

ENTERTAINMENT

Art that's fit for Olympics

BY JOHN BENTLEY MAYS
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It hasn't received a proper label yet — rush-hour art? drive-in art? — but the fine art of the fast lane got a boost in Toronto yesterday when Calgary's Olympic Arts Festival unveiled three big, backlit billboards displaying works by Canadian artists.

The three images, temporarily on view beside Roy Thomson Hall yesterday, are the first fruits of a \$400,000 Art on Billboards project that is the opening event of the arts festival scheduled to run alongside the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics.

The billboards reproduced a 1980 painting of crows in flight by Alex Colville, as well as images created especially for the Olympic project by Barbara Astman and Arnaud Maggs. Other artists to be included are David Bolduc, Christopher Pratt and Medrie MacPhee.

The three billboards are slated to go on view today in prominent public locations in Calgary and Toronto. All six images will be installed in eight Canadian cities

during the next 12 months.

The billboard program has been undertaken in co-operation with Mediacom, the Canadian outdoor advertising company.

"It really takes the festival across Canada," Karyn Allen Keenan, Olympics arts supervisor, said. "It's hats off to our finest, most prolific blue-chip artists." Each artist will receive a \$5,000 fee for the reproduction rights to his work.

Astman's Ektacolor mural is a glimpse through red curtains into the mythological heavens, bright with classically depicted constellations. Maggs chose to photograph skier Ken Read, crouching on the top of the slope, for his striking design.

The Olympic Arts Festival, a showcase of Canadian and international talent, will open Jan. 23, 1988 in Calgary and will continue for five weeks. The XV Olympic Winter Games will take place Feb. 13-28, 1988 in the Calgary area.

No arrangements have been made for the disposal of the billboards after the Olympics, Keenan said.

Arnaud Maggs (left), Barbara Astman and Alex Colville frolic in the snow yesterday after helping to unveil an Art on Billboards project that's part of Calgary's Olympic Arts Festival.

