

Three-ring circus

By SUSAN MERTENS
Sun Art Critic

The Burnaby Art Gallery's three-exhibition opening to its fall season brings together a gallery-sized fibre installation, large-scale ceramic pieces, and printworks from the Malaspina Studio on Granville Island. It is a something-for-everyone kind of affair and, although Aiko Suzuki's fibre tribute to British Columbia physically dominates the proceedings, it's a three-ring circus without an obvious show-stopping number.

Victoria ceramist Robin Hopper contributes quietly reflective pieces based on forms borrowed from classical Greek and Roman times - mainly functional-looking pots and jars with names like *krater*, *hydria*, *kylix* - and he has given their surfaces the look of arrested deterioration one associates with museum artifacts. This echo quality in the work is attractive - Hopper strikes a nice suggestiveness - and the ideas he's playing with should, one feels, sustain further and yet more fruitful exploration.

Sharing space with Hopper's *Explorations Within a Classical Theme* is Suzuki's *Stanley Park Parade*, a lyrical evocation of the 'Westcoast rainforest. Suzuki, Sister of geneticist David Suzuki, has lived in Toronto for many years and perhaps best-known work is *Lyra*, the mammoth, \$44,000 white nylon suspension in the lobby of Metro Toronto's central reference library. This new work, a mood-dominated salute to her home province, creates its effect largely through colour - cascading sheets of mysterious dark green and blue yarn with bright spring accents. Suspended from painted wooden platforms in three triple swags, the waterfalls of yarn filter the light as does a forest and one could only wish for a breeze to ripple and bring it to life

It is a spare, sculptural and yet highly fluid and graceful construction - fibre art that avoids the crafty and the pretty and strikes a type of theatricality through a minimalist approach.



Upstairs, printmakers Gill Armitage, Barry Kootchin, Victoria Oginski and Ken Pattern parade their own different sensibilities. Oginski's multiple perspective intaglio studies of man and water have a subconscious appeal that is perhaps more elemental to the human organism than Pattern's brand of cool and quiet surrealist juxtapositions but the latter are very handsomely executed indeed. Armitage is dealing with formal concerns and the direction of her explorations struck me as perhaps more interesting. than this particular selection would indicate - I'll hold judgment until I've seen more of her work. With its spareness and emphasis on strong, expressive line. Koochin's work resembles a blend between the caricaturist and the illustrator with an attractively dated 'modernistic' look at the images.

All three exhibitions continue until Oct.25