

# He works with Death

By LINDA REED

An artist who uses death as a recurring theme in his work is exhibiting at Erindale College until Feb. 10. Tom La Pierre, 42, is showing 32 paintings in the preliminary building. Among the exhibition is a painting called *The Loved One Departed* — which took a year to paint and has a price tag of \$6,000.

La Pierre, an instructor at the Ontario College of Art, produces paintings which may puzzle or shock the viewer.

## BUXOM NUDE

*The Loved One* is a vivid portrayal of a funeral. An old wrinkled hag is bending over a coffin at the same time a buxom, naked girl in high boots is peering over the edge.

A dog is strapped to the girl's back and a variety of ghoulish creatures lurk in the background.

Death appears several times in his work. One picture shows a young girl with a rotting chicken carcass over her head.

## GNARLED TOES

Another shows gnarled human toes, birds eating insects and chicken heads mingled with pearl necklaces.

La Pierre argues that his paintings aren't really shocking.

"This is the way life is — it's brutal and hard. Think of Vietnam," he said, pointing to a painting of a woman tied to the ground.

La Pierre says he is trying to make people aware of oncoming death and make them more aware about life.

La Pierre is a member of the Canadian Society of Graphic Art, Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolor and the Ontario Society of Artists.

He studied at OCA and the Ecole des Beaux Arts and Atelier 17 in Paris, France.

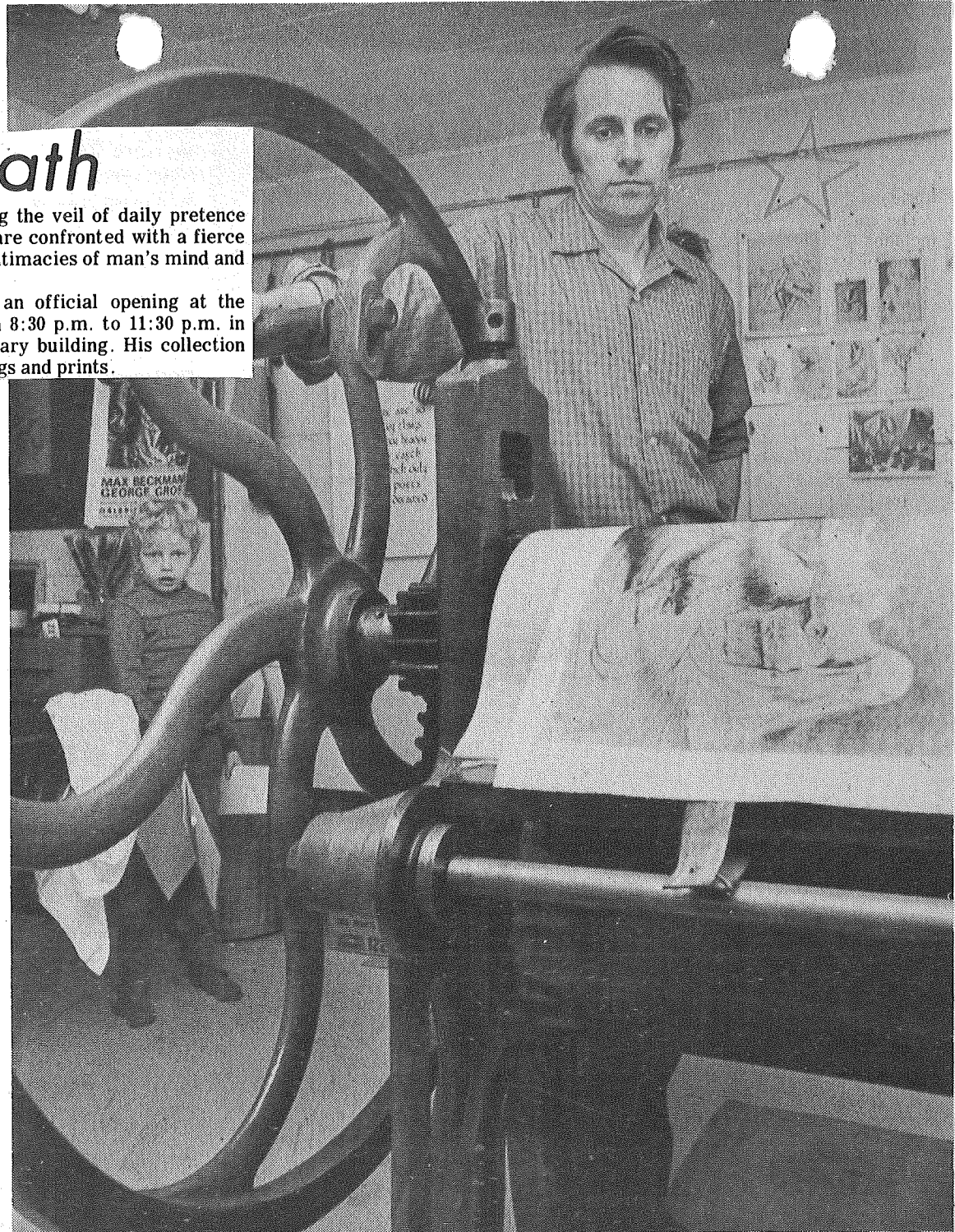
## MANY HONORS

He has exhibited in South America, Great Britain, Italy and Spain. He has won two Canada Council grants in the past.

His chief mentor, artist Erick Freifeld, says La Pierre's work doesn't try to comfort man.

"In La Pierre's painting the veil of daily pretence is stripped away and we are confronted with a fierce awareness of the deeper intimacies of man's mind and spirit," said Freifeld.

La Pierre will attend an official opening at the college on Thursday from 8:30 p.m. to 11:30 p.m. in Room 264 in the preliminary building. His collection includes paintings, drawings and prints.



The artist Tom La Pierre demonstrates his etching press which he uses in his Mississauga home to reproduce his paintings. His youngest son David is in the background. Married with two children he has lived in town about ten years.

Photo by John Willis

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La Pierre, Tom