

Great art for a great university

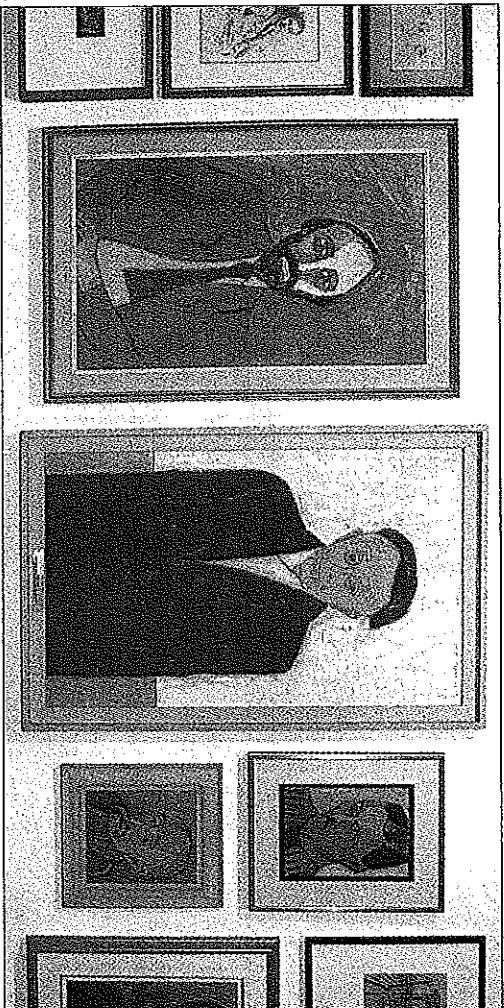
UTAC's latest exhibit showcases incredible Canadian talent

EVANNA FOLKENFOLK

In a corner of one of the oldest buildings in downtown Toronto, hidden behind the nondescript white walls usually reserved for office buildings and community colleges, lies a visual art gem virtually unknown to the people of Toronto. The University College building, erected in 1859 as the very first entity in what later became the University of Toronto, is evidently home to more than the infamous Junior Common cafeteria and its obscenely large and criminally luxurious leather couches. The stolid structure also holds at its northeast corner the University of Toronto Art Centre (UTAC) and in it, the "Great Art for a Great University" exhibit.

Filled with the likes of some of the biggest names in Canada — a certain seven of them — the modest but elegant gallery is all sparkling hardwood floors, walls of gleaming white, and vivid artwork at every angle. Walking in is like easing into a warm shower — clean and precise, yet peaceful and rejuvenating.

As the director of the gallery, Niamh O'Laoghaire, walked me through its four distinct rooms, it was obvious that there was an



objective to the exhibit beyond mere artistic display. For the location of the gallery — and of the glossy exhibit itself — was no coincidence. With a name like "Great Art for a Great University," the exhibit bordered on a somewhat self-congratulatory celebration of the University. The smug self-high-five was left bouncing off the walls of the first room, filled entirely with the depictions of and paintings by (and aptly named) 'University College People.'

Bypassing the dull and uninviting Barker Fairley landscape, I found solace in front of his portraits which, with sal-low orange skin-tones, murky browns and melancholy blues expressed the solemnness of academia in a way only an academic-turned-artist could. Beside his solemn portraits hung the pencil sketches of Phil Richards, whose subjects emanated from the canvas in such detail, it was at first impossible to distinguish them from photographs.

The next room, titled simply 'Landscapes', held the greatest variety of talent and some of the biggest names. O'Laoghaire

explained that this component of the exhibit was not curated chronologically, as is often the case, but rather by content. The result was a striking display of the diversity of Canadian landscape artists, ranging from the vivid and geometric greens of Kazuo Nakamura, the autumnal warmth of Franklin Carmichael and Lauren Stewart Harris, to the eerie sundown of Arthur Lismer's Evening Silhouette

Georgian Bay. Cradling the 'Landscape' room on either side was 'Abstraction' to the right, and 'My-

thology of Life and Culture' to the left. Both modern in their own right and unconventionally Canadian, they could not have been more different, or more unexpectedly representative of the multiplicity of Canadian artists in their content, form and mood.

In 'Abstraction', the sinister and sexual energy of Quebecois artists such as Paul-Emile Borduas and Jean-Paul Riopelle could be felt on the far wall, juxtaposed against the serene pastels of William Peruhdorff and John Golding of the prairies whose abstract landscapes, while calming to the eye's first glance, unnerved in a way that only a placid but bottomless ocean could.

In the 'Mythology' corner, the airy colored stencils of Joyce Wieland competed against the aggressive black-and-blue oils of Charles Pachter's Rite de Passage, and every painting in between showcased an entirely different style and sensibility, as though the room itself, and the gallery at large, was trying to fit the very essence of Life and Culture into its tiny confines.

Walking out of the small and discreet gallery, the reigning emotion was on of the absolute largeness of Canadian talent.

IT'S LIKE A TUNGLESOME TIME
AS IT MARKS THE WONDERS
WITNESS FROM GOING UNDER

the newspaper

University of Toronto's Independent Weekly

Vol. XXIII, No. 14

January 20, 2011

Murder still unsolved 10 years later

Murder on campus Professor killed in art studio



U of T General Assembly set in motion Community members cite distrust in university governance, form alternative governing body

MARTIN WALDMAN

U of T students, faculty, staff, and general members of the university community gathered on Wednesday evening at the inaugural University of To-

ronto General Assembly held at the U of T Multi-Faith Centre. Organizers state that the assembly was created out of a lack of confidence in the current governance of the university, demanding that learning

conditions, working conditions, and academic freedom are improved and respected.

Speaking prior to the event, Johanna Lewis, an undergrad-

Continued on page 2