

Barbara Astman

Deja Vu Gallery of Photographic Art
January 6-February 5

There is a feeling of great vitality to be found in the work of photographer Barbara Astman, who showed numerous color Xerox prints at the *Deja Vu Gallery of Photographic Art*. Astman displays the objects of her affection in her work by depicting the people close to her. In this her fancies are more part of her life than they are of her art.

Her color Xeroxes were all smaller than the commonly seen letter-size pages usually done with the machine. This was eminently to Astman's

advantage, as the prints were among the most technically perfect prints I have seen come out of a color Xerox copier. The size worked to keep the pigment density, usually a problem with this form of reproduction, well in control. She also selected appropriate papers, in color and in weight, to handle the odd plastic that melts to the paper to create the image.

Color xerography is becoming increasingly common, in Toronto at least. Though the process is still very new, there is already a large handful of artists working with this space-age technology for making three-color reproductions in seconds. The machine makes copies by melting various blends of colored powder onto ordinary paper, the mixture of powders determining the color. The colors can be controlled to an

interesting and still indeterminate degree by fiddling with the three dials and the other elements of the way the machine works. What results is a print quite unlike a conventional printed page or a photograph.

Astman's works suggested color postcards more than they did photographs. And this seemed deliberate. She superimposed pictures of friends, relatives, and possibly even herself, onto various "tourist" backdrops. There were a few neat examples of layout and composition, but the exhibition gave the impression of being a surrogate for the experience of looking through her own private photo album. It was a very nice, wholesome, "honest" experience. And her choice of color Xerox seemed a good way to make something private somewhat more sharable.



BARBARA ASTMAN

Uncle Jack Travels . . . to Ibiza, 1975
color Xerox, 4³/₄" x 6¹/₂"

Joe Bodeli, Arts Canada, 1976