

# ODD COUPLE

**ALEXANDRA DIKEAKOS & GLORIA MASSE : PAINTINGS,** Charles F Scott Gallery, Emily Carr College of Art and Design, Granville Island, until Oct. 28th.

**ALEXANDRA DIKEAKOS** and Gloria Masse are an odd couple. Myth, ritual, and a figurative mode are the thin threads which tie the work of these two local woman painters together. Otherwise, they haven't much in common.

All of the works of Dikeakos are figurative images of women: mythical women, swimming nymphs in bikinis, and ordinary faces of women. Dikeakos claims no interest in the accomplishments of women as a social or political statement, as Judy Chicago does. Instead, she explores "How women look" — their makeup and personage.

*Handmaidens* is a series of ink drawings based on women from myths and history. The figures, represented as puppets, are sharply delineated and elaborately decorated in a style reminiscent of Aubrey Beard-

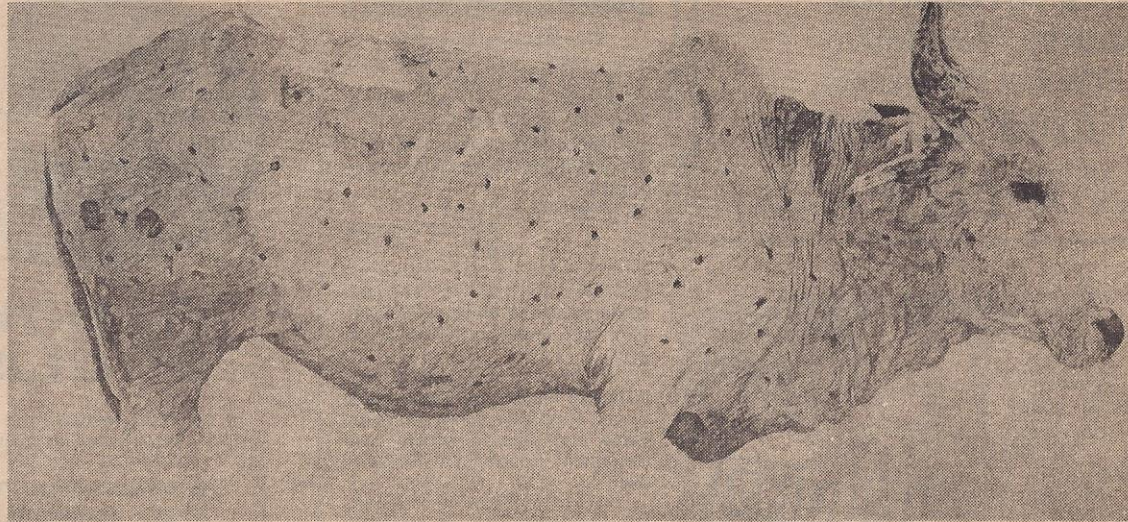
sley's illustrations.

In the pastels and watercolours of Dikeakos one finds an astonishingly different style and approach to her subject. These images of women are painted with very little decoration or precision of line. A bright palette of floral

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## VISUAL ARTS

pinks, greens, oranges, and blues dominates in these childlike renderings. In spite of all the spontaneity of the watercolours and their richness of hue, these depictions of women seem spiritually malnourished. *Frida* (1984), although colourful, is ex-



**WHITE BULLOCK, FINGERPRINTS,** oil on canvas by Gloria Masse

tremely anemic in its drawing and facial expression. The awkwardness of this figure and others detracts from the otherwise fluid effects of the medium and leaves one wondering about whether some of these pieces ought to have been left out of the show.

Gloria Masse's oil paintings of ceremoniously decorated bullocks were derived from a series

of photographs she took in India during 1980-81. These close-cropped compositions of dyesplattered sacred Brahman cattle are skillfully painted in a loose photorealist manner. Masse's strong ability to evoke light, colour, and texture comes across especially in *Water Buffalo, Handprints* (1982) and *White Bullock, Fingerprints* (1984).

The unsettling aspect of this

group of paintings is its unusual presentation. The stretched and framed canvases are suspended in rows of three so that they fill Masse's allotted space in the gallery. The visitor is intended to walk "amongst" the paintings instead of past them as in a more typical gallery display.

It is difficult not to make comparisons of Masse's exhibit to Gathie Falk's *Herd*. Falk's piece

was an installation of merry-go-round style horses, cut out of plywood and suspended by wires in a loose herd formation, gently swaying in the breeze. The symmetry of Masse's rectangular paintings, lined up in neat rows conflicts with the disorderly nature of a herd of cattle; the mood set up in the painted images.