

lages form a "messy" counterpoint to Brian Grison's formal variations. A stunning three-panel painting by Carole Thompson evokes swirling tropical fish with a crisp brilliance. Just around the corner are Sydney Condrashoff's ardently modern scrawls.

But Gloria Massé's bales and shades come first. These big oils depict coils of fence wire, baled hay, leafy nooks and two remarkable monsoon river gods. The two stand like tar-baby scarecrows, planted knee-deep in the shallow water under a huge Calcutta umbrella.

At first glance these paintings depict a frozen photographic moment, each blade of grass captured in time. But their sensual texture, built of a thousand little strokes, draws one in. Come closer to the painting. Realism dissolves into a colourful calligra-



**"River Gods": one of Gloria Massé's remarkable oils**

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sé's technique eats up time by the hour. "I'm bull-headed. I just keep doing it." But her ceaseless effort gives results. "Keep waving the brush and you've got to get better, unless you get lazy and slick. But as long as you keep the brush moving, something happens. You've gotta have faith that it will happen. It was excruciating this far."

Excruciating for the artist, maybe, but not for the viewer. Gloria Massé's paintings are a hit of this year's Vancouver Island Invitational. And her herd of painted beasts will be finished soon.

phic stew. Drips and washes and controlled accidents take on a life of their own. Realism, under a higher magnification, has become abstraction.

A native of Windsor, Massé graduated from UBC, having studied painting with Gathie Falk. Two long trips to India provided her with the inspiration for her current series of paintings of bullocks, decorated by their Hindu owners. More and more, Massé's painting focus on a part rather than the whole— from the whole cow, to the texture of skin as landscape, to the way each hair grows out of the skin.

The herd is painted life-size and close up. "I like to work in the same proportions as the thing really is— real size or bigger. I hang the painting on the real proportions of the beast. That freckle was here and that hair there— these are my landmarks. They give me a certain security and from there I can do my paintings. Once the boundaries are there you can let go."

To her, "letting go" means painting the myriad broken, flickering brush strokes which make up the rich surface pattern. "It's done pretty unconsciously," she says. Mas-

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# ART

## Calligraphic stew

THE VANCOUVER ISLAND INVITATIONAL. Art Gallery of Greater Victoria (384-4101) until Oct. 2

**T**HIS year's Vancouver Island Invitational at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria features five painters. In a show of more than usual interest, artists with very different approaches are included. Roberta Sutherland's col-