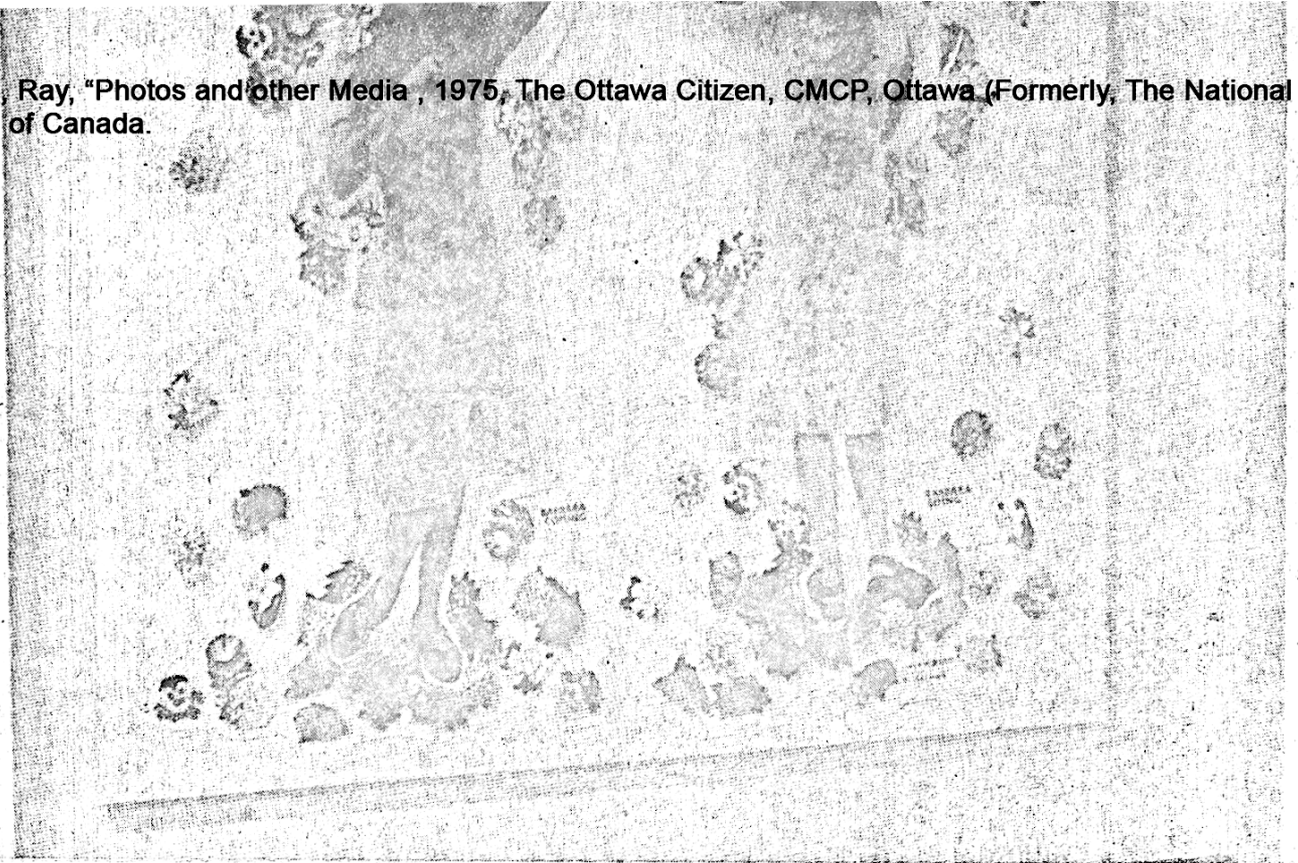


Van Dusen, Ray, "Photos and other Media", 1975, The Ottawa Citizen, CMCP, Ottawa (Formerly, The National Film Board of Canada.



Barbara coming; Barbara going— by Barbara Astman

Photos and other media

By Ray Van Dusen
Citizen Special Correspondent

The current exhibition of photography at the *National Film Board* gallery, 150 Kent St., features two major portfolios of work which are as wildly different in concerns as in the use of the medium.

For **Barbara Astman** photography is largely just another tool, albeit a major one, which she combines with photo linen, color xerography, collage, stitchery and sequential imagery.

These she uses in expressing her primary concern which is celebrating her intimacies — herself, her sexuality, her family and her close friends. Her work is refreshingly light hearted and gay. Indeed the dominant impression is her sense of fun and humor.

This exhibition spans three years

of her work and thus affords us the opportunity to witness her development during this period. A problem arises however with hanging such a variety of work.

For example a wall of 3 x 4 ft. photo collage, cloth constructions completely overwhelms the opposite wall of small silver prints, which are not only more intimate but are also dealing with lower key qualities of light and sensuous mood. This might have been alleviated with more partitioning off of the various media styles. As it is the show does not flow smoothly because of this variety.

Successful fun

Several of the pieces do stand out. Among her photo constructions of lace and linen, the double portrait, of Gayle with shirt on and off

is by far the strongest, combining a distinctly photographic quality with the portrait mood of a Jan van Eyck. *Barbara coming, Barbara going* is also successful and fun.

Of the Kodalith silver gelatin prints, her self portraits dealing with form, mood and her sexuality are the most intimate and successful. The Kodalith film light boxes of *Jank J being a cowboy* stand out as well.

A wall of silver gelatin portraits of herself and friends is more subdued than her other work but might have been more effective if their size had been reduced to proportions commensurate with their intimacy.

Despite obvious comparisons with the work of Evergone and Joyce Weiland, her joy and intimacy are uniquely her own.