

ENTERTAINMENT

Paintings of Newfoundland memories are social history as seen by a child

Conrad Furey lives in Hamilton but his mind is in Newfoundland, where he spent his childhood.

The 40-year-old artist paints memories of houses being towed by boats from outports for resettlement in other areas as part of Premier Joey Smallwood's plan to turn the province's economy from one based on fishing to one based on farming.

His paintings are social history from the perspective of a child, done in a style that is deceptively naive and stylized, with a shiny sparkle on the paintings' surfaces that he achieves through glazing. The effect of this sparkle is to make you think of the lift that comes from dollar days at Zellers, a brightener that takes the edge off drabness.

In a portrait of a stocky mother and an adult-looking child, the mother wears red nail polish, an incongruous contrast to her peasant-like strength. Furey's fishermen have a similar unvarnished strength. They stare at the viewer, their expressions melancholic and questioning about their solitary lot.

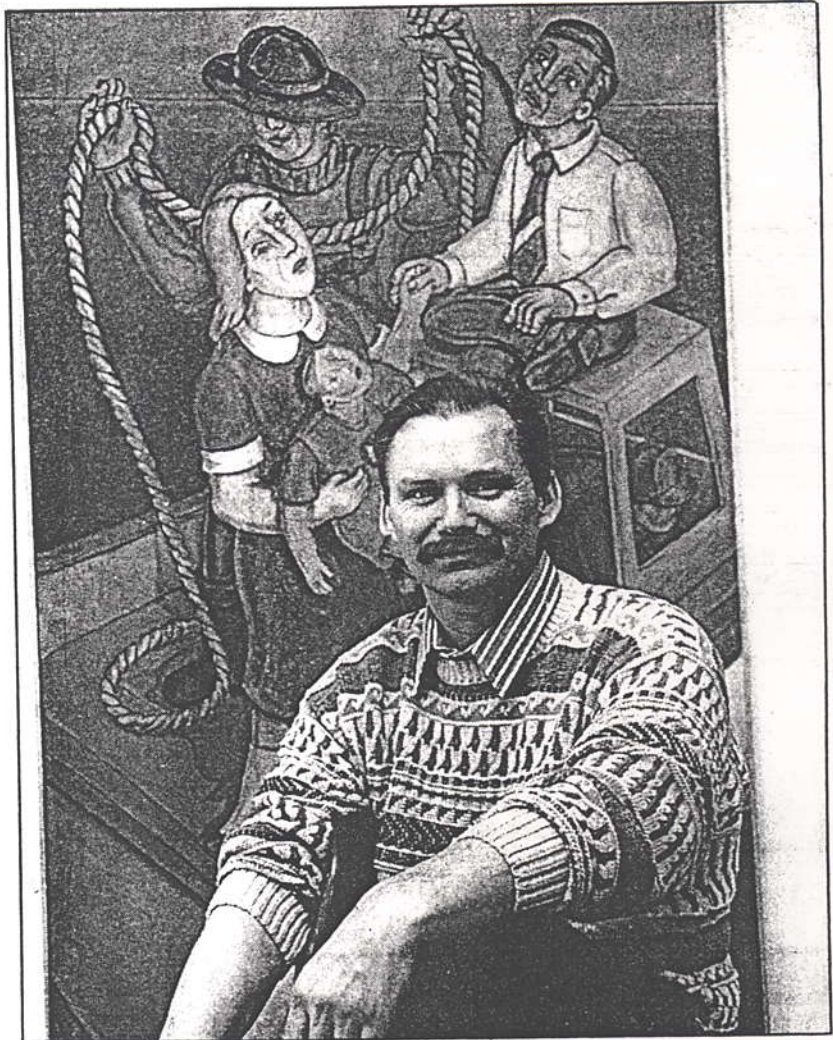
Furey strikes one emotional note consistently — the sense of apprehension that comes from displacement. Although there are several large storytelling paintings in this show — mostly repetitions of the boat people theme — the most interesting works were those that had no direct reference to the Newfoundland theme.

His painted bas-reliefs are done with wood and found materials. Still-life, landscapes and Picasso-like portraits convey a sense of melancholy and exuberance without the storytelling, simply through the way he shapes his material.



At The Galleries

NANCY
BAELE



—Anand Maharaj, Citizen

CONRAD FUREY: His style is deceptively naive and stylized, with a shiny sparkle on the paintings' surfaces

Furey has shown several times in the Ottawa area. This exhibition shows him to be moving away from the exaggerated gesture that was so evident in his earlier works, where people's heads were almost at right angles to their bodies.

Furey is discovering that things themselves tell stories, that narrative doesn't always need a story line. The exhibition continues at Robertson Galleries, 162 Laurier Ave. W., until May 20.