Poor funding is cited as the major reason for lack of gallery space (we receive little funding from the Canada Council, only a small donation from the City of Hamilton and rely heavily on government grants. It is this lack of parallel galleries, the structured absence, the 'catch' which disallows that inter-community dialogue; a dialogue enabling artists to exchange ideas, discuss ideologies, and ultimately foster their creativity

which nurture all art.

Whereas it is the artist which is of fundamental concern to the parallel gallery and it is the gallery as an entity which propels the commercial sector of galleries it is duty to the masses which is basic to the public sector galleries (Note: 'public refers to public galleries within an institute specifically. ie. Hamilton Public Library Gallery, Mohawk Gallery, and McMaster Gallery).

PUBLIC GALLERIES

The mandate of the public sector gallery is, for the most part, to educate. Since the institution which houses the gallery provides a ready-made environment for spectators the cycle is carried through; the public is exposed to art, exposure to the arts educates the public in the arts, the public demands to see more art on display.

For an artist seeking gallery acceptance the 'public' sector of galleries appears to have an easy, open-door policy. "We look at anyone's work, in any media. The artist sends us their photos and slides and then an artist-gallery discussion can get underway," Carol Wilkinson of the Hamilton Public Library Gallery.

There is, however, an inherent stumbling block, the 'catch'. Because of the publicness of the 'public' gallery certain subject matter becomes difficult. The depiction of violence, despite its social implications, is impossible and the nude form is a subject matter which just may not wash. But how does a public which can neither explore themselves at the level of human dynamics or spiritual restlessness learn about themselves? Is the 'public' sector gallery then fulfilling its mandate to educate? Meanwhile, the artist is left at the apex of this sector's internal contradictions. And how does the artist now choose to fit himself/herself in along side such limitations?

The Carnegie Gallery in Dundas is a unique center for artists which deals with both the visual

arts and crafts. A difficult gallery to categorize into any one of the sectors, the Carnegie operates like an artist run center, but, like a commercial gallery, it has a great interest in selling art, (90% of the exhibited material must be for sale). The Carnegie is also a special case since it is affiliated with the Dundas Art and Craft Association, an incorporated non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and encouraging the appreciation and production of Canadian art and artists." Judi Burgess, gallery co-ordinator.

The objectives of The Carnegie Gallery are: to act as an educational resource for the community, to provide an opportunity for aspiring artists to gain exposure, to promote the work of the established artist and craftsman, to set up dialogue between artists collectively while elevating the critical appreciation of craft media in general.

Although exhibitions for 1991 have already been scheduled, artists interested in sending in proposals for future exhibitions at the Carnegie Gallery should be prepared to send in: a resume, a statement of intent for their exhibition, 10 labelled slides with a slide list giving title, dimension and media of work. A stamped, self-addressed envelope should also be included in the artist's proposal.

Although the Carnegie Gallery seems to float mysteriously between gallery sectors, most galleries are quite easily categorized - their respective sector is part of their gallery's identity. What we have discovered is that each sector within the art community system has its 'catch.' When shopping for a gallery it is the artist's decision, both personal and political, as to which sector he or she identifies with. The artist's final choice of gallery is perhaps not the fundamental concern, what is significant, what is learned, is that the artist must think and rethink the significance of the sectors. It is through imposing this mentality of reading a system that the artist, and this is perhaps the greatest goal, positions himself/herself accurately within the art community

CLASSIFIEDS/ CALLS FOR SUBMISSIONS

In an effort to keep HAI members informed of Calls for Entry and Exhibition at other art centres, notices are provided in this newsletter and at the Inc. studio space as a point of information only. The Board of Directors does not support any Exhibitions that require the artist to pay an entry fee.

ARTSPACE

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Artspace, a centre for art, performance and communication, is organizing an interactive sound sculpture/installation exhibition titled, NO BARRIERS to be presented in October 1990. This juried exhibition will be national in scope and seeks to challenge traditional perceptions of space and sound while encouraging interaction between object and viewer.

ARTSPACE pays artists' fees in excess of the CARO recommended fee schedule, pays for transportation of work on way, for installation and documentation of the exhibition, and for slide talks/discussions with the artist.

Submissions would include up to twenty slides of recent work and/or work-in-progress with a list; a resume and statement about the work; and return postage on a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

DEADLINE: June 29, 1990

Submissions and information requests should be sent to the attention of Susan Belyea, Artistic Director, Artspace, 360 George St.N., Box 1748, Peterborough, Ontario, K9J 7X6. (705) 748-3883

AT CARNEGIE GALLERY, 10 KING ST. W., DUNDAS

Upcoming Exhibitions

June 1 - 26

Hamilton Artists' Inc. gratefully acknowledges support of its members, Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council, The City of Hamilton, Ministry of Culture and Communications and Employment and Immigration Canada and W.L. Griffin Printing

JOHN DAVIES

"Dwellings and Views" - an exhibition of large scale oil paintings which explore the fragility of nature and the inflexible, often misguided, strength of technology.

Mini Exhibition - Dorothy Fergusson
Floral oil and chalk pastels.

June 29 - July 31

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP EXHIBITION

Alan Alexanian, Bob Barkwell, Leo Davis, John Farr, Henry Gordillo, Tony Hendry, Peter Karuna, Lynn Macintyre, Ann Milne, Gary Spearin, Cees Van Gemerden, Annerie Van Gemerden. A curated group exhibition of recent photographic work by local artists. Includes a variety of approaches, including B&W, colour, photocollage, and installation. A catalogue will be produced.

August 3 - September 4

CARNEGIE PAINTERS

Artist member painters will show a variety of two-dimensional art works.

COLOUR AND FORM SOCIETY

1990 38th ANNUAL OPEN JURIED EXHIBITION
Conditions of entry: Artists may submit up to two recent works in oil, acrylics, watercolour, fabric, mixed media and all sculpture media. Works must be suitably framed and ready to hang. All works must be labelled on the back. All works must be available for purchase. A commission of 30% for

members and 40% for non-members will be retained by the Colour and Form Society. Sales will be encouraged. A non-refundable handling fee of \$6.00 (per piece) for members and \$10.00 for non-members. Make cheque payable to the Colour and Form Society. Entry data deadline October 19th. Mail form and entry fee to the COLOUR AND FORM SOCIETY, 1998 Lakeshore Road West, Mississauga, Ontario. L5J 1J8.

Exhibition dates and times: Nov.10 - Nov.29. For further information contact Mansaram at (416) 525-1388.

POETRY READING July 13, 1990. Beverly Daurio and Gay Alison. Readings begin at 8pm. at the Inc.

VIDEO SCREENING July 27, 1990 at 8pm. Bay Area Artists for Women's Art will present a screening of Studio D, National Film Board, films on video: THE GODDESS REMEMBERED (59 minutes) "A documentary exploration of goddess centered religions of Europe." Raises questions about historical misreadings as well as today's environmental crisis and the loss of Goddess Culture. ILLUMINATED LIVES (9 minutes) "A witty animated short based on Medieval illuminations. It explores womens' history of the middle ages."

CONFERENCE: "The Curator and the Media" at the Art Gallery of Hamilton. Saturday, September 15 at 10am. A Bay Area Art Collective project "Under the Clear Blue Sky": Curating outside the Umbrella of Metropolitan Toronto.