THE TREATMENT OF NATURE
IN CANADIAN ART
SINCE THE TIME OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN

by

Doreen Elizabeth Walker
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Department of Fine Arts

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver 8, Canada

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ABSTRACT

It is the purpose of this paper to examine the continuing manifestations of nature in Canadian art since the time of the Group of Seven. It has been the writer's endeavour to handle the available material in such a manner as to show not only the persistence of the nature theme, but also to show that the changes in the expression of this theme have followed basically the general trends in Canadian art since that time. Whenever possible, relevant comments by critics and writers of the period have been included so that works may be considered in the opinion of the acknowledged authorities of the day, as well as to a degree in retrospect. Pertinent comments by artists concerning their work and their attitude to art, as it relates to the general subject, are also included.

In the past fifty years Canadian artists have responded to their environment in countless ways, and many meaningful interpretations have resulted. In addition to traditional landscape expressions which reflect our most familiar conception of nature, manifestations of responses to other aspects of nature are included. Nature is thus taken, for the purposes of this paper, in a wider meaning to include a number of conceptions of the physical world and its phenomena: a number of aspects of the world not made by man.

In the opening chapter the facts concerning the establishment of the landscape tradition in Canadian art
are reviewed. There is consideration also for the ques­tion that is rarely posed, as to why the strong sense of nationalistic pride of members of the Group of Seven found all-but exclusive artistic outlet in interpretations of the rugged Canadian northland.

During the Thirties the Canadian landscape remained as the main theme of Canadian artists, and imitation of Group methods was rampant. However, in the works of some artists, it is noted that subject matter becomes more intimate and the statements more personal.

The avant-garde Montreal painters in the Forties sought to replace the prevailing obsession with landscape, with works derived from School of Paris influence. Although these artists were to spurn the prevailing devotion to typically Canadian subject matter, the presence of nature, perhaps unconsciously revealed, is apparent in many of their works.

Following the innovations in Montreal, School of Paris influences spread across Canada during the Forties and early Fifties, and many interesting landscape abstrac­tions evolved. In many instances the French 'manner' was consciously applied to the traditional Canadian 'matter'.

With the adoption of methods of the New York Abstract Expressionists, following the mid-Fifties, Canadian artists frequently expressed themselves in the form of 'gestural' landscapes. The Canadian environment is no longer the prime inspirational force in such subjective works, but there
seemed to be a resistance to eliminate all suggestion of nature. There are lingering references in many works to the once all-powerful theme, but the landscape references are most frequently general and universal, rather than specific.

A group of artists are considered who have turned from international influences and have maintained a commitment to 'realistic' art. This group have frequently combined landscape and figure in their work in order to express a meaningful human situation. Their vision is intense and their realistic approach to subject matter often borders on the surreal. When man is not depicted directly his presence is implied: landscape is a setting for a human situation.

In a totally different vein are a number of works that would seem to realize in plastic form aspects of the 'new landscape' of our time. Due to the advancement in science and technology new orders of magnitudes, both microcosmic and macrocosmic, have become part of man's visual and mental experience and have stimulated his imagination. Artists struck by the wonder and mystery of the expanded conception of nature have enriched our experience with a wealth of imagery.

In the Sixties the widening commitment towards formalism, which has been accompanied by an increasing denial of all subject matter, has taken its toll on the declining landscape tradition. In the majority of hard edge works the connection with nature is emphatically broken. On occasion, however, it is noted, that with the employment of certain
elements, landscape overtones are to a degree apparent - perhaps as a result of a nostalgic tendency on the part of a romantic viewer, or as a lingering attachment towards landscape on the part of the artist. In either case the approach is subjective, stemming from a committed habit of association.

A number of significant artists of the Sixties have consciously retained an association with nature. These artists are primarily involved with new attitudes and techniques, and have brought about drastic changes in the presentation of traditional landscape subject matter. Theirs is not so much 'new landscape' as landscape transformed.

Frequently these statements are three-dimensional, and seemingly reflect a desire on the part of artists to achieve a more concrete form of expression in line with a present trend toward literalism in art. Essentially this group of artists have concentrated on the details of traditional landscape - interpretations of clouds, waves, earth, streams, etc. They have approached these details, however, in a universal sense as idea, rather than as specific topographical detail. It is this general, non-specific approach that would seem to hold meaning for these artists.

A climax in the involvement of artist with 'actual materials', 'actual colour' and 'actual space' is seen in the current involvement on the part of some artists in Earthworks. Here the elements of the natural world provide not only the inspiration, but the media as well. In Canada
this is not a major trend, but merely one further manifestation of interest in the world of nature. It is suggested that this urge to create in outdoor natural situations is surely, perhaps unconsciously, a form of reaction against the existing technologically-dominated urban society.

The Canadian landscape tradition as established by the Group of Seven has not flourished since the Forties, but within the broader nature theme (of which landscape is a part), many artists have found a powerful motivating force.

Undoubtedly the world of nature will continue to be a deeply influential factor for a number of artists in the future as they endeavour to come to terms with ever-changing world situations. The forms their expressions will take, however, one could not possibly predict.
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Preface

We are surrounded with things which we have not made and which have a life and structure different from our own: trees, flowers, grasses, rivers, hills, clouds. For centuries they have inspired us with curiosity and awe. They have been objects of delight. We have recreated them in our imaginations to reflect our moods. And we have come to think of them as contributing to an idea which we have called nature.

The most familiar concept of nature that painting has dealt with is traditional landscape. It is a view, in all its variety, which reflects man's image of the environment as unified, whole and comprehensible, and nature a particular aspect of the total space he occupies and understands.

For the purposes of this paper, nature is taken in a wider meaning to include additional conceptions of the physical world and its phenomena - other aspects of the environment not made by man - even when a complete and coherent view, as landscape, is not possible. Thus conceptions of nature as fragmented and discontinuous, for example, - or reduced or extended as a result of the insights of modern science and technology, for example,

1Kenneth Clark, Landscape Into Art, p. 1.
will be included. A number of artists it would seem have endeavoured to give form to these additional conceptions and experiences of the natural world. Such works will be considered along with the more traditional interpretations of the nature theme.
CHAPTER I

THE GROUP OF SEVEN

AND THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LANDSCAPE TRADITION

... It was a great theme, profoundly felt and grandly expressed.

The story of the impact of the Canadian landscape on a group of painters living in Toronto just prior to World War One is now legend. Their response to the natural grandeur of the northland was a profound one based as it was on a genuine love, a patriotic devotion, and a deeply held philosophical attitude. They felt a great sense of pride and awe at the vastness and magnificence of their chosen region of Canada, and were filled with a sense of moral purpose to capture something of these qualities in their paintings. To them the very essence of Canada was to be found in the rugged, wild, undomesticated, unpopulated landscape of Ontario: this landscape typified the very spirit they felt was Canadian.

Tom Thomson, whose work was "the great inspirational force" of these painters, died in 1917 before they were to exhibit publicly as a group. It was not until after the war, in May of 1920, that such an exhibition was held. At that time the seven artists taking part in the show: J. E. H. MacDonald, Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, F. H. Varley, Franklin Carmichael, Arthur Lismer, and F. H. Johnston, acknowledged that they shared "a like vision concerning Art in Canada." It was from this time that these artists were to be known as the Group of Seven, although their movement had been generating for some ten years.
Something of the Group's enthusiasm and crusading spirit is expressed in the catalogue of their 1922 exhibition: "Art must take the road and risk all for the glory of a great adventure." Their great 'adventure' is an exciting, meaningful, and influential episode in the story of Canadian painting. With incomparable spirit the Group of Seven established the landscape tradition in Canadian art, and their movement came to receive the designation "National Movement." Since their impulse was sufficiently powerful to animate not only their own generation but many artists in the succeeding generation as well, it seems relevant to consider the basis for the all but exclusive preoccupation of these artists with landscape painting.

The motivating forces behind the art of the Group of Seven came from several sources, but each source led to the members finding artistic expression in this theme. Their personal predilections toward landscape painting, the collective spirit of their association, their sense of nationalistic pride, and their inherited philosophical attitudes concerning nature in general, all found artistic outlet in versions of the rugged Canadian northland.

There was from the beginning with the members of the Group, a personal affinity towards the painting of landscape. Lawren Harris, shortly after his return from
studying abroad in 1910 'discovered' MacDonald through an exhibition of unique landscape sketches. "His early sketches were, in my view, the first paintings done in Ontario that contained the authentic character of the countryside."\(^5\) Tom Thomson had painted landscapes as a hobby since 1905, although it was not until his northern trips from 1911 that his power became apparent. Harris recalls meeting Thomson and seeing some of these sketches that were "rather dull in colour but smouldering with the character and spirit of the North."\(^6\) A. Y. Jackson's *The Edge of the Maple Wood*, 1910,\(^7\) showed him to be a landscape painter of conviction and prompted the invitation for him to come to Toronto from Montreal and occupy a place in the newly erected Studio Building. Arthur Lismer sketched with Thomson shortly after his arrival in Canada from England in 1912.

The personal and natural attachment of these men to landscape painting became a collective and consciously held conviction through the communal association that developed between them. To paint the land in a manner which would convey what they felt to be its essential character, came to be their common purpose, and gave strength and meaning to their collective spirit.

As early as 1910 Harris and MacDonald discussed the possibility of art expression which should embody
the moods and character and spirit of the country."

In 1912 they visited an exhibition of modern Scandinavian painting at the Albright Gallery in Buffalo. They were inspired by their visit to this show which exhibited works by northern artists in a bold, vigorous style which seemed to embody an authentic experience of the north.

As a result of this experience in Buffalo our enthusiasm increased. Our purpose became clarified and our conviction reinforced. From that time on we knew that we were at the beginning of an all-engrossing adventure.

The idea of an 'all-engrossing adventure' was inextricably united with the sense of patriotic fervour that animated the Group's mission - a reflection of the strong nationalistic feelings that were abroad in Canada at the time. It was these artists who had gathered in Toronto who were consciously to attempt a distinctive style of painting, to give the artistic expression to the newly awakened national consciousness.

Of course the immediate impulse for the national movement was supplied by Canada herself. A wave of national feeling came to its climax just about 1913, the year which saw the rise of the Group of Seven. Commercial prosperity had returned after the prolonged depressions of the late nineteenth century and the atmosphere of optimism was epitomized by Laurier's famous dictum that the twentieth century was to be Canada's century.

At the time that Laurier made his optimistic statement concerning the potential opportunities in
the expanding Canada, Tom Thomson began to paint the beauty of the unexploited Canadian north. His magnificent revelation of the northland was a new conception of beauty hitherto unfound in Canadian landscape painting.

In stark contrast to traditional landscapists who depicted the quiet, lush, and very English pastoral quality of southern Ontario... Thomson painted wracked pine trees, bare rock, log booms, canoes, all of the paraphernalia of what hitherto had been known as the barren North, a country to be endured but not to be enjoyed.11

Fellow members of the commercial art firm Grip Ltd., and Lawren Harris, soon followed Thomson to the woods on weekends and holidays. At first the sketching trips were to the countryside around Toronto. By 1913 the artists were sketching in Northern Ontario and the shores of Georgian Bay - in time they were to take in the whole of Canada.

We ranged the country from the city to the countryside, to the near and then the far North, from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, always seeking those parts of a district where the character reached its summation. We canoed and camped, lived and painted, driven by an inner urge to portray the various parts of the country we visited in their variety of themes and moods and symbolic meanings.12

In their determination to convey something that was peculiarly 'Canadian' in their art, the Group of Seven eschewed older European styles. They believed
that Canadian art to that time had been portrayed only as an "artistic extension of Europe." The style they evolved, however, was replete with European influences, based as it was on aspects of late nineteenth century and turn of the century European modes. Elements of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism and Art Nouveau styles are evident in their works.

From an art-historical point of view, the most interesting thing about the story of the Group, and of Thomson, is the way in which art and nature so happily coalesced. As young artists working in the commercial studios during the early 1900s, obviously they were deeply influenced by art nouveau. The sinuosities of the art nouveau style perfectly fitted the depiction of twisted pine trees and the rolling, graceful contours of pre-Cambrian rock. Furthermore, the almost incredible vividness and richness of the colour of autumn foliage of northern Ontario was its own justification for the Group's use of a fauve palette.

Jugendstil, a northern European version of Art Nouveau, also provided influence in the formation of the style following the visit of MacDonald and Harris to Buffalo. Thomson too was influenced by Scandinavian art through art periodicals available in Toronto at the time. By assimilating these outside influences, the Group developed a formal means (within their own individual styles) to make their interpretations of Canada's northland. The style they evolved was boldly
patterned, heavily outlined, and richly coloured.

Their sense of patriotism grew as they explored the vast northland: they became to regard the north as symbolic of the spirit of Canada, and this fired their creative energies as it fired their sense of nationalism. The love of landscape and the love of Canada merged as one.

It is perhaps fitting to pose the seemingly relevant (but rarely asked) question as to why the Group should have found the embodiment of their patriotism so exclusively in the landscape. John Alford suggests that in the landscape painting of the Group of Seven, one finds a rebirth of a nineteenth century European romantic naturalism.15

During the nineteenth century nature was exalted as a source of goodness, nobility and a reflection of the divine. Much of the poetry and most of the landscape painting reflected this view:

... there was something in trees, flowers, meadows and mountains which was so full of the divine that if it were contemplated with sufficient devotion it would reveal a moral and spiritual quality of its own.16

Faith in nature assumed the significance of a form of religion, and landscape painting thus became an act of faith.
The art of Canada from the mid-nineteenth century reflected that of the romantic naturalism of early nineteenth century Europe, as the artists of Canada were cultural inheritors of this style.

. . . the romantic naturalism of England, France, and Germany, became the romantic naturalism of Canada, because at the moment when Canadian artists emerged as a class distinct from travelling commentators and native traditional craftsmen, romantic naturalism was the dominant imaginative mode of Western civilization, of which Canada is a younger son.17

The nineteenth century Canadian artists inherited this style although the economic and sociological conditions that gave birth to the style in Europe were not a part of Canada at that time.

At the time of the emergence of the Group of Seven, the philosophical attitude of European romantic naturalism could be genuinely reborn in Canada. Canada was adapting to economic and sociological conditions that in many ways resembled those of early nineteenth century Europe. The Group's enthusiastic praise of nature, it is suggested, was reaction in part to the growing industrialization and urbanization of Canada. Nature, perhaps unconsciously, was 'extolled in implied contrast' to this.

The stimulus to nineteenth-century romantic naturalism, . . . was, it will be remembered, a reaction from the sordidness of early urban industrialism. The vastness and spiritual self-realization of nature was
extolled in implied contrast with
the littleness and self-frustration
of civilization. It is difficult
not to see in the birth of a native
Canadian-nature-romanticism the same
implication, and the same reflection
on developing economic and social
conditions in Canada.18

The preoccupation of the Group of Seven with
landscape painting is thus related significantly to
circumstances that existed in Canada at the time. An
inherited 'Wordsworthian' attitude is considered at
the root of their love of nature. Thus, it could be
argued, it was characteristic of their beliefs, and
appropriate to their time, that they did find the embodi­
ment of their Canadianism in the landscape to which they
were drawn.

Their deeply held beliefs were a powerful moti­
vating force in their art and gave cohesion to their
group, and inevitably resulted in their group effort,
(despite magnificent individual epic monuments), being
stronger than that of the individuals that composed it.
It also makes meaningful the strong unity of their style.

The Group of Seven which had dispersed during
the War reassembled in 1919 and immediately recaptured
their pre-War enthusiasm. Although each group member
had developed his own individual manner within the
characteristic style of the Group, at the time of this
first exhibition in May, 1920, a marked degree of unity in style is noted. For example, the members made particular use of the compositional device of a lone tree motif silhouetted against the sea, hills and distant sky—a theme immortalized by Thomson in his famous *The Jack Pine*, 1916 - 17. In the 1921 exhibition, two of the Group's best known of the canvases using this theme appeared: *September Gale*, by Arthur Lismer, and *Squally Weather, Georgian Bay* by Fred Varley. The abuse received from critics during these early 1920s only served to spur the members on: "It was all grist," says Harris, "to the creative mill." 

During the early 1920s the Group had some of their most successful sketching trips, particularly to the Algoma district. Large versions made from the sketches of these trips are considered among the most memorable works of the Group: MacDonald's *Solemn Land*, and *Mist Fantasy*; Jackson's *October Morning, Algoma*; and Arthur Lismer's *Isle of Spruce*. During the late twenties the last of the "Good Companions" sketching trips were held, when some of the members went to the north shore of Lake Superior.

Slowly, however, during the 1920s the Group lost its former cohesive power. Members became scattered as a result of changing interests, and individual characteristics, although present from the start, became more
pronounced. Members turned to more personal ways as the strong binding forces fell away. Some of the artists had reached their peak within the Group experience, but others were to enlarge their vision in new forms of expression.

By the third decade of the twentieth century nationalism was no longer a primary motivating force for art. Canada's identity was established. Industrialization was sufficiently widespread to be considered, perhaps, an inevitable, and not unacceptable, sign of progress. The country was changing and the Group's moment in history had passed.

The Group of Seven exhibited together until 1932. As others were attracted to the Movement the members of the Group realized the need of the formation of a larger body. Thus in 1933 the art society known as the Canadian Group of Painters was formed.

The achievement of the Group had been remarkable but their days of pioneering adventurers were over. Their works were not all masterpieces, but they left for future inheritance a high level of achievement. With the eventual acceptance of their magnificent monuments of Canada's northland, the Group gained an audience for 'modern' art for the first time in Canada.

These artists had focused exclusively on the rugged land, and because it held such meaning for them
they were inspired with creativity. "... It was a great theme, profoundly felt and grandly expressed." Other forces were to come to shape the nation's art, but not until a host of followers pursued the landscape theme.

The enthusiastic response of the Group of Seven to the Canadian landscape was indeed contagious. The Group attracted many eager supporters, who followed their lead not only in choice of theme, but frequently in manner of depiction, bringing about widespread imitation of the Group's style.
CHAPTER II

CONTEMPORARIES AND FOLLOWERS

OF THE GROUP OF SEVEN

... That which had been original became patterned and repetitive - that which had been sharp and stimulating became dull and obvious.

Many of the Group of Seven's followers were competent artists who genuinely found inspiration in the land, but their manner of seeing was predicated on the prevailing landscape style with its characteristic imposition of pattern. Yvonne McKague Housser (1898 - ), was such an artist. *Rossport, Lake Superior*, c. 1930 (fig. 1) bears the stamp of Group of Seven influence in the bold patterning of clouds and islands, and in the rolling foreground of the lakeshore; something new is noted however with the inclusion of the effects of settlement. Isabel McLaughlin also adhered to Group of Seven methods. In *Bonita Lake, Algonquin Park*, 1933 (fig. 2) there is a strong sense of patterning seen particularly in the rendering of the foliage.

Illingworth Kerr (1905 - ), took the Toronto stylistic influence to the prairies, and there applied the rhythmic roll to his renderings of that region. He saw the prairie scene through Group of Seven eyes (fig. 3), and responded with their style and something of their spirit.

It is perhaps significant that in Montreal it was mainly the English-Canadian artists who surrendered to the landscape in the manner of the Group of Seven. Mabel May (1884 - ), (fig. 4) and Anne Savage


(1897 - ), (fig. 5), members of the Beaver Hall Group, were enthusiastic landscape painters whose works show the familiar stylistic influences.

Clarence Gagnon (1881 - 1942) and Albert Robinson (1881 - 1956), also members of the Beaver Hall Group, depended more for stylistic influence on the tradition of James Wilson Morrice than on the Group of Seven. Robinson did, however, paint with Jackson during the Twenties and his works of this period show something of this influence.²

It was impossible for the immediate followers of the Group to sustain the fervour of the originators, and imitation among lesser artists became rampant. The remarkable achievements of the Group led to the establishment of an academic formula for landscape painting. In the work of an artist like Thomas Beament (1898 - ), one sees the imitation bereft of inspiration. The Mountain, (fig. 6) shows the vast view and the lone foreground tree, but there is little vigour in the statement. It is but a 'pale reflection' of what had been so forceful.

The works of William Percey Weston (1879 - ) are further "pale reflections".³ In Canada's Western Ramparts, (fig. 7) the power of the originators is gone. "... That which had been original became patterned and
4. H. Mabel May.  
Melting Snow, c. 1925.  
30 x 40\(\frac{3}{4}\) inches.

5. Anne Savage.  
Saint-Saveur,  
c. 1936.  
30 3/4 x 40 inches.

The Mountain, 1925.  
36\(\frac{3}{4}\) x 41 5/8 inches.

Canada's Western Ramparts, c. 1931.  
36 x 40 inches.
repetitive - that which had been sharp and stimulating became dull and obvious."

With the absence of the deeply motivating forces which had animated the Group of Seven, the cohesive quality of the Group's activity could not be sustained, even if desired, within the larger body - the Canadian Group of Painters. During the Thirties artists turned to their more immediate surroundings, no longer feeling the urge to act as propagandists. Subject matter became more intimate and statements more personal; with some there is a noted concern for formal qualities. The romantic attitude to nature lingered in these more personal expressions, but the statement of the larger ethos has disappeared. Canada's increasing domesticization and urbanization were not only acceptable as fact, but were considered as a source for art. The landscape theme, however, remained the main preoccupation.

L. L. Fitzgerald (1890 - 1956) was a member of the Group of Seven in its last year, but neither his style nor his choice of subject matter show Group influence. His preference was for a quieter statement and a more domesticated view.

Fitzgerald nurtured a deep love for the prairies
where he lived and worked, but it was not the broad and empty expanse to which he was drawn. He chose rather intimate views of his immediate environment in the Winnipeg area, and responded to this chosen area in a unique way.

Whether he was painting details of prairie landscapes, Winnipeg houses and yards, or still lifes, Fitzgerald was primarily a formalist abstracting from nature in order to make a formal statement about the subject. His simplification process, enacted with precision, gives to his work an austerity and restraint - a quality of rarified essence.

He once wrote to Robert Ayre:

Nature is all so confusing at the beginning and only is sorted out into some kind of order by steady plodding.  

In Landscape with Trees, a charcoal drawing, 1934, he has seen in a commonplace view a formal, classic quality which he has sensitively recorded. The lyrical quality of the graceful, flowing tree forms has been captured and the result is an exquisite interpretation of this small section of a Manitoba scene.

A bolder patterning of tree forms is seen against austere frame houses in the Fitzgerald neighbourhood in his well-known Doc Snider's House, 1931, (fig. 8).


Carl Schaefer (1903 - ) chose for his subject matter a rural setting, stating that he "always wanted to paint first those things which he knew best." He turned to the scene which he had known from his birth - the area of Hanover, Ontario. Schaefer has sought continually for valid means to express the unique aspects of this region. In Stubble Fields, (fig 9) of 1937, Schaefer captures something of the land's breadth and its gentle, but expansive roll. He has infused this work with a subjective quality in his use of tonal qualities, so that the Ontario countryside is faithfully, yet personally, represented. Schaefer has also depicted the small farms, the woodlots, the rail fences (fig. 10), the small school houses, and the rural cemeteries.

In Lumber Mill, c. 1937, Will Ogilivie (1901 - ) reflects the acceptance of the changing countryside as fitting landscape subject matter. Ogilvie, however, is best known for his intimate scenes of nature rendered in a poetic manner. In his works of the post war period, one finds the culmination of his earlier beginnings in landscape. In these delicate works the lightness of the water colour medium is combined with the precision of the drawn line: "that penetrating line, like a scalpel, seeking out truth and the vital inner life." Summer Afternoon, 1956, (fig. 11)

is an intimate landscape scene of reeds and rock forms revealing Ogilive's lyrical response to landscape.

Charles Comfort (1900 - ) painted landscapes of the St. Lawrence and Saguenay Rivers during the Thirties which showed a marked degree of simplification. His method of abstraction - a "brittle stylization" - resulted in landscapes of great clarity and strength.

Comfort was frequently drawn to industrial scenes. In *Smelter Stacks, Copper Cliff*, (fig. 12) his methods of simplification and the precision of his forms add power to the industrial scene.

*Split Rock Island* is a more intimate view, but shows Comfort's characteristic tendency towards simplification. The artist has been seized by the eroded patterning of the barren rocks, and his interpretation is an unusual fragment of this isolated area of Georgian Bay.

Paraskeva Clark (1898 - ) gave herself wholeheartedly to the Ontario scene from the time she arrived from Europe in 1931. Frequently she responded to the intimate surroundings of her home, or the woodlands of the neighbouring countryside. *The Pink Cloud*, 1937, (fig. 13) betrays her earlier
13. Paraskeva Clark. The Pink Cloud, 1937. 20 x 24 inches.


European training in the sensitive colouring and the firmness of the compositional design.

Two of the major landscape statements of all time in Canada were made by contemporaries of the Group of Seven: David Milne, (1882 - 1953), and Emily Carr, (1871 - 1945). Each made an intensely personal (and diametrically opposed), interpretation of landscape, and each has contributed immeasurable to the history of Canadian art.

David Milne's work is stylistically isolated. Milne, one of Canada's most unique and sensitive artists, was completely untouched by the Group of Seven's feeling of urgency towards landscape painting. His response to the world was an aesthetic one, and he viewed the Canadian landscape with a "quiet analytic eye."  

David Milne was related to the international movements before the First World War, yet his extremely personal form of art is his own, and difficult to classify with any school or movement. By 1915, in the Adirondack's, Milne had evolved an intensely individual and delicate style.

It wasn't until 1928 at the height of the Group of Seven influence that Milne returned perm-
anently to live in Canada. For many years he sought seclusion in isolated areas on the shores of Lake Timagami and in the woods of Muskoka. It mattered little, really, for Milne where he lived or worked, as subject matter counted for little. His work, unlike that of the Group of Seven, is almost free of associ­
ative overtones.

The subjects Milne chose for his work would generally be familiar ones, but his particular manner of working required the inspiration of a sudden moment of vision. It was the immediacy of this moment of in­
sight which he would endeavour to capture in his work.

Alan Jarvis recalls Milne's description of his working procedure:

I recollect Milne's own description of being so 'possessed' by a pattern of maple trees and stumps in the snow which he had seen along the trail from his cabin at Six Mile Lake to the Big Chute, a path which he must have traversed hundreds of times, that he was compelled to pause and scribble with mittened hands a pencil notation which would serve him as the inspiration for days of passionate painting in the cabin, attempting to realize this vision in concrete form. 14

To Milne the artist's problem was that of expressing the shock value of inspiration in line, colour and form. The thing that 'makes' a picture is the thing that 'makes' dynamite - compression. It isn't a fire in the grass; it is an explosion. Everything must hit at once.
Milne developed imaginative and sensitive methods in order to attain this sense of compression: he achieved magic results with a variety of media.

In the 1920s Milne found that his vision was adaptable to colour-drypoint. *Still Water and Fish*, 1941, shows the imaginative results he achieved with this method. His sparing use of line and colour, and his extremely delicate touch yield a landscape of incomparable sensitivity.

In 1937 Milne turned again to water colour (a medium he used before his return to Canada), and achieved enchanting effects. *Hill Country*, 1943, and *Shore Clearing, Blue Water*, 1952, (figs. 14 & 15) have the free flowing quality of his water colours from this time. With the visual impact from his touches of colour, his sparing use of line, his limited brushwork, his enchanting bare areas, these works breathe with the feeling of the moment.

In an explanation of his use of broken line, and interrupted calligraphy Milne has written:

"This line and the scratchy sparse laying on of colour come in part from a feeling that I often am aware of, a desire to set things down with as little expenditure of aesthetic means as possible, to just touch the canvas or paper, even to just wish them on without any material agent, if that were possible."

To look at a work of Milne is to be struck by
the wonder of his aesthetic response to the world.

David Silcox in a recent appraisal of his work stated:

He created works of international importance which one would not describe so much as being 'of' Canada but simply 'from' Canada.18

It was during the Thirties that Emily Carr produced the bulk of her powerful landscape expressions, which were to add so immeasurably to Canada's landscape tradition. Her response to the region was a profound one - the result of a deep inner urgency.

The Pacific coast landscape in all its forms and moods is made for modern expression in paint. Its fullness of growth, its skies, and hills, mountains, islands and headlands have a plastic amplitude, design and pattern such as exists in no other part of the continent. It is another world from all the land east of the Great Divide. Emily Carr was the first to discover this. It involved her in a conscious struggle to achieve a technique that would match the great, new motifs of British Columbia.19

In 1927 Emily Carr came in contact with the Group of Seven after a prolonged period of unproductivity and it was this contact that provided the necessary stimulus for a period of renewed creativity that was to last until the final years of her life. She had found that these men shared her ardent Canadianism and it encouraged her to try again to express in paint her feelings for her own particular part of Canada. She dramatically recorded in her
diary the impact of this meeting.

"Oh, God, what have I seen, where have I been? Something has spoken to the very soul of me... Oh, these men, this Group of Seven! What have they created? A world stripped of earthiness, shorn of petty details, purified." 20

Emily Carr turned from predominantly Indian themes to 'forestscapes' and found a means of painting something she felt profoundly about life. Through her intimate knowledge of the Indians she had come to see what the Indian art stood for in relation to their environment. She, too, found a forbidding power in nature and instinctively sought to give it form in her powerful paintings of the great rain forest.

She was deeply aware of an overwhelming force at work in nature that involved a continuous process of growth, decay, and reproduction. She saw this as something so strong that it was malignant in its power of growth. Her style evolved as a means of expressing this force she felt to be all-present in nature.

In A Young Tree, c. 1932, (fig. 16) one of the great brooding works of the Thirties, all is simplified to the few forms that carry her idea. She interpreted this great life force with her solid, spiralling, enclosing forms, her deep, heavy colours, and her
16. Emily Carr. A Young Tree, c. 1932. 42 x 47 inches.
expressive use of light. With these means she boldly expressed her response to nature.

During the latter part of her life, Emily Carr interprets nature as a great moving force, but it takes a new form. Her paintings are neither so solid nor so weighted in mood. In the application of the brushstrokes, there is a new intensity; in the vibrant, rhythmic swirls - a freedom and expansiveness. In *Stumps and Sky*, n.d. the brushstrokes alone are the form, and it is in the frenzy of their movement that the growth and change in nature is conveyed. There is a whirling vortex of light and movement. "What she discovers by dissolving form is not a projection of her own subjective feelings, but the inner nature not only of what she is depicting, but of life itself."22

Emily Carr found in nature a revelation of the whole life cycle, and she sought till the end of her life valid means of expression. Her theme is unmistakably British Columbia, and yet with the bigness of her vision, she transcends the realm of regional painting and makes a universal statement.

Goodridge Roberts (1904 - ) is an important transitional figure between the followers of the Group of Seven and the innovational Montreal artists of the Forties.23 Roberts acknowledges a life-long commitment
to nature and speaks of a "... sensation of identi-
ification with my surroundings and the consequent urge
to express this identification." But, he has stated
also that his intention as an artist has involved
much more than expressing his response to the world
of nature.

In fact, to my mind the most important
thing about good painting is the power it
has of giving us insight into the man who
made it, of bringing us into touch with
mankind and so of teaching us to know our-
selves.

From his Montreal background Roberts acquired
a concern for a painterly approach to art. As a student
in New York in the Twenties he learned "the importance
of seeking for the true relationships of all shapes
and colours to one another and to the whole structure
of the design." From the beginning he applied these
painterly concepts to his renderings of nature.

It was in the field of watercolour that Roberts
first attracted attention as a landscape painter. His
reflections of his work of 1932 clearly reveal his
unique approach:

I was fortunate that summer in that I
experienced almost everywhere I looked
a very clear impression of the character
of the countryside and discovered unhesi-
tatingly what seemed to me suitable means
of giving expression to this character in
my chosen medium - for translating the
hillsides, the trees, the fields, and the sky above them, which all added up to this particular quality for me, into adequate symbols in terms of watercolours on paper. Each shape and colour had to assert its individual meaning up to the limit imposed on it by the meaning of the whole. (Italics mine.)

In 1938 he began to work in oil, and subsequently produced lyrical landscapes in both media. His direct, free, approach to landscape has remained virtually unchanged over the years.

Goodridge Roberts allows himself a narrow range, both in form and colour, but within his restricted means he achieves an eloquence. His approach to landscape is unspectacular. His scenes are lacking in event, (fig. 17) but there is a beautiful play of brushwork which gives life and vitality to the work. He varies the direction of the strokes with subtlety, creating minor areas of meshing, but these areas are basically integrated to give an overall sense of horizontal movement. The horizontal emphasis lends a quietness of mood, as does his restricted use of colour. The formula is simple, but a fascinating fabric emerges.

Roberts' choice of scene is also quiet - frequently the uneventful countryside of Eastern Townships. It is with his lively use of brushwork that he imbues his work with richness, and captures
47 3/4 x 59 3/4 inches.
essential aspects of the land. And with his open-ended compositions he conveys a feeling of continuous flow, which suggests not breadth alone, but elemental forces.

In *Lake Massawippi, Eastern Townships*, 1962, he retains the freshness of his vision. There is a feeling of excitement with its greater size, its greater contrasts, and its greater freedom, but his style remains essentially the same. "... Over the years Roberts has made such countryside his own, and through his love of it, made it ours as well." His landscapes are extremely personal interpretations of his environment: interpretations through which he was able, as Emily Carr, to enlarge the vision of the Group.
CHAPTER III

MONTREAL INNOVATORS OF THE FORTIES: SCHOOL OF PARIS INFLUENCE

... In so far as we set out to produce a "Canadian Art" we will not have art in Canada. Our red sleighs will not accomplish it for us. Does Braque have to introduce a bottle of French wine into a still life to express something of the French spirit in his painting? And does Picasso paint bullfights to have Spain in his art? An art which attains a certain level of perfection always universalizes its expression.

In Montreal during the early Forties there was an effective move against the overwhelming predominance of 'Canadian' subject matter in Canadian art.

French speaking artists, with memories of their own great tradition, were to revolt against both the manner and the matter of the Canadian landscape school, and to produce an art no less dynamic, and a good deal more subtle.  

McInnes further states:

Their work also coincided with a possibly sub-conscious recognition among Canadians made articulate by their artists that the nation no longer had to insist on the vigorous independence through an exclusive devotion to typically Canadian subject matter. The battle had been fought years earlier. 2

As early as 1931, John Lyman, 3 on his return from studying in France, had set about to campaign for a more painterly approach to art. He scoffed at the prevailing landscape tradition in Canada: "This talk of the Canadian scene has gone sour; the real Canadian scene is in the consciousness of Canadian painters, whatever the object of their thought." 4

Group of Seven subject matter and methods had never been as enthusiastically accepted in Montreal, as in the Toronto area, but it was not until the 1940s that an effective group opposition evolved.
The eventual impact of this movement on Canadian art was to be considerable.

It is with the return of Alfred Pellan to Montreal in 1940 that the full impact of the School of Paris was brought to the Montreal art scene. He convinced the young painters that they should found their own school of painting based on the methods of the School of Paris. The moment was right\(^5\) and "Almost overnight painting in Canada came up to date by European standards."\(^6\)

Jacques de Tonnancour, in an article on Alfred Pellan stated that it was Pellan's show held in the Art Association of Montreal in 1942 that can be considered as the birth date of the progressive thinking of most contemporary French-Canadian painters.

In these works, the intrinsic powers and qualities of painting were released freely without being tied to depiction, narration or any other restrictive form of expression so often imposed upon painting - almost universally imposed upon Canadian painting.\(^7\)

The avant-garde Montreal painters sought to replace the prevailing obsession with nationalistic subject matter with works derived from School of Paris methods. Geography and patriotism were dispensed with in their search for universal qualities. It was through aesthetic means they wished to make their appeal. They
acknowledged the painterly tradition of Morrice and Lyman, and looked to Picasso, Matisse and the Surrealists as their main source of influence.

In 1947, Paul Dumas, writing on artists and trends in Montreal observed:

What links them together..., is a common effort to create original and sincere art by expressing their intimate self and their intuitive conception of life through the medium of line, colour and form. That this faith is pure art should be shared at the same moment by so many artists is a strikingly new phenomenon in a country that has been accustomed mainly to derivative and regionalist art. Here lies, in our estimation, the original contribution of the Montreal group of painters to the advancement of Canadian painting.8

Although these artists were to spurn the prevailing devotion to typically Canadian subject matter, it is interesting to note how frequently the presence of nature is apparent, or suggested in their art. In the works of Alfred Pellan, (1906 - ), Paul-Emile Borduas, (1905 - 1960), and Jean-Paul Riopelle, (1923 - ), the most outstanding of the Montreal artists, one discovers responses, perhaps unconscious, to the natural world, stemming from an instinctive awareness of its presence. Jacques de Tonnancour, (1917 - ), a fourth to be considered, is consciously a landscape painter, but is like the others,
primarily a stylist in his approach to art. With all, the 'manner' is stressed in preference to the 'matter', in keeping with French tradition.

Alfred Pellan's art reveals in many instances an instinctive concern for the natural world. It is significant that his earliest paintings were based on nature. In some of his later surrealist works this interest in nature is retained perhaps unconsciously.

Alfred Pellan had been associated with Miro in Paris, and was primarily a Surrealist. His sophisticated form of art - an adaptation of Cubism and Surrealism - acted as a pacesetter for free experimentation in Montreal.

It is indicative of the state of art in Canada in 1940 to note that Pellan, shortly after his return to Montreal, turned to landscape painting, "as the thing to do in Canada." In the summer of 1941 he went to the lower St. Lawrence in Charlevoix County to draw and paint. His landscapes, however, were contrary to the established image of the Quebec scene: he adopted the "backyard approach."

Pellan was also involved for a short while in other forms of representational painting. He was commissioned to do two mural panels for the Canadian Embassy in Rio de Janiero. In these panels he depicted,
in a representational manner, elements of the life and landscape of Canada.

It is, however, with his impressive surrealist canvases - in the works which reveal the full impact of his Parisian experience - that one finds Pellan's indirect, but absorbing, fascination with the world of nature.

Floraison, 1952, presents a powerful interpretation of nature. The life force of man is symbolically presented in the depiction of the blossoming of a flower, in its strange landscape setting. In strident colour and powerful form, he reveals the life cycle of nature with the growth and bursting of the seed, the plant's forceful thrust through the firm ground, the blossoming of the flower, and the inevitable return to seed again.

It is with Pellan's Jardin series of 1958, made while on a Canada Council grant, that his deep fascination with nature is most exquisitely revealed. He imaginatively transforms plant forms into "fantasy gardens of richness and splendour." Recognizable flowers are juxtaposed with unrecognizable forms - which become flowers. They are superbly decorative pieces that show his superb ability as draughtsman and his delightful sense of colouring. Considering
a work such as Jardin Jaune, (fig. 18), c. 1952, Robert has stated:

Rarely has the brush contained so much poetry; rarely has the light seemed so subtle, the composition so elegant, and the skill so great. These gardens have a dimension that is almost solemn.  

A distinctly different form of awareness of the natural world is revealed in the intensely introspective work of Paul-Émile Borduas. Borduas' art was to spring from the depths of his own inner world, but something of the outer world would remain.

But man takes in the landscape not only by the teleceptive eye, but by many contact senses. He feels the touch of the wavering breeze at the root of every hair of his skin, . . .  

It was in the late Thirties that Borduas became familiar with the writings of André Breton and his Surrealist theories. He responded to the concept of psychic automatism as a means of personal liberation in art. Borduas felt that something fresh in artistic expression could be achieved through adopting purely intuitive means of creation, and he wholeheartedly adopted this spontaneous means.

Subject matter was completely eliminated from Borduas' art in his gouaches of 1942. Cimetière Marin, is non-objective but contains a strong suggestion of organic life in the turning and twisting of the forms,
and in the throbbing vitality of the deep sensuous colour. Subject matter was eliminated but "By a miracle, nature was still present in the painting..."¹⁹

Plongeon au Passage, 1951,²⁰ is also filled with natural references. An atmospheric quality and a sense of flickering movement in this non-objective work, suggest a kind of skyscape. There is a quivering, trembling sensation from the intuitive markings of the palette knife on the canvas.

Sous le Vent de l'Île, c. 1948, (fig. 19) shows more clearly Borduas' retention of landscape elements in his automatic process of creation.²¹ It is a romantic, lyrical landscape-fantasy. Glowing colours and flickering forms appear as life against the sombre island ground.

Borduas was in New York in the early fifties and was in contact with the Abstract Expressionists there. It was during this time in New York that the remarkable light appeared in his art. In Froufrou Aigu, 1955, (fig. 20) dark splintered forms are seen against a dazzling field of light. One feels these forms spring from his innermost sensibility - the result of deep poetic searching. Our senses are incited by the indescribably sensitive quality of the exquisite fractured forms.

In his paintings of the Fifties, Borduas' sense of affinity with nature remains. An excerpt from a letter written from New York in 1953 is interesting in this connection:

I have spent a glorious and unique summer: 40 new paintings. It is more than I did in five years in Canada. I have ignored the sea and the sand and the dunes but nevertheless, I think one can find them somewhat in my painting.  

Borduas' units of touch became larger and more solid and his colour range more limited. The atmospheric quality of his earlier work disappeared, but a strong organic quality remained. In Sea Gull, 1956, dark organic forms are set obliquely against the heavily encrusted white. There is an unmistakable presence of nature - perhaps the nature of an 'inner landscape'. Borduas believed that we are in a new era where painting initiates a conscious search of the inner world. These haunting works seem as desperate projections of this world - concrete realizations of deep felt experience that we respond to deeply through our own senses. In Borduas' introspective form of art one feels that something of the outer world remains. Nature disappears as his subject matter, but his art becomes nature again by its organic quality.

Borduas has indeed acknowledged that his works were always related to some aspect of nature. Even
when he was in New York and Paris, Evan Turner has observed, the Canadian countryside remained as a source of inspiration for his work.\textsuperscript{25}

Jean-Paul Riopelle, Canada's most famous expatriate artist, has an exuberant approach to life and art, in direct opposition to that of the late Borduas. Riopelle's art would seem to be an exaltation of the world around him, and the primary impact of his works is visual. In many a strong feeling of landscape inspiration emerges.

Riopelle is an admirable example of the influence which the structure and atmosphere of an environment exercise even on art which is known as "abstract." This response to nature is, for that matter, essential to any work of art, but it is all the more profound when it is unconscious, lying deeper than memory, all the more vital when it has shaped the imagination and the senses from the earliest days of an artist's life.\textsuperscript{26}

Until 1945 Riopelle was a conventional painter of still life and landscape. It was at this time that he came under the influence of Borduas and the Automatistes who were to provide him with a new method of working. His tachist technique at first took the form of free sweeping brushwork, but gradually he adopted a more controlled method. By the early Fifties he had developed a style that was emphatically his own.

Autriche, 1954, (fig. 21) is one of the works in his well-known style of this time. It is a superb display of brilliant surface effects built up with a multitude of crisp, prismatic-like markings that are distributed over the entire surface of the canvas. Facets of colour and light burst forth in an array of great splendour. The feeling of landscape is inescapable, but one cannot pinpoint the source. It has evolved from a wealth of exciting impressions to which the artist has responded. Franco Russoli has stated:

Colours and forms of an always-evocative landscape which reflects his temperament, dominate Riopelle's pictorial imagination and are the basic elements in his work. He finds them together in his feelings and memory; he senses them as figurative symbols of his various moods.27

Riopelle's works of the Sixties, (fig. 22) show a greater looseness of stroke and a consequent greater variety of form, but an instinctive link with landscape, in many of his works, would seem to remain. Riopelle has also turned to sculpture creating bronzes suggestive of nature forms.28

Although Riopelle has lived mainly in Paris since 1946 he is credited with many memories of his native country, and he confesses himself to a "mind and imagination saturated with Canadian images . . . ."29
Jacques de Tonnancour, (1917 - ) was an influential member of the Montreal scene of the Forties. As early as 1941 he proved to be an articulate spokesman for the avant-garde espousing the cause of freedom in the arts. He was deeply aware of the inhibiting effects from the stifling academic atmosphere at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, and the lingering regionalism in Canadian art. De Tonnancour cried out for a more universal expression. It was with prolonged study of the methods of the masters of the School of Paris that he hoped such expression might be achieved.

Let us recognize our false primitivism. Let us recognize that we cannot return directly to instinct, to nature and to a primitive state of being by forgetting everything.

. . . We have to know and pour over the masters Matisse, Derain, Braque, Picasso. We must LEARN. Art is not made after nature, but after art and with nature. 30

The influence of the School of Paris is strongly in evidence in de Tonnancour's own work of the Forties. His still life and figure paintings are unthinkable without a firm knowledge of the art of Picasso and Matisse.

The landscapes of the early Forties show an admiration of the painterly approach of Goodridge Roberts, himself an admirer of the School of Paris. These early landscapes reveal also a basic love of
nature that de Tonnancour recalls goes back to boyhood.

Ever since I can remember, there have been trees in my life. To me, they are the most mysterious symbol of the vital principle, of the creative force of nature. . .31

Following a prolific period of painting in Rio de Janeiro during 1945-46, de Tonnancour showed little interest in the painting of the Canadian landscape. From this time until 1950 he was absorbed in figure studies and still life themes. Then came a virtual cessation of creative activity. It was a prolonged period of self-analysis and self-appraisal - a time when de Tonnancour was deeply questioning the validity of his artistic methods. Only in 1955 did he return to painting, entering at this time on a period of great productivity. It was then he was to find in landscape an all-absorbing theme. This is the period of the "classic, expansive, spidery landscapes"32 for which he is best known.

De Tonnancour's landscapes betray a lifelong intimacy with the Laurentian landscape. They are not, however, spontaneous emotional outpourings from deeply held feelings toward landscape. They reveal a conscious reorganizing of nature resulting from a basic need to discover a sense of order in things. His landscapes, thus are the result of both an overwhelmingly intellectual activity and an
extremely deep sensibility. In his art it is frequently the intellectual activity - that is the search for form that precedes the expression of deep sensibility - that is the release of feeling.

The intellectual educated man is often at war with the artist to whom feeling and intuition are of paramount importance. Spontaneity and emotional insight must dominate the facile articulation of the hand. Yet in de Tonnancour's work often the stylistic, formal element leads and feeling follows. His landscapes, especially those painted between 1955-59, are full of mysterious mood and painted as they were from within - never directly from the actual subject - reflect a successful fusion of feeling and form.

In de Tonnancour's landscapes from 1955 there is a gradual progression towards simplification as incidental landscape elements are increasingly eliminated. From The Clearing, 1956, with its brisk, full and vigorous brushwork to Paysage de Juin, (c. 1957), (fig. 23) the beginning of the movement toward simplification is seen, for the view has become broader and the rendering more abbreviated. Black Spruce Country, 1957, shows further reduction of form. Sparsely rendered 'calligraphic' trees are 'drawn' against earth and sky. De Tonnancour describes the form his work was taking:

... I rediscovered this linear graphic quality in the forest and my painting developed as graphic embroidery running through space.
23. Jacques de Tonnancour. Paysage de juin, c. 1957. 31\(\frac{\text{1}}{8}\) x 43 3/4 inches.
In *La Plaine*, 1958, (fig. 24) the horizon line is lowered and the landscape details are further reduced: two horizontal planes broken only by the most meagre suggestions of bare trees and brush. One feels this is but a section of some enormous stretch of land.

It was in 1960 that de Tonnancour discovered, quite accidentally the 'squeegee' technique which provided him with the form for the direction his painting was taking. The wide strappings made possible with the squeegee aided in the elimination of extraneous form and a narrowing of the colour range: there remains an awesome stretch of earth and sky. Surely, a work as *Passage*, n.d., is a universal expression concerning stillness, immensity, and isolation.

The magnetic and engulfing charm and power of the north can in no time dissolve a man and lose him in a sea of silence and desolation. In many parts of Canada that is what we are up against, that enormous silence. This is the shape of it in Quebec.

In his paintings of this style the landscape has been abstracted to its most irreducible point. It was in 1962 that de Tonnancour turned from landscape to completely non-objective works which no longer had their starting point in the visible world.

In 1959, at the time he was producing his evocative landscapes, de Tonnancour recalled the change of attitude that had come to many artists
of the Forties. His eloquent writings sensitively express his deep feelings concerning art and its purpose:

From the moment the search for and expression of unconscious elements were recognized as the true aim of art, the simple description or even the idealization of natural forms was no longer of interest to the artist, although the public kept asking for it as a hangover from the previous centuries. Carrying the object beyond its material confines and frankly into the realm of feeling was now the ambition of the living artist. . . . that. . . . spelled the end of regionalism. . . . unless one could generalize about them and transpose them onto a more universal level.
CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL OF PARIS (AND OTHER EUROPEAN) INFLUENCES SPREAD IN CANADA:

LANDSCAPE ABSTRACTIONS

"The process of art is, in a sense, the process of metamorphosis. All art presupposes the power on the part of the artist" to make a re-combination of the facts of nature, which will have a more emphatic, enduring impact on the spectator than nature itself.

Experiments toward a purer form of art expression based on European development, had been carried out in Canada prior to the activity of the Montreal artists in the Forties. The investigations in this area, however, were not influential on a national level, and the emphasis was mainly intellectual and analytical, rather than painterly.

Lawren Harris, (1885 - ), was one of the artists connected with early experiments in non-objective art in Canada. His work in this regard is a manifestation of his own spiritual response to the world, based on philosophical searchings. One senses the mystical quality of his vision, but sees in the forms and extension of those used in his late formalized landscapes. From the severity and austerity of his Arctic canvases as in Bylot Island, c. 1930, (fig. 25) it seemed a logical step for Harris to turn to non-objective painting where the only concern was in the formal relationships.

The Arctic voyage and the pictures resulting from it virtually brought Harris' career as a landscape painter to a close and ushered in his period of non-objective art.

Abstract, c. 1942, (fig. 26) is a conception of formal order without a conscious basis in nature. One feels, however, the affinity of pyramid and cone with
northern mountain forms.\(^3\)

As early as 1926 Harris made statements that were prophetic of the direction his art would take:

Indeed no man can roam or inhabit the Canadian North without it affecting him, and the artist, because of his constant habit of awareness and his discipline in expression, is perhaps more understanding of its moods and spirit than others are. He is thus better equipped to interpret it to others, and then when he has become one with the spirit, to create living works in their own right, by using forms, colour, rhythms and moods, to make a harmonious home for the imaginative and spiritual meanings it has evoked in him. Thus the North will give him a different outlook from men in other lands.\(^4\)

School of Paris (and other European trends) spread in Canada, until by the late Forties and early Fifties, the methods of the School of Paris provided the most vital means of expression for Canadian artists. Thus for those significant artists who remained pre-occupied with landscape, one finds the interpretations frequently made through these methods. They consciously applied the French 'manner' to the traditional Canadian 'matter'. With many artists, however, an interest in formal qualities and the adoption of methods of abstraction in no way covers a deep-felt experience of the land. This would seem to be particularly true of the West Coast Canadian artists at this time, for whom the methods of abstraction served
25. Lawren Harris. Bylot Island, c. 1930. 42 1/2 x 50 1/2 inches.

to intensify their expression.

In the Vancouver area in the late Forties and early Fifties, there was a noticeable upsurge of creative activity, with the result that Vancouver was recognized as a vital centre for the arts in Canada. Among the vital group of artists at work in Vancouver were Jack Shadbolt, (1909 - ); B. C. Binning, (1909 - ); John Korner, (1913 - ); Bruno Bobak, (1923 - ); Gordon Smith, (1919 - ); Donald Jarvis, (1923 - ); and Takao Tanabe, (1926 - ). These artists showed the influence of the School of Paris in many of their works, but showed as well, overtones of a lyricism which stemmed from the British romantic tradition. The results were lyrical abstractions based on nature as theme.

R. H. Hubbard, in the spring of 1955, commented on the vital activity in the Vancouver area. He praised the magnificent natural setting of Vancouver and noted that "The combination of urbanism, wilderness and salubrity apparently provides an exhilarating climate for the arts." The key artists of the Vancouver area at this time were intimately involved with nature in their daily lives. In the majority of cases they chose for their homesites properties on the city's fringes - unspoiled areas where a natural form of growth was very literally at their door.
The prime preoccupation with landscape would appear to link these artists with the tradition of the Group of Seven. However, they spurned the broad view and turned most frequently to intimate aspects of nature for their inspiration, ignoring in their interpretations all familiar sense of scale. In many instances evocative landscapes emerged from the rendering of fragmentary tokens of environment: complete worlds inspired by nature's details. The patriotic fervour has disappeared; it is the sense of wonder that remains.

R. H. Hubbard credited the example and teaching of Jack Shadbolt for much of the originality of style that existed in British Columbia - a "sort of abstraction based on organic form".

Shadbolt found that his deep response to nature could be most meaningfully expressed by means of abstraction.

Following the War, Shadbolt seemed unable to paint the British Columbia scene without strong reference to war-inspired imagery, as in *Image in the Cedar Slash*, 1947. The violence of such images was to disappear, however, when he found a new theme for his creative mind: the growth cycle of nature. In 1948 came a series of water colours of lyrical mood! "My real involvement turned toward the inner
poetry of identification with the cycle of nature:"

In this transfer of interest Shadbolt has stated that he found the "perfect, indirectly symbolic images" for which he was searching,

. . . in the birth and struggle under the earth to break through, in the flowering, withering and return to the earth of plants, - or in the drama of the minute life among the grass stems. Because I find all this somehow symbolic of the larger world and larger meanings, I am trying to find an abstract paraphrase of this core theme. So I immerse myself in nature, but when I paint I put nature behind me and try to conjure up new inventions of form.

Shadbolt describes his process, as seen in Expansion of Seed, 1949,

Here is a sort of X-ray view of the forces of growth causing a seed to expand, break open and send out its seeds into the air. I had found my theme and could exploit, to achieve it, everything I had learned from Coast Indian sectional design and from articulated anatomical stress; or I could evoke implications of psychological imagery. I was in my private world, identifying with nature.

Dark Fruition, 1952, (fig. 27) is another work of similarly evocative imagery in which one can see the debt to Picasso.

Like Emily Carr, whom Shadbolt had known in his youth, he seemed aware of a mysterious sense of presence in the natural world, but this presence
Shadbolt found in the minute life at the earth’s surface. At the *Edge of Dark*, 1951, a life among the grass stems is suggested. The artist was fascinated with such fragments, and conceived forms to convey something of their life-struggle. In a haunting landscape setting, strange creatures enact their mysterious ritual. Shadbolt has written:

> All my painting is an improvisation on themes from nature, whether actual or imaginary. Over the years I have evolved a kind of mythology for myself of familiars which seem to be protagonists acting out the age-old drama of the cycle of generation, fructification and return to earth.

Bruno Bobak for a time also created unique worlds from nature’s details. In many of his paintings of the early Fifties we are confronted with such fragments of nature, as the common word, which by “a magical enlargement of scale become the flora of fantastic landscapes.” In *Corn*, 1951, (fig. 28) he has created an evocative landscape scene with fragile cornstalk forms which stretch skyward. The forms appear as tenuous moving figures dramatically set against field and sky.

He is a nature painter; underlying and permeating his work there is a sense of tenderness, wonder and affection inspired in the face of nature, a fact incidentally which links him with the eighteenth century British water colourists and with more recent painters like Paul Nash and the earlier Graham Sutherland.

One is aware of an affinity with Graham Sutherland in Bruno Bobak's exhibition of a series of rock and root forms in 1953. These forms are isolated and abstracted, and attain a sense of monumentality. Bobak's own remarks are indicative:

In these works I have tried to present these forms as living, or rather as dying, crumbling things. All the panoramic setting of landscape painting has been eliminated in order to present the subjects isolated in their naked state without interference from any other world. As objects by themselves I would like them to convey a sense of nervous energy; many years of crushing water and choking by root is surely torture.

In the early Fifties, John Korner, too, was drawn to the details of nature. Doris Shadbolt, commenting on Korner's work at a 1953 Vancouver Group show, seems to sum up the main direction of Vancouver artists at this time.

It is a fascinating distinction of certain artists that, within their work they create a unique world, a cosmos in small. The material used may be fragmentary and ostensibly insignificant but they have evoked from it singular echoes of the unity and vitality which underlie the whole of existence.

Specifically referring to Korner's Tomato Vine series she continues:
In these pictures, John Korner, has I think found and intimated a complete world. The immediate inspiration of most of them came from a garden lot outside his studio window, where tomato plants, among others were growing. In these paintings we do not simply pass by the plot, we enter the tenuous, energetic, deceptively fragile realm of the vine. Now we learn its phases, we share its life. . . There is nothing here but the isolated plant form -- no view beyond, scarcely even a suggestion of the ground from which it grows -- for in the fragment itself life is completely manifest.  

Methods of abstraction were applied to broader views and coastal scenes, as well as to nature's details. Favourite Harbour, VI, 1956-57 (fig. 29) is a later work of Korner's, and reflects his love of harbour views. He has captured qualities of shimmer and reflection with the application of his colour in separate touches.

B. C. Binning (1909 - ), a leading figure in the art world of Vancouver in the late Forties and Fifties was the "master of decorative abstraction." Ships in Classical Calm, 1948, (fig. 30) is an abstracted view of great precision. It contains strong overtones of coastal atmosphere with its marine forms, its grey-blue colours, and its quality of background haze.

A further involvement with abstraction is noted in Gordon Smith's work of the mid-Fifties. At this time Smith moved from his semi-abstractions as seen in Pruned Trees, n.d. (fig. 31) in the style of which he had first
36 x 50 inches.

Oil on board. 32 x 40\(\frac{1}{2}\) inches.
become known, to the style of *Structure with Red Sun*, 1955, (fig. 32) which won for him a first prize at the First Canadian Biennial of 1955. Jean René Ostiguy, praising the work at this time, noted that Smith retained an affinity with nature forms.

In his painting Gordon Smith reveals to us, with freshness and spontaneity the feeling of the proud play of branches of the lofty British Columbia fir tree.\(^{19}\)

The spectator is confronted with a strongly abstracted landscape. A trunk-like structure becomes a scaffolding for a cluster of tightly knit linear forms that are crossed horizontally and vertically. These intermeshing forms are set against an atmospheric background. The presence of the red sun motif confirms the landscape origin. "For while nature is not obviously pictured, we feel its presence..." \(^{20}\)

Anthony Emery writing in 1956 stated:

Gordon Smith paints nature at one remove: he faces the landscape, but views it with the inward eye.\(^{21}\)

In 1965, Alvin Balkind, in the catalogue for the exhibition, Beyond Regionalism, reflected on the art of the Fifties in British Columbia.

Nearly a decade has passed since the art in post-war British Columbia achieved national recognition by the evolution of a "movement". It was an art of lyricism, passion and occasional symbolism; its mystique was romantic, inescapably involved as it was with the omnipresent

mountains, fjords, fogs, and rain forests of this part of the coast. Its intellectual basis was essentially School of Paris, from Cezanne on, with a background scrim -- like a racial memory -- on which was projected a slide of English Landscape Painting.

The vitality of the West Coast scene in the early Fifties justifies a concentration on the art there, but, of course, the trend towards abstraction took place across the land.

On the East Coast, the progressive artist Jack Humphrey (1901 - ) responded to the coastal view in many works. Harbour Theme from Dead Boat Anchorage, c. 1955, is an abstracted harbour scene. There were overtones of cubism in the angular brushwork of Henri Masson's rural genre scenes and landscapes.

The chalky landscapes of Stanley Cosgrove reveal a preoccupation with formal means and show a combined influence of School of Paris and modern Mexico. Fritz Brandtner was an early experimenter in abstraction. His themes were frequently cityscapes in which he employed blunt and angular strokes, an intensive use of colour, and an expressive use of light and dark (fig. 34). His works have a power that reveal his German Expressionist background.

Among the most poetic of landscape abstractions of the Fifties are those of Kazuo Nakamura (1926 - ). With Nakamura there seems to be a racial instinct toward landscape, and George Elliott has noted the traditional Japanese qualities of "fragility, precision, simplicity." 26

In all his works, Nakamura demonstrates a strong interest in formal qualities, but they reveal, too, the artist's deep love of nature.

Two qualities dominate the art of Nakamura: refinement and clarity. 27 These qualities are both strongly evident in Hill-side, 1954, (fig. 33), an exquisite abstraction of wooded countryside. The composition is imaginatively conceived and finely executed, showing his instinctive sense of taste and restraint.

Into Space, 1958, 28 is an elegant string construction where nature, reduced to its essence, is still unmistakably present: a quality of growth remains.

By the mid-Fifties in Canada, adaptations of modern European methods of painting had become the accepted form of artistic expression. Abstraction, in a variety of forms, was the order of the day. Eric Newton, reporting in Canadian Art following a two month lecture trip across Canada in 1954, noted
the diversity of expression across the vast land.

Canada is, as it were, an immensely elongated frieze stretched across the northern frontier of the United States. Taken as a whole, the frieze certainly has a recognizable flavour while it is neither that of Europe nor of the United States, yet the traveller who follows its course across the continent finds that it changes its character at least four times between the Maritimes and the coast of British Columbia. . . Environment does count. Within the framework of what has been termed the "international" contemporary style in painting and sculpture, which originally radiated from the École de Paris, all kinds of local variations occur. Indeed these variations are among the healthiest signs observable in Canadian art today.29

Jean René Ostiguy in his article "Canadian Abstract Painting Goes on Tour", 1956, reviews an exhibition of Canadian painting that was sent to the United States. He included with his comments the following:

The quality of most of the paintings proved that many of our best artists are now firmly enrolled in the ranks of the abstractionists. There is no one movement here, but a number of diverse tendencies. . . 30
CHAPTER V

INFLUENCES OF ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM:

'GESTURAL LANDSCAPES'

We replaced the nude girl and the French door with a modern Stonehenge, with a sense of the sublime and the tragic that had not existed since Goya and Turner. Brother! What a gesture!

The landscape abstractions that we have been discussing were influenced primarily by European modes of painting - mainly by those methods developed by the School of Paris. During the early Fifties the capital of the art world was to shift from Paris to New York, as a result of the impact of the art achievements of the Abstract Expressionists residing in New York.\(^1\) The artists involved are considered founding members of the New York School, which was the first major school of painting to develop in the United States. Canada was to gradually recognize the leadership of New York as art centre.

The American artists involved in Abstract Expressionism evolved an art form of great and immediate impact. In its more radical aspects it was a vigourous, energetic improvisatory, gestural, and - imageless form of painting.

Meyer Schapiro in 1956\(^2\) at the time of the American Exhibition at the Tate Gallery, recognized two polarities (between which were a "rich spectrum of styles") in the art of the "Younger American Painters of Today". One, he referred to as an "art of impulse and chance", exemplified in the work of Jackson Pollock and de Kooning, and the second, a contrasting approach seen in the work of Mark Rothko, who "builds up big areas of colour in solemn contrast. . . ."
It was the free, gestural style of the 'action' painters that was to be the most influential to artists of the Fifties, and it was this aspect of the movement that was to influence Canadian artists at this time.

Many Canadian artists found the gestural methods of Abstract Expressionism an exciting means of expression, and they eagerly adopted the improvisatory methods for their own. The Canadian adaptations, however, could not contain the extreme personal commitment, the Existential cast, the overwhelming degree of expressive power of the works of the originators. The particular New York situation which had contributed to the development of the style did not exist in Canada.

The influence of the Abstract Expressionist movement was to move eventually right across Canada, but it was in Toronto that the impact of their bold and vigorous methods was first felt. Toronto had suffered a period of inertia in the field of art after the dominance of the Group of Seven and their followers, in the Thirties - Montreal and Vancouver, had become the more vital areas. However with the impact of the New York School on the Toronto art scene, Toronto, was once again to become a centre of interest.
It was the informal group, Painters Eleven, formed in 1953, that first acknowledged the importance of Abstract Expressionism in Canada. These Toronto artists were fired with enthusiasm for the work of the New York artists, and turned to them for inspiration. The first exhibition of their work was held in the Roberts Gallery in Toronto, February, 1954.

The Painters Eleven issued a forceful manifesto stating that their art was "... the expression of a long repressed desire on the part of eleven painters to disagree in terms visually indigenous to this age." The individual styles of the Toronto painters varied greatly, but they were united in their intention to turn from a concern for representation in order to find more personal and forceful means of expression.

In the summer of 1954, George Elliott made acknowledgement of the existence of Painters Eleven.

At the moment Toronto is observing the birth of a new group, Painters Eleven, that has as much cohesion as the Group of Seven ever had in its hey-day. Their pictures and their apparent views are as much out of sympathy with current art modes as were those of the Group 34 years ago ...

Although these artists spoke out militantly against representation in favour of a more expressive form of art, one discovers that in many of the works, landscape references are indeed apparent. With some
landscape interpretations are obviously intended. With others, overtones exist, but are perhaps incidental—personal expression being the primary interest and intent. In some, the landscape connection is present only in the titles perhaps a lingering nostalgic reference.

With Harold Town, (1924—), a leading member of the Painters Eleven, landscape references are assumed intentional in his gestural works. (He has stated that the term non-objective is meaningless to him.) Town, a prolific artist of great virtuosity first became widely known through his imaginative and inventive single autophraphic prints. Under the influence of the New York School, he adopted the grandiloquent gestural painting technique, and could be described as a leading exponent of abstract expressionism in Canada.

Harold Town's work showed the influence of the New York School as early as 1953. There is tremendous freedom in the brushwork of Beach Fire, No. 2, (fig. 35) although little hint of landscape. This expressive work, which was shown in the First Canadian Biennial, 1955, was still of modest size.

Dead Boat Pond, 1956, (fig. 36) makes obvious landscape reference. This was one of a series based
35. Harold Town.
Beach Fire, No. 2,
1953. 58 x 23 inches.

36. Harold Town.
Dead Boat Pond,
1956. 95½ x 38 inches.
on "visual memories of fading beaches and derelict boats." It is a stunning painting of great richness. Complexity and power in which Town has employed something of the size and a great deal of the gesture of abstract expressionism.

Perhaps the most outstanding example of abstract expressionism in Canada is the thirty-seven foot mural by Town at Cornwall for the Saunders-St. Lawrence Generating Station.

Following a visit to Cornwall to look over a section of the Seaway project, Pearl McCartney notes that Town saw what must be done:

... symbolize the two unseen and intangible forces that were the main actors in this drama, the elemental force of nature and the equally real force of the human intellect, in conflict only temporarily, and finally in engagement for the richer life made possible by electricity.

On the left of the large mural Town symbolizes the great thrust of natural forces; then the challenge by science; and finally, the results possible from the combining of these forces. The work has no direct landscape reference, but with his grandiloquent gestural style Town suggests the wonders of the scheme. The work has a tremendously striking visual power: "I felt strongly the intricacies as well as the over-all grandeur of the project," Town has said.
The work of Kazuo Nakamura really stands apart from other members of the Painters Eleven. Of all the group, he was the least involved with the gestural form of expression. (A work such as *Into Space*, 1958, is really the antithesis of gestural abstraction).

In *Forest*, 1955, the trees are conceived as a pattern of rich, but controlled, brushwork. The scene is abstracted, but the landscape inspiration is obvious. The freedom shown in this work is probably the extent of Nakamura's participation in a gestural form of art.

Tony Urquhart, too, retains a strong connection with landscape. He enthusiastically accepted the free brush work of the New York painters, but retained an interest in representational painting. *Nocturne*, 1957, shown in the Second Canadian Biennial, 1957 was "wild and daringly composed", but obviously a landscape. *Near Wycherson Side Road II*, 1963, is named, but less specific, and freer in its style. Sky and field all but merge as one in the vigour of the handling. Urquhart imaginatively sets his landscape in a circular format - the tondo becoming an evocative form for the free landscape view.

Urquhart's adaptation of Abstract Expressionism brings a fresh approach to the rendering landscape - it
is not of the Canadian landscape in particular but of landscape in a larger, more universal context.

J. W. G. Macdonald (1897 - 1960) was an extremely influential teacher at the Ontario College of Art, and one of the leading members of Painters Eleven. His *Earth's Awakenings*, 1959, (fig. 37) is in no sense based on landscape interpretation, but strong overtones of nature are present. In this evocative work, dark organic shapes extend over the surface, suggestive of gentle flowing movement. Openings of light in these darker areas add further to the evocation of nature. The title would seem to confirm a lingering attachment to nature by Macdonald, despite a commitment to non-objective art.

Evan H. Turner has stated concerning the art of Macdonald:

"... during the mid-30s, he began to explore essentially abstract ideas. Yet even in his most extreme works Jock Macdonald was never divorced from the images of nature and the emotions they aroused in him. The depth of his feeling and the integrity of his explorations of new images inevitably stimulated the younger painters of Toronto. . . ."

George Elliott described Tom Hodgson, (1924 - ), in 1954 as a "middle of the roader" because his canvases

usually retained some recognizable aspect of subject matter. In Hodgson's large, gestural *March Pond*, however, overtones of landscape are not overly apparent. Hodgson has employed the colours of the March scene (mud browns and 'coloured' whites), and a certain atmospheric use of paint, but these factors, plus the choice of title, provide the only clues to landscape derivation. It is, however, a powerful, personal expression: the painting has a tremendous energetic power from the forceful calligraphic overwriting.

William Ronald, (1926 - ) was to abandon all reference to subject matter under the influence of the Abstract Expressionists. Landscape suggestions disappear in his work - with references lingering occasionally only in titles. Ronald's large works have a force and power that suggest an influence of Franz Kline.

In 1955 Ronald moved to New York, encouraged to do so by his former teacher Jock Macdonald. The *River*, (fig. 39) and *Incendio*, (fig. 40) are powerful abstract expressionist works of 1956 following his move to New York. A work of the same year has been described by Hubbard, as "a blast straight out of Hands Hofmann." In reference to Ronald's art at this time Hubbard continues:

Ronald paints on such a large scale and in such violent colours and eruptive forms that canvases . . . , have been justly described as 'block blusters.' 18

In these works one feels that Ronald has fully assimilated the influence of the New York School.

From East to West across Canada in the latter half of the Fifties, one can find significant artists adopting aspects of Abstract Expressionism, the international art style of the time. Sensitive artists seemed to find in the free, gestural approach an answer to their needs for a more personal, and emotional means of expression.

Jack Humphrey (1901 - ) has always shown an interest in international trends, despite his relative isolation in St. John's, New Brunswick. It was during a 1952-54 sojourn in France that Humphrey was to turn to non-representational painting. By the time of his return he was creating strong works in a gestural manner which showed contact with Tachisme, an improvisatory art with certain affinities with abstract expressionism.

The Dark, 1960, (fig. 38) shows the spontaneous manner he employed in many of his works of the following years. There is great freedom in the brushwork, but in the horizontal movement and the nature of the
patterning, an affinity with landscape is retained.

Humphrey has stated concerning his art:

I try to authenticate my work - regardless of the idiom - by this reference to something I have experienced in nature. Sometimes the experience comes out in an entirely unexpected way, in relationships that would hardly explain their origins, and sometimes the "nature" is more the nature of myself than it is of something seen outside. At the same time, I try to find new areas to keep the reactions fresh.

In Quebec Suzanne Bergeron (1930 - ) and Edmund Alleyn (1932 - ) show a freedom of execution in their landscape works that implies an interest in current international styles, not found in the work of their teacher, Jean-Paul Lemiux. Bergeron went to Paris in 1955 where she was perhaps influenced by Nicolas de Stael. Arrière Port, 1957, (fig. 41) has an underlying firm construction, despite the freedom of the handling, that would suggest this influence. In Alleyn's Shore-line, c. 1958, (fig. 42) there is an obvious landscape intent within the gestural style. In Summer Breeze, 1960, however, the form is reduced to broad horizontal areas of gestural strokes. Nevertheless, there is a suggestion of beach, sea and sky.

Charles Gagnon of Montreal created Paysage Collage, 1960, a powerful non-objective work of
41. Suzanne Bergeron. Arriere Port, c. 1957. 28 3/4 x 45 1/2 inches.

collage elements and free brush swipes. Evocative printed words are scattered throughout the clash of forms - all suggestive of urban landscape.

Ralph Allen, in contrast, used the freedom of the style for direct landscape expressions that have a truly romantic air as *Coast Edge in Air*, c. 1969, (fig. 43). David Silcox notes the impact of the Canadian landscape on Allen's art following his arrival from England in 1957.

... Allen finds an anonymous quality in the Canadian landscape. He views it as an extensive, uncharted, almost cosmic space with a handful of towns and villages sprinkled across it like stars across the sky. ... In his paintings are large areas of dark, brooding, infinite space which gradually organize themselves around and focus on an intense and solitary highlight. One feels that the focus is on something particular and specific but the painting always denies that as a final interpretation, for the haunting force of the general statement is always present. One landscape is all landscapes.23

Further West, Regina artists felt the impact of the gestural style prior to their major involvement with New York art late in the Fifties, and individual adaptations of Abstract Expressionism are noted. Arthur McKay, (1926 - ), in the late Fifties, turned from lyrical landscape abstractions to a form of non-objective art. *Organic Forms*, c. 1959,24 retains, however, a sense of landscape from McKay's
manner of disposing the loosely conceived forms on the canvas surface. His title is an acknowledgement of his awareness of the organic quality present in the work.

Roy Kiyooka (1926 – ) was a member of the active group at Regina until moving to Vancouver in 1959. His works at this time reveal a marked degree of freedom in the method of creation. Abraham Rogatnick discusses *Untitled I*, (a Relief Painting with five panels, 1961):25

... a recent plaster relief painted mainly in deep browns with amorphous, relieved forms only partially emerging from the dark background, like a landscape of softly eroded rocks pushing through coffee-coloured earth, visceral perhaps, but displaying an organic order nevertheless.26

A noticeable element of restraint is achieved in the work by means of the narrow frames that divide the wide format into the five panels.

Abstract Expressionism proved to be a vital means of expression for the nature artists of the West Coast, and they used the free methods for interpretations of their region. Landscape remained, for these artists, the animating idea and one finds its presence in the form, and colour, and in the evocative imagery. The works of these Coastal artists retained a sense of poetry and lyricism.
John Korner's Coast Glitter, 1960, shows his restrained handling of the gestural mode. Abraham Rogatnick speaks of a "small-stroked, embroidered quality," in referring to Korner's evocative Coast Glitter series.

Donald Jarvis' Forest, 1959, reveals a freer form of creation. It is one of his many paintings based on tree forms (here a forest detail) and has been described:

This picture suggests a burning forest, or perhaps an action painter's mental image of a forest, in which the artist can experience the depth and bewildering variety of nature and render them coherent on canvas. This is the kind of rich, elaborate painting, full of the artist's own personality but also full of the B. C. outdoors, which has so distinguished West Coast painting in recent years.

Tak Tanabe could perhaps be considered a landscapist by instinct. R. H. Hubbard has stated concerning Tanabe's works of the Fifties that they may appear non-figurative "... until one discovers in them suggestions of pine forests and mountain lakes." Fragment 35, 1953, shows the all-over quality of the calligraphic style he employed at that time. In Forest at Top Loft, 1959, there is a greater freedom in the larger calligraphic swirls, but a restraint is evident in their disposition over the surface.
he demonstrates a kind of soft, sensuous calligraphy which is a mixture of Japanese discipline and action-painting freedom. All of his work, or almost all of it, has the quick grace and the extreme reticence which this picture illustrates. 

Jack Shadbolt's use of the gestural style revealed his "latent tendency toward landscape." His own words reveal his authentic use of the spontaneous approach:

It has often been the case, especially in the years following the improvisatory nature of the abstract expressionist approach that whatever there was has emerged from the work process to reveal itself only at its completion: and this has been the case with my own work for some years.

Although Canadian environment is no longer the prime inspirational force in the art of Canada, as a result of a lingering landscape tradition, and as part of the artist's life experience, the landscape seems to come through. Certainly in the art of this time, there remained a resistance to eliminate all reference to nature.

Donald Buchanan at the time of the Brussel's Fair in 1958 rather tentatively and tardily acknowledges the changing situation in the art of Canada:

Canadian art is no longer linked, as intimately as it used to be, with Canadian geography. The vast horizons of our northern woodlands, the fir and
pine-fringed lakes and rocky escarpments which thirty or forty years ago so fired the imagination of our nationalist Group of Seven has now largely ceased to be the primary impetus in our art. As we mature our painting passes from objective to the subjective; in it the personal, the more intimate, even the introspective take control.

Although references to landscape were retained within the gestural style, the resulting 'landscapes' are far removed from traditional landscape painting in Canada in both style and conception. Landscape references are less geographically specific - and indeed, have taken on a kind of international landscape flavour.

At the time of the second Canadian Biennial, 1957, Donald Buchanan, and Robert Ayre wrote concerning the artists represented at the time:

Clearly evident... in spirit and action of these artists, was a full acceptance of the whole western world as their cultural home. The best of Canadian work is now being merged in the universality of art.

and further in the same article:

... naturalism and realism, even in their decorative or romantic variations, are no longer the favourite paths to creation among Canadian artists. Abstraction, in all its aspects, is much more the practice of the day. (italics mine)
But heaven forbid that Canadian painting should confine itself to abstraction. Life in Canada is far too rich and human to express itself in purely formal terms.

The artists we have discussed in Chapters IV and V have adopted the methods of the International Art Movements of the Fifties, and have used these methods as a means of interpreting their responses to the world. Frequently, it was noted, these personal expressions took the form of landscape renderings.

There are a number of artists in Canada who have been little influenced by current international trends and movements. A group of such artists frequently combine the use of landscape with figuration, in order to express a meaningful human situation. Their vision is intense, and their approach to subject matter is most frequently a realistic one, sometimes bordering on the surreal. When man is not directly depicted, his presence is implied: landscape is a setting for a human situation.

The artists are grouped together because they share a common need to combine figuration with landscape in order to express their life-view; but in each instance the artist's vision is unique.

The art of Jean-Paul Lemieux, (1904 - ), is stylistically isolated. The unique figurative style that one associates with this artist developed after a period abroad in 1954-55. It was on his return to Canada that he was struck by the vastness and the
stillness of the Canadian landscape. He saw Canada as he had never seen it before. His works since that time express, in a most haunting way, something of the immensity, silence and sense of isolation that is part of the Canadian experience. The extremely personal style Lemieux evolved was removed from the main currents of expression in Canadian art at the time.

I am not in tune with Paris fashion.
I am not part of the general current.
The trends of contemporary art do not stir me.

Lemieux has created unforgettable images of landscape, and figures in landscape, with a kind of primitive simplicity, and dream-like quality. He simplifies his figures "down to a kind of shadowy essence of themselves," but they retain, however, a compelling sense of presence.

In La Visiteur du Soir, 1956, (fig. 44) a strange, large anonymous figure appears in the foreground, excentuating the infinite distance of the immense landscape. Colour, form and event are reduced to a minimum heightening the feeling of remoteness and isolation that is so much a part of Lemieux's art.

Lemieux frequently makes use of slanting horizons which lend a sense of movement and a sense of passing time to his works. It is against these immense and
haunting backgrounds that he places his anonymous and insubstantial figures.

What fascinates me most is the dimension of time; time which passes on and man before this passage of time. 3

In La Ville Lointaine, 1956, (fig. 45) there are no figures, but a feeling of humanity is present with the shadow paths that fade towards the distant town. Again there is the feeling of great distance and stillness, and again, too, the slanted horizon, which here looms high across the sky.

Summer, 1914,4 1965, is a more recent work, in Lemieux's characteristic style. The frontality of the figures arrests our attention. A strange stillness isolates these static figures from their surroundings, and from each other. They exist as memories.

Lemieux's painting is, above all, a climate, a state of mind. His figures assume their place in the immensity of nature. They are conscious of the emptiness which surrounds them and they are powerless to act.5

All Lemieux's works seem to possess a strange, haunting, unforgettable quality. His is an art of quiet, but compelling intensity.

By the early Fifties Alex Colville, (1920 - ), had evolved his characteristic realistic style which enabled him to express his extremely personal world view. The intense form of realism he employs has
44. Jean-Paul Lemieux. Le Visiteur du Soir, 1956. 31\frac{1}{2} \times 43\frac{1}{2} inches.

45. Jean-Paul Lemieux. La Ville Lointaine, 1956. 19\frac{1}{2} \times 43\frac{1}{4} inches.
been classed as Magic Realism. Colville has confessed that he had "no inclination to work in the tradition established by the leading European painters of this century." As early as 1951, he had stated his aim in art:

I want to declare the value and significance of the objective world, and the way for me to do this is by representational painting.

Patrick Hutchings considers Colville's art as an art of celebration. "Alex Colville celebrates the ordinary, the everyday commonplace of a middle-class, democratic society." Colville has a deep respect for the natural order of things and recreates scenes from the everyday world with meticulous care, and seemingly a sense of reverence. The art style he has developed is intimately involved with his philosophy of life.

By giving an absolute and permanent existence to certain objects and certain moments of our lives, Colville simply recognizes the fact of their greatness and worthiness.

In Family and Rainstorm, 1955, (fig. 46) Colville has focused sharply and intensely on the tangible, visible world. He has overemphasized his subject by combining a painstaking attention to detail in the rendering of individual figures and objects, with an over-all tendency to eliminate the non-essential. By
this method a fleeting moment is captured and preserved
for all time, so that the subject matter takes on a
sense of epic importance. It is a true celebration
of the ordinary.

Contributing considerably to the memorability
of the scene is Colville's success in suspending action
in time.

The "magic" in the best of Colville's work
seems to rest in his ability to freeze time -
to take a transient moment in a series of
actions and immobilize it in such a striking
way that the spectator is caught right up in
an immediate awareness of time having stopped.
The subject matter he chooses is invariably
mundane and quite at variance with the stat­
esque and even heroic qualities that he
gives to people, objects and landscapes in
his work. When all this is added to his
acute observation and painstaking technique,
it produces "the magic" that is imbued in
his realism.10

Colville has stated that he sets his figures
in environments "to do the highest possible justice
to reality."11 In Family and Rainstorm the landscape
is rendered with the same meticulous care as the car
and figures, and Colville has shown the same concern
for eliminating the non-essential. A dark horizon
line cuts emphatically across the scene separating
the land, with its haunting sense of quiet, and the
sky with its suggestion of coming storm. All incidental
aspects of nature have been eliminated. The uninter-
rupted horizon line conveys a sense of stillness and

47. Alex Colville. Horse and Train, 1954. Masonite. 16 x 21½ inches.
timelessness which adds considerably to the meaning of the whole. Colville's landscape provides a fitting and essential setting for his arrested figures.

All of Colville's works have a compelling quality, but in some there is an additional sense of crisis. In *Horse and Train*, 1954, (fig. 47) there are strong surrealist overtones with the strange juxtaposition of the large riderless horse and the on-rushing train. The meticulously rendered landscape partakes of the hallucinatory precision of the whole.

*Pacific*, 1967, (fig. 48) was painted during Colville's term as artist-in-residence at the University of California at Santa Cruz. The extensive stretch of peaceful ocean provides provocative background (as one's imagination reacts to the work) for a scene of potential imminent disaster. The proximity of man to gun, and gun to spectator is startling: the impact of the work is indeed disquieting. Has Colville not acknowledged a possible questioning of the significance and purposefulness of the objective world he celebrates? Stripped of all incidentals, the painting makes seemingly relevant comment on the undeniable and inescapable presence of violence in our time.

The intentionality of these extra realistic pictures is invariably the same: to heighten the reality and assert the significance of the subject matter.12
From 1946 until 1963 Alex Colville was a teacher at Glasgow School of Art, Mount Allison University. During this time several interesting students were strongly influenced by his style: Christopher Pratt of St. John's, Newfoundland was one.13

In 1963 in the introduction of the catalogue of the Fifth Canadian Biennial, J. Russell Harper makes an interesting plea for a continuation of regionalism in Canadian art. He comments particularly on the art of Newfoundland in this connection:

An inferiority towards their own artistic convictions and their own surroundings was expressed by some painters. This was combined with a reluctance to use Canadian motifs or to paint "Canadian." This is unfortunate. It is found in varying degrees, but is so apparent in Newfoundland as to require comment...; there is no awareness of the potentialities in the truly authentic, texturally unique, and pictorially magnificent worn rocks, lichens, grass and other local natural phenomena.14

Christopher Pratt shows little interest in portraying such 'local natural phenomena', but in *Boat and Sand*, 1961, (fig. 49) he does most successfully capture something of the sense of isolation and the fearful loneliness, that is undoubtedly, for many,
an authentic Newfoundland experience.

Pratt has emulated Colville's realistic style in this small serigraph, but some differences are noted. Soft shadows have been used in Boat and Sand, which lend a distinctly romantic note to the haunting scene. There is a strange sense of emptiness, not only in the vast expanse, but with the lack of human signs.

In the catalogue to the exhibition Magic Realism in Canadian Painting, the introduction includes the following:

This quality of frozen time, of a strange other-worldliness that is at the same time very realistic, is present in the work of all artists in this exhibition. . . . Whether people are depicted in the canvases or not, there is a sensation of presence, or the imminent presence, of human life, and this is inextricably bound up with the sensation of time, thus creating that special atmosphere that has been called "magic."

Ken Danby (1941 - ) of Guelph, Ontario, is also involved with a 'realistic' form of art.

. . . Danby has joined the small group of rugged individualists in Canada who dare go against popular international trends of op, pop, abstract expressionism and other even more radical innovations. 16 Danby worked in the style of abstract expressionism, under the influence of J. W. G. Macdonald at the Ontario College of Art. A dramatic change came into the art of Danby after seeing the sharply rendered
rural scenes of Andrew Wyeth. Danby became convinced that figurative art was not obsolete. He turned to the haunts of his youth and found suitable subject matter there. Like the work of Wyeth, Danby's art has a feeling of memory more than of immediate reality.

On His Way, 1966, is an extremely personal statement of a figure in an isolated landscape setting. Once again there is a suggestion of isolation, and again, a quality of suspended time. Danby depicts a lone boy hitchhiker against a low uninterrupted field, a clear sky, and an empty highway. With his intense realism and his evocative use of strong light and shadow, Danby gives to an ostensibly everyday scene, a haunting quality.

It would seem from considering these works of magic realism, that for 'realistic' art to arrest the eye and bear some significance at the present time, it must be of a hyper-realistic style. Is it only in this way, one wonders, in an age of photographic excellence, that artists can make their 'realistic' statements meaningful? The spectator is transfixed temporarily by the intensity of the expression and is compelled to reflect on the content.

It is perhaps significant that the technique of magic realism is frequently used to depict scenes
of isolation: how often do the scenes suggest a sense of loneliness. And how often do the artists seem to choose for their depiction, unappealing rural areas, empty fields, deserted highways and abandoned farms. How infrequently do the artists turn to urban scenes.

Do such works tell us something about ourselves and about our time? In these works the country is seldom seen as a romantic, idealistic dream world, but as a place abandoned - a place where one construes that man does not belong - nor longer wants to be.

The works of John Chambers, (1931 - ), are also rendered in a 'realistic' manner with meticulous care, but they are strange "symbolic" landscapes which provide settings for his haunting scenes.

There is an aura of death in much of the work of Chambers. In Olga Visiting Graham, 1964, (fig. 50) the scene is a new cemetery. Overtones of surrealism are present with the placement of isolated figures and tombstone monuments in the vast funereal landscape. The immense space and quality of stillness suggest eternity.

The initial impact of strangeness is a result of subject matter, but the lasting impact, it seems, derives from Chambers' unique use of colour. The
opaqueness and the weight of the 'whitened' green, immobilize and embalm the scene. There is an uncanny duality between freshness and morbidness; between lightness of tone and oppressiveness of atmosphere.

In *Sunday Morning*, 1963, figures from old family photograph albums are the ghostly inhabitants of a similarly vast landscape. They provide a strange nostalgic reference to things past. The concern for death is again apparent.

More recently in his work Chambers has turned to photographic techniques for his imagery. Motion picture techniques and film negatives provide sources of inspiration.

In *Stuart Shaw Mixing Reds and Greens*, 1965, (fig. 51) Chambers has combined a figure and a negative image in an open, summer landscape. There is a marked contrast with the sharp silhouette of 'Stuart Shaw' and the juxtaposed shadow figure, suggesting a kind of memory image.

*Moving Side and Forwards*, 1967, shows an increased involvement with photographic techniques which he now uses to create eerie, empty 'landscapes' for his photographic images. The developed 'photograph' of the mother and child is juxtaposed with the 'negative'
40 x 70 inches.
51. John Chambers. Stuart Shaw Mixing Reds and Greens, 1965. Oil on panel. 52 x 76 inches.
image of the child alone. There is a strong suggestion of the fugitive - perhaps, even, the implication of death.

Chambers has stated concerning his art:

I don't know if surrealism applies to my work because I am not sure what the term has come to mean, but if isolation, like water, makes up 75 per cent of a being, it is that kind of real dissociation that people and things have in common that I'm interested in as theme. A formal association in real life or a grouping of figures in a painting for me is an interrogative image... a "Why?" 21

In the work of primitive artists landscape and figures are frequently combined. Evan Turner gives his definition of primitive art as follows:

A "primitive" can be essentially defined as a work presenting some fact or feeling taken from the everyday experience of an unsophisticated person. The "primitive" painter handles the idea with little or no concern for the correctness in such areas as perspective, light, colour or technique that is usually evident in western art.22

Jan Wyers, (1891 - ), a farmer from Saskatchewan, is a completely self-taught naive painter. Wyers, who emigrated to Canada from Holland in 1916, began painting in the 1930s working from memory or photographs. These Good Old Thrashing Days, c. 1954,23 is a nostalgic reminiscence of the spirited activity at the time of an abundant harvest.
It is an example of the charming landscapes he achieves with his primitive eye, and untrained hand.

William Kurelek (1927 - ) has also been classed as a primitive. His art is seemingly untouched by international art movements, but he is not unaware of contemporary trends. It is in his handling of shadow and in the near-correctness of his space, which lead some critics to question Kurelek as a primitive.

In Western Landscape, 1962, he reveals many aspects of the primitive artist, but there is a sophistication in the handling of space and shadow that suggest the eye of a skilled artist. A superb technical ability has enabled him to vividly express the immensity of prairie space.

Kurelek has combined figures and landscape in the religious subjects he pursues with such ardour. In Lord That I May See, (n.d.) of the Sixties, a groping, blinded figure is placed against an awesome, empty landscape. It is a poignant work and quite unique in contemporary Canadian painting.

The works of E. J. Hughes (1913 - ) are also away from the mainstream of Canadian art. Hughes is an artist who responds deeply to the powerful
scenery of his particular region of Canada - the West Coast. His works reveal a strongly individualistic style: they are the product of his own unique vision. The landscapes of Hughes are colourful, exacting renderings of the British Columbia coast scene which show both a strong attachment to the land, and an acute sense of awareness of its every detail.

He not only looks at the Canadian scene but feels it, with passion, and puts it down note for note, leaf for leaf and wave for wave, with the love and concentration of a 'primitive.'

There is a concreteness and weight from the equal distribution of detail over the surface, but there is a sense, too, of organization that removes his works from the realm of the primitive. There are indications of the work of a sophisticate.

Since the intention is to realize the thing loved as fully as possible, he pays attention to its detail, gives maximum delineation and precise colour and tonal differentiation to all its forms.

In two different statements Hughes makes one aware that his intention as an artist encompasses this duality of anivete and sophistication. He states that it is his purpose "To make art out of picturesque and popular subjects," and also "in a matter of fact way to organize nature as well as possible in the rectangle provided."
In Farm Near Courtenay, 1949, (fig. 52) one notes the attention to detail, the crisp delineation of form, the strong sense of patterning, the clarity and vividness of colour, and the sharp tonal differentiation, that are characteristic of his style. The unnaturally brilliant light which has momentarily illuminated the scene makes each detail stand out with sharp intensity. A strange tension is set up (characteristic of all his works), with the heightened sense of reality.

The vision is sharp as in a dream, the moment intense as in hallucination, and as in a dream or hallucination, we know it must pass ... 29

In many of his works the world of man and the world of nature appear in a state of co-existence. In Farm Near Courtenay, the farmer continues at his work totally accepting the immensity of nature that surrounds him. Logs, Ladysmith Harbour, 1949,30 and Edge of the Woods, Gabriola Island, 1953 31 are other examples.

It is doubtful whether he himself is aware of the particular flavour and psychological edge his work has. To begin with, it is a particular part of the coast world he chooses: not untouched primeval nature nor nature a subdued backdrop for man's activities. It is man (as individual) and nature still in vital and meaningful confrontation. They get along together but in a state of mutual resilience.32

In his works of the Sixties the figures have largely disappeared, but man's presence is implied.
52. E. J. Hughes. Farm Near Courtenay, B. C., 1949. 30 x 38 inches.
In *Half Tide at Cowichan Bay*, 1967, there is increased quiet from the less eventful form, and the greater sense of distance. The intensity of vision is reduced, but the sharp clarity remains. The works of Hughes reveal a uniquely personal interpretation of the British Columbia landscape. One feels the deep sincerity of his experience:

> He will not receive the acclaim of the true contemporary who adds collective relevance to whatever other qualities he may have, but on the other hand his private revelation is of a kind to resist the wearing of time. He has created a permanent poetry of Canada's Pacific coast and reiterated the continuing validity of the individual creative spirit.34

Claude Breeze does add 'collective relevance to whatever other qualities he may have.' Breeze, too, works out of the mainstream of Canadian art, but his style has evolved from contemporary modes and his paintings are deeply involved with subjects relevant to the time.

For five years Vancouver's Claude Breeze has been the most consistently original young painter in Canada. From 1963 to 1968 his canvases have been authoritative, trenchant statements of pressing relevance to an understanding of contemporary life and art. They are difficult, often dangerous works.35

Breeze has been preoccupied with subjects of
violence and eroticism, and with social problems of urgent political implication. In his art Breeze forcefully confronts the spectator with menacing and shocking aspects of contemporary life that one would wish to ignore. But his paintings incite reaction and demand reflection. They are powerful indictments against many facets of contemporary society: "It is work with too much integrity to be ignored." 36

The power of Breeze's imagination, and the forcefulness of his style is evident in his Lovers in a Landscape series. A traditional pastoral theme is employed to comment on a theme of sexual violence. The surrounding landscape in Lovers in a Landscape: No. 13: The Murder, 1965, (fig. 53) is unrealistically, but expressively rendered, to excentuate further the horror of the scene.

In Sunday Afternoon (from an old American Photograph), 1965, 37 Breeze again employs a landscape environment for his brutal scene of social comment. A shocking newspaper photograph has provided the inspiration, but Breeze has altered both the composition and the setting to produce a powerful personal interpretation.
The bodies of the two lynched negroes hang in isolation against a background of a summer landscape. The darkness of the nude bodies contrasts boldly with the brightness of the sky and the freshness of the summer scene. The figures are still but the surface of the work is alive with movement as though in response to the agonizing theme.

The suspended bodies are mute, but the inserted face is turned to engage our attention. "His gaze . . . asks a question." We are compelled to judge.

Breeze refuses to turn from the violent aspects of our age. He responds to the crisis of our time "with both topical and universal anger."
CHAPTER VII

'THE NEW LANDSCAPE'

Art cannot celebrate such a society. The artist can react and catalogue the horror of the human situation or he can withdraw and conceive of images that are formed in worlds other than this one. Personally, I am drawn toward the latter reaction.

Preliminary: The Regina School

In the late 1950s and early 1960s there was an astonishing upsurge of artistic activity in Regina. David Thompson, in a recent appraisal of Canadian art in Studio International, commented on this phenomenon. "Regina suddenly became the home of the best informed and most advanced painters in Canada, . . ."¹

The group of young artists who were responsible for the marked increase in creative activity had congregated in Regina during the Fifties, and their interests were centred around the Regina Art School and the progressive Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery.

In the foreword of the exhibition Five Painters from Regina, organized late in 1961 by the National Gallery, Charles Comfort made note of the unique situation that had occurred in Saskatchewan.

The growth of art consciousness, and the gathering together of a group of very talented young artists in the city of Regina over the past decade, has been a truly remarkable phenomenon. It is very difficult to explain why such a dramatic growth of artistic activity should have taken place there, especially in view of the brief history of the Province of Saskatchewan and its relative isolation from centres of aesthetic stimulation. . . . The paintings of these five artists from Regina - Bloore, Godwin, Lochead, McKay and Morton - demonstrate the artistic vigour of the art of painting on the prairies. They show the potential
that exists when brilliant minds live together in a city which, despite healthy controversy, provides a stimulating environment for artists and art lovers.2

One of the prime influential factors in connection with the formation of the Regina school was the re-establishment of the Emma Lake Workshops in 1955. Visiting artists were invited to take charge of the program, which was organized as a summer workshop at the northern Saskatchewan lake site. From late 1950s a succession of influential figures of the New York art world came to Emma Lake, including Barnett Newman, Kenneth Noland, Clement Greenberg, and Jules Olitski. They provided a remarkable stimulus to the vital young group, and the development that resulted following these associations was remarkable.

Barnett Newman was invited to conduct the session in the summer of 1959. Clement Greenberg, writing in 1963 concerning the presence of Newman at the workshops stated:

His personality and ideas had a galvanizing effect on the artists. The new seriousness with which some of them began to take themselves as artists after Newman's visit became a main factor in creation of the informal group of painters known as Regina school.3

Although Newman made no attempt to influence the artists stylistically and was little concerned with technique, Terry Fenton has noted that he offered "an
exalted and coherent idea of art which operated apart from fashion and regional taste."\(^4\)

Arthur McKay acknowledged his appreciation of Newman's influence:

> All the workshops have been exciting in their own way, but for some of us, the year 1959 with Barnett Newman was a breakthrough. Members of the so-called Regina Group and others present, freely admit that Newman's workshop marked a turning point in their artistic development.\(^5\)

With the impact of Newman's visit, and the influential 1962 visit of Clement Greenberg, the artists in Regina, in the main, turned from a gestural form of abstraction to a more controlled creative means. William Seitz, in the catalogue of the 1968 Canadian Biennial, makes reference to Greenberg's "sermon" at Emma Lake in 1962, when Greenberg "sought to substitute 'ambitious', 'big attack' painting, in the tradition of Newman, Noland and Olitsky, for the disease of Abstract Expressionism."\(^6\)

Greenberg had referred to the "noxious influences" of New York abstract painting of the Fifties in an article to Canadian Art early in 1963:

> . . . with its mannered brush swipes and smears and spatters, and its deceptively hackneyed scaffoldings of light and dark. The influence of this New York manner has been one of the most blighting, as well as, the most infectious, that I know of in modern art. \(^7\)

Many significant painters of the time were questioning
the validity of the gestural style of abstract expressionism. The turning from these 'noxious influences' to a more formal mode of expression is a part of a general trend in the art of the Sixties.8

Clement Greenberg advocated a more conceptual, non-painterly approach to the abstract image.

Greenberg now espouses a non-painterly approach to the abstract image on a flat surface presenting a configuration marked by clear forms in clear hues, without any kind of personal touch in the application of paint. There is room for personal invention. Forms run the gamut from the fluid and irregular to recurrent geometric shapes. Sometimes forms and colours act upon each other to induce optical ambiguity so that passages vibrate. The artists do not try to simulate illusory space.

Many artists... favour pure, clear, thinned colour, often on unsized canvas or sail-cloth.9

In 1964 when Clement Greenberg organized the exhibition "Post Painterly Abstraction" to define the new style, he included works of three Canadians: Jack Bush, formerly of Painters Eleven, and Arthur McKay and Kenneth Lohead of the Regina School.

The New Landscape: General

Man's conception of nature has been so vastly altered by twentieth century scientific developments
that any meaningful discussion of landscape painting must include aspects of this expanded conception. In the last number of years the span of man's vision has been immeasurably increased with the fantastic advancement in the power of optical instruments and comparable developments in photography; realms of the infinitesimally small and the infinitely large have been brought within range. These new orders of magnitudes have become a part of man's visual and mental experience, and have stimulated his imagination.

Science has opened up resources for new sights and sounds, new tastes and textures. If we are to understand the new landscape, we need to touch it with our senses and build the images that will make it ours. For this we must remake our vision.10

The landscapes we have discussed until now have been mainly a product of impressions of nature based on an anthropocentric definition of landscape. (We have hinted at another stage in the discussion of such works as Jock Macdonald's *Earth's Awakening*, 1959). A definition of landscape is no longer complete, if it includes only those aspects of the natural world that are visible with the unaided senses. The traditional definition must be broadened to embrace newly revealed landscapes and the 'felt patterns' of experience based on an awareness of these realms. Artists struck by the wonder and the mystery of the expanded conception
of nature have enriched our experience with a wealth of imagery. It is perhaps noteworthy that the year Earth’s Awakening was painted, (1959), Donald W. Buchanan noted in the Biennial Catalogue:

> . . . Canadian landscape is more of the mind than of the earth.¹¹

Sensitive persons have long been aware of the tremendous increase in the visual data of the world due to advancements in science and technology. However, with the publication of The New Landscape in 1956 by Gyorgy Kepes, something of the extent and the potential image-making power of this new visual data was revealed. The photographs of this 'new landscape' included fascinating microscopic and macroscopic images, as well as surprise angles of vision of the visible world with which analogies could be made with works of art.

Lucy Lippard commented in 1967, regarding a later series of publications of Kepes, concerning similar analogies:

> Rather than abstract art borrowing directly from, for instance, the microphotography and cosmic images which it resembles after the fact, it is probably the other way around. The photographs and images produced are chosen precisely because they remind the editor or scientific writer of art he has seen.¹²

Referring to the photographs in the original
Kepes publication, S. Giedion stated:

It reveals in its excellent pictures that the forms of the infinitely small and the forms of the infinitely large - atoms and stars - have reached the level of our emotional experience. The viewpoint is widened, but this enlargement of the psychic outlook has only been made possible by the preparatory opening of our emotional equipment by such modern painters as Kandinsky Malevitch, Mondrian, Maholy Nagy, Klee, Arp and Miro, who - with others - have established stations along the road to a new vision of the world around us.\textsuperscript{13}

There is undoubtedly a working on many levels.

Whatever the immediate source of inspiration for his imagery, the artist undoubtedly reflects in his work something of the changing concepts of the nature of the world, and something of his own experience in relation to these changing concepts. As ever, the artist seeks a means to express his response to the world around him. Recently, artists have evolved images that realize in plastic form, significant aspects of the 'new landscapes' of our time.

The current position of the experimental artist has been sensitively expressed by Nuam Gabo.

The very conception we have of the world has changed. In his description of reality, why shouldn't the artists also have the right to present a new image of the real world all about us? This does not require one to turn one's back on nature. On the contrary, it means penetrating far further into it than 'realistic' art ever did. There is no need to invade intersidereal space for this. By listening to the beating of our pulse, we can feel the presence
of great cosmic rhythms. On his feet, alert, receptive to all new ideas - that is how I see the artist. Assailed by unknown, still unexplored or only half-sensed forces, he tries to express them in the new works he creates with his hands. If he also reaches our hearts and minds, so much the better.14

In the works to be considered the 'new landscape' is not depicted directly, but in all the works nature's presence is strongly indicated. There are suggestions of biological and botanical realms as well as the nature of outer space. At the same time pattern structures suggest an inner-world - an emotional experience "crystallized into a significant plastic form."15 Nature is considered in its broadest terms. In many of the works there exist a kind of co-relationship of 'inscape' and 'new landscape.'

New Landscapes of the Microcosm

In the paintings of Arthur McKay one is confronted with a strange, unfamiliar world, but one senses the presence of nature.

From his paintings one feels his fascination with, and his immersion in, nature. But he creates a different type of reality from that with which we are generally familiar, a reality which is in a constant state of flux, in which fleeting mood is just barely captured. It is as if he is able to combine the elusive essence of nature with an equally
elusive, poetic response to it.\textsuperscript{16}

In \textit{Effulgent Image}, 1961, (fig. 54) there is a strong suggestion of organic structure - of aspects of nature made visible through powerful microscopic techniques. (Or is it a cosmic realm brought close through the expansion of our span of vision?) One could indicate "superficial analogies"\textsuperscript{17} with this image and photomicrographs from nature, but one senses, too, that \textit{Effulgent Image} is an expression of an inner-world experience, based, perhaps unconsciously, on the feeling that such realms exist. The dual aspect of the impact of this image is suggested in the sensitive commentary in Images for a Canadian Heritage:

> A disc poised in a void, insubstantial like ash and yet bearing the imprint of living tissue. This image comes from the farthest reaches of the imagination, a memory beyond recall, but infinitely stirring and beautiful.\textsuperscript{18}

McKay's works of the early Sixties are centrally positioned, frontal and tending toward the two-dimensional. A great deal of the impact comes through McKay's unique technique. He uses enamel on masonite achieving a smooth, but strangely mottled surface effect. He combines this with a use of luminous colour subtly achieved within the limited range of his blacks, browns and bronzes.
Mckay, at the time of The Vancouver Art Gallery show of 1964 commented:

These paintings are attempts to re-establish contact with and immersion in feeling and therefore are introverted hypnotic and mostly a combination of concentric and excentric movement. . . . They are contemplative.19

Painting, June, 1960, (fig. 55) by Ronald Bloore (1925 - ), is another contemplative work. Bloore, a member of the Regina group from 1958, has stated concerning his art that the appearance of each work has been consciously determined in his mind before execution. In Painting, June, 1960 the world of nature is not directly represented, but the organic quality of the form suggests such derivation.

There is elegance and restraint in Bloore's frequent choice of single image, and in his use of richly layered white surfaces made up of tones of white.

Cool, refined, and restrained, these white canvases with their clear designs in colour or in raised white relief suggest the sun or tree rings or other such symbols of natural energy.20

Avoiding the austerity of single image works, Ted Godwin, (1933 - ), favours a free over-all composition without central focus. Godwin discusses the technique he uses to achieve the organic quality
55. Ronald Bloore. Painting, June, 1960. Oil on panel. 48 x 48 inches.
he desires:

The works I am showing in this exhibition are attempts at exploring, finding and making a cohesive order out of organic accidents that I have willed to take place on the canvas. While I have explored organized forms I find the naturally evolved organic forms have more meaning for me.21

One instinctively associates the forms with magnified under-water life. Colour-Pool, 1964-65, (fig. 56) could be a detail from a powerfully magnified particle — a newly revealed landscape.

Brian Fisher, (1939 — ) studied in Regina under Ronald Bloore during the height of the activity there. Fisher tends, like McKay and Bloore, towards austere, contemplative works, and frequently makes use of the single image. But Fisher's works are of extreme mathematical precision and balance. Referring to the imagery of an artist, Fisher has stated:

Indeed, it is inevitable that his imagery should throw into relief those areas of his experience which are most meaningful to him, an imagery formed by his intuitive apprehension of the patterns underlying the bewildering complexity of this world.22

One feels evocations of the natural world in Fisher's web-like structures, as Pacific, 1965. There is something in the fineness and symmetry of the structures, and in the illusionistic space, frequently enhanced by the use of atmospheric colour, that suggest this.
96 x 96 inches.
The essential vision of reality presents us not with fugitive appearances but with felt patterns of order which have coherence and meaning for the eye and for the mind. Symmetry, balance and rhythmic sequence express essential characteristics of natural phenomena: the connectedness of nature—the order, the logic, the living process. Here art and science can meet on common ground.\(^{23}\)

In Fisher's work the viewer responds to the basic order and feels an affinity with a natural order. It is interesting to then discover that Fisher's characteristic style evolved from a series of plant or biological drawings executed by the artist. The series of drawings became progressively abstract until finally the free-hand mandala-shaped forms became precise structures of mathematical precision.\(^{24}\) The nature derivation of his inspiration is perhaps unconsciously retained.

The concern of man to find an essential order in nature is considered in the 1967 Chandler and Lippard article, "Visual Art and the Invisible World." Arthur L. Loeb has written and is quoted:

> The discovery of order is thus quite subjective, and the structure of matter as it is known to us partly of our own making; we tend to structure our perceptions and to create frames of reference suitable for relating various observations to each other.\(^{25}\)

and also Lancelot Law Whyte:
In his long pursuit of order in Nature, the scientist has turned a corner. He is now after order and disorder without prejudice, having discovered that complexity usually involves both.\(^\text{26}\)

The ability to probe beneath the surface of the earth has resulted in man acquiring knowledge of fascinating aspects of essential formations in nature, some not hitherto even suspected. Electric supermicroscopes have brought to light these aspects resulting in still further conceptions of nature. The form possibilities for an artist's 'imitation of nature' have been so vastly increased that they would appear to be all but limitless. Chandler and Lippard note a connection between the modular structures created by recent American artists and the newly revealed aspects of nature's structuring.

The organic has, like all other surface aspects of nature, undergone alteration. The organic structure of Tony Smith's sculptures and Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes may be difficult to discern, yet both find the source of their tetrahedral structure in nature. According to Fuller, the tetrahedron is nature's most stable form, the "fundamental quantum of the universe's structuring". Every probe beneath the earth's surface has revealed modularity, and the modules form geometric, non-simultaneous patterns.\(^\text{27}\)
New Landscapes of the Macrocosm

Optical techniques have brought the realms of outer space within our vision. Some artists reveal in their works a sense of cosmic space. Theirs is kind of an exploded vision of nature, and their works might be termed 'spacescapes'.

J. W. G. Macdonald's Departing Day, 1935, (fig. 57) is an early example of a kind of cosmic vision. Macdonald shows his desire to retain connection with nature, but it is to the heavens and stars that he is drawn for inspiration. In this small canvas he interprets the vastness of the world that is not earth. There is no horizon line - it is a view to the heavens, and one is caught up in the splendour of the drama there.

Macdonald, who was an early experimenter in the field of abstract and non-objective art in Canada, referred to such works as follows:

These semi-abstracts I call 'Modalities'. This is a new word dug up from the dictionary, and so far I think it is the only classification which interprets the expression of this work. It means "Expression of thought in relation to nature" and was considered by Kant to relate to creative expressions which did not relate to nature (objectively), nor relate to abstract thoughts (subjectively) about nature, but rather included both expressions...
In *Heroic Mould*, 1959, Macdonald shows that he retained his fascination with natural form. This work was executed during the time Macdonald was a member of Painters Eleven. There is an overpowering feeling of natural form and cosmic space in this non-objective work.

In Roy Kiyooka's *Mirak*, 1964, (fig. 58) a painting of great impact, one feels something of the infinite extension of cosmic space. Kiyooka evokes an experience of the vast dimensions of the universe that have lately been revealed to man. It is a 'new landscape' of the space-age world.

Kiyooka's use of vivid red lends to this large painting an expanding quality, enhancing further the feeling of enormous space. The canvas extends vertically, seemingly beyond the painted edge. The fluid dark line adds to the suggestion of vertically and infinite extension, and the staining of the canvas lends a quality of space.

Jean McEwen's works, (1923 - ), too, suggest a macrocosmic vision. *Mauve Ovodalisque*, 1964, is such a work. The large simple centrally poised ovoid shape suggests a cosmic world - unrelated to anything of human scale. The richly mottled surface adds considerably to this sense of macrocosm.

McEwen was influenced in his earlier days by the Automatistes. Since 1952 his paintings have eschewed subject matter. In Paris during the Fifties, McEwen was influenced by a number of artists including Riopelle, Tapies, and the Americans Tobey and Rothko. McEwen's manner of painting was of soft effect, rather in the manner of Rothko. Gradually, however, he developed a harder textural surface resembling that of enamels, produced by applying successive layers of translucent glazes. "The result is something deep, rich and entirely personal to McEwen."\(^{31}\)

*Le Joie de Vivre #2*, 1968, (fig. 59) has a less seductive surface, and no single image. Except for two narrow bars that frame the sides, the canvas is a soft blending of dark colour effects. The romantic vision suggests a cosmic space of some distant sky world - some outer realm.

Jacques Hurtubise (1939 - ) found valid means of expression in the abstract expressionist style during the early Sixties. Elements of this style remain in his works of 1964-65, giving them a force and impact of space-age magnitude. In *Temps Sideral*, 1964,\(^{32}\) Hurtubise combines the gestural and the orderly in a startling canvas, where the powerful thrust of the dark form cuts through the exploding macrocosmic planet.
In Katia, 1966, excitement is generated with the eruptions of dynamic forms against the immensity of space itself. One seems projected into a strange realm where explosive forms appear as moving masses in an infinite, still unfamiliar universe.

In Passage V, a recently completed work by Don Reichert (1932 - ), large, mottled, arrow-shaped forms are set boldly against a plain ground. Such works of Reichert have been described:

The forms of the Prospect and Passage series are explosive and expanding, occasionally hinting at forthcoming doom. The shapes suggest sky, explosion, horizon, particles that will eventually descend and settle.

Passage V is a forceful landscape of the expanding frontier.

The viewer's subjective response to these works of art must of course be taken into account. Influences from the changing world bear on the sensitive viewer as well as on the artist. There is always the possibility that the viewer has 'discovered' meaningful expression in works of art that make no claim to such content.

In this connection it is interesting to find artists making written comment on the influence of current world situations in their 'search of form.' Jack Shadbolt writes of such influences in a line of
thinking that must surely apply to other artists of this time.

... I began to be aware that in current discussion there was increasing concern that our system of values, being rationale-bound and based on over-technologically conditioned mentality, was proving somewhat inadequate to deal with the vast and fluxing implications of our new knowledge. Science had uncovered new concepts of the structuring of our universe and ever since the principle of relativity had first shaken our sense of a fixed predestination, philosophers, theologians, sociologists and psychologists had been using these new concepts as metaphors to describe the structuring of our mental environment. Through contact with such works as Keypes 'The New Landscape' I was also aware that artists, too, were beginning to find fascinating new analogies of structure in such concepts as energy fields, drifts, flows, a space continuum, endless expansion, fission, polarities, cross-section, process and micro- or macro-cosmic scale. One of the newest and most disturbing concepts of all was the possibility of a random casuality to our universe, which, if it once got loose in our minds, could be as disruptive as had once been the theory of evolution.

Shadbolt further states:

For me, the crucial realization was that now the picture space need no longer be resolved within its own boundaries but could expand beyond the edges into a timeless dimension. Internal scale had disappeared.36

In his Field of Force, 1965,37 he acknowledges the direction his work had taken:
In this drawing, the space has definitely opened out into a drift. Its scale is cosmic rather than intimate. It trembles rather than writhes. It has become a field of force subsconsciously influenced no doubt, by atavistic fears of the new images of terror such as nuclear fission. Yet it is still, in a way, an extension of my former responses to the rhythmic insistence of nature. . . 38

Moonshot, 1968, (fig. 60) shows a different attitude and direction in the painting of 'new landscape'. Carol Fraser, the artist, is an experimental painter who has resided in Halifax since 1961 where she became known for her fine expressionist landscapes. Moonshot shows her change of style and interest.

There is an exuberance and directness in Carol Fraser's approach to the 'new landscape' that is interesting and exhilarating. There is no introspective quality; no sense of 'inscape' or 'felt universe'. This is a direct, objective (as much as can be) approach to landscape. Imaginative, yes, but inward and introspective, no.

. . . the horizon line wavered all the way from the top of the canvas to the bottom. Then it consistently began to sink lower and lower when suddenly one day it dropped right out of the bottom of the picture and - WOW - I was in space. 39
60. Carol Fraser. Moonshot, 1968. 50 x 60 inches.

Fraser has looked and painted. Her transformation is an imaginative conception of outer space, but it is based on images gained from actual photographs in television and newspaper coverage of space exploration. She has captured the great drama and the movement with the swirling forms and the use of light and dark. Here is a positive acceptance of science's assault on space, and a positive acceptance of the knowledge brought to the world from spatial trips. As space is conquered aspects of the unknown are becoming known. Perhaps with this may go the deep-set fears.

And then there is the level of hope... that as we understand the visible forms of the new science better we will fear its knowledge less, just as we have ceased to fear the mountains and the waterfalls and the deep forest.  

New Angles of Vision

Artists have responded to the experience of viewing the world from new angles and have created images based on these views. Airflight, in particular has provided imagery for 'new landscape', with its experience of great height and great speed.

Horizon? There is no longer a horizon.
I was in the wings of a theater cluttered up with bits of scenery. Vertical,
oblique, horizontal, all of plane geometry was awhirl. A hundred transversal valleys were muddled in a jumble of perspectives. . . . For a single second, in a waltzing landscape like this, the flyer has been unable to distinguish between vertical mountain sides and horizontal planes. . . .

It was not until 1965 that Harold Town flew for the first time. Great Divide, 1965, (fig. 62) is an imposing image based on this experience. Town has imaginatively altered the size, colour, and density of the small circular forms (his 'doughnuts') to create an impressive section of landscape where a great divide plunges to an awesome depth. White oblique lines suggest wingspread and lend a sense of dynamic movement and drama. Great Divide is a stunning painting which captures something of the thrill of flying as well as the experience of aerial vision.

No-op, 1964, is suggestive also of speed, dynamism and tension, but here the inspiration is the complex network of streets and expressways - "l'anatomie du corps de la cité." Brilliant optical effects are achieved with the dynamic white bars that break across the darker ground.

A heraldic form of image emerges in Shadbolt's Northern Emblem, No. 2, 1964, formed from impressions
of aerial views of the northern Alberta landscape. The painting is one of a series done by the artist in connection with a mural commission for the Edmonton Airport as a tribute to Canadian bush pilots. The composite arrangement gives one a sensation of the vast view, the great speed, and the earth's richness.

David Partridge (1919 - ) creates fascinating organic patterns in nail sculptures. At the time of Sculpture 67 exhibition in Toronto, Partridge stated in an interview, regarding his art:

I once studied geology and paleontology; my first drawing was of a fossil. That and airforce memories of flying over northern Ontario are the real root of my visual experience. My work is, in fact, so inextricably linked with the imagery of Canadian landscape that a lot of it looks like muskeg seen from the air. Expatriate I may be, but when I look at my work, I know I am a Canadian. 45

In Kazuo Nakamura's Blue Reflections #2, 1968 (fig. 61) the world is depicted as a small floating object in the immensity of space itself. Gary Michael Dault suggests that it is as though Nakamura has "stepped back a long way from his earlier preoccupations in order to see it all in wide perspective. . ." 46 It is as though only by this means one can look at the world objectively.
Dault refers to Marshall McLuhan's statement that "Our getting up into space turns our 'big small world' into an art object, as we look back at it." In Blue Reflections Nakamura is in space 'objectively' presenting 'the world'.

This is one of a series that Nakamura has produced in which small landscapes of varying sizes are enframed in white and arranged against a deep blue-black ground. On the left a grid is in evidence on which the positionings could be scientifically recorded.

Today, new instruments and associated techniques have liberated men from their earlier observation posts. Partly for substituting the camera for the human eye, partly by using new means of transportation, from aeroplanes to rockets, observations are made at hitherto impossible angles, in inaccessible places and under physical conditions which would destroy human beings. These observations have made a new order of objectivity possible when looking at the world.
CHAPTER VIII

FORMALISM OF THE SIXTIES:

NEGATION OF NATURE

I hold that it is erroneous to project in a painting an object-in-a-space concept, as did figurative and some abstract painters, because it maintains a false duality. Similarly, any effort to describe in a painting some reality existing on the anthropomorphic level of experience can only lead to a negation of painting's true function.

The widening commitment towards formalism by Canadian artists in the Sixties was accompanied by an increasing denial of all subject matter. "The new abstraction" stated Seitz at the time of the 1968 Biennial, "is an art of image. Often...it is hostile to the very idea of content."¹

In 1966, David Silcox, summing up recent trends in Canadian art, stressed the strong influence of New York on the art of Canada, noting that this has led to the Canadian artist becoming less "peripheral." He then pointed out the direction that Canadian art had taken in the Sixties:

The trend from the late Fifties to the present has been a gradual one leading from density towards spaciousness, from the tumultuous towards the neat, from the bountiful to the economical, from the personal to the impersonal, from the emotional blot to the intellectual diagram.²

It has already been noted that by 1960 progressive artists had turned from abstract expressionism to a more economical means of expression. Barbara Rose speaks of a "general shift in sensibility within the art world"³ in the Sixties. In Toronto and Regina it has been noted the shift in attitude was primarily acknowledged and encouraged by Clement Greenberg with his influential endorsement of a non-painterly approach to the abstract image.
It is interesting to note that a reaction against gestural expression had taken place in Montreal prior to this time. As early as 1954 in Montreal (at the time when Toronto artists were enthusiastically adopting the methods of the abstract expressionists), a group of artists reacted against the spontaneity and freedom of expression that had originated in Montreal with Borduas and the Automatistes. The Montreal artists turned at this time to a more conceptual and objective art form.

The Montreal painter-critic Rodolphe de Repentigny founded the revolutionary art movement Les Plasticiens, in 1954. It was the avowed intention of the artists of this self-generating movement to abolish any tendency towards Romanticism. In their manifesto they declared their dedication to plastic qualities and to the interrelationship of the formal elements on the picture surface. This was to be their sole concern.

A second wave of Les Plasticiens were included in the Art Abstrait exhibition in 1959. The works in this show were of a non-figurative, geometric style in the tradition of Mondrian and Malevich. Guy Robert discusses the intentions of these artists taking part in this exhibition:
The seven painters courageously attempted to strip their pictures of any identifiable story content and of any literary sentiment. They set up the rule of reason and the law of the square and compass in opposition to the subjective approximations of lyricism, free gesture, and arabesques.

The style of painting that these artists were involved with is generally referred to as hard edge painting.

Guido Molinari, (1933 - ), considered the most representative of Les Plasticiens as far back as 1955, became the leading exponent in Canada of the newly adopted hard edge style. It was in 1959 that he first exhibited a work in his characteristic style. He employs vibrantly contrasting vertical colour bands of constant width, setting up a dynamic tension as the colour areas interrelate and interact on the surface of the canvas, (fig. 63). In this relatively flat, single directional art style, no nostalgic links with landscape can be made. (Molinari has stated: "I have found it essential to eliminate the factor of horizontality. . ."). There is no reference to subject matter in Molinari's art: this is an avowed aim.

My own preoccupation is to produce a plastic language expressive of my intuition of reality through the elaboration of a rhythmic structure implying a new definition of space. I hold that it is erroneous to project in a painting an object-in-a-space concept, as did figurative and some abstract painters,
because it maintains a false duality. Similarly, any effort to describe in a painting some reality existing on the anthropomorphic level of experience can only lead to a negation of painting's true function. 7

In the same catalogue statement Molinari discusses his ideas concerning picture space. It is here that one finds the denial of any reference to atmospheric space or any concern for spatial references which could lead to overtones of landscape. Molinari consciously aspired to a new spatial reality:

Thus I maintain that "space" is not an autonomous reality existing prior to perception and which would be external to man. The experience of space is a final synthesis resulting from the interplay of the components of perception and it is always subjective. The pictorial space cannot be a "representation" of an external spatial reality, like the atmospheric space of perspective, for instance, or of light-and-shadows whose only function was to reproduce volume. 8

Montreal became the centre for hard edge painting in Canada. In 1961 at the time of the Fourth Canadian Biennial, it was noted by the Jury: "... the only hard edge painting of any significance comes from Montreal." 9

In addition to Molinari a growing number of distinguished Montreal artists developed authoritative hard edge styles: Fernand Leduc, (1916 - ), a
pioneer in the movement; Claude Tousignant, (1932 - ); Marcel Barbeau, (1925 - ); Yves Gaucher, (1934 - ); and Charles Gagnon, (1934 - ). The styles they developed were in line with a major direction of painting that was being explored in the New York and Washington areas.

David Thompson in a 1968 appraisal of Canadian art recognized the continuing strength and importance of the Montreal School:

But artist for artist, the Montreal "stable" is headed by a formidable array of heavy-weights - Molinari, Gaucher, Tousignant, Gagnon - whose very affinities reinforce the impression of a kind of achieved authority which cannot be found in such concentration anywhere else in Canada.10

A hard edge, conceptual type of painting was taken up by a number of artists across Canada, but in some areas a considerable time lag is noted.

In B. C.'s New Talent Show of September-October, 1964, there was a predominance of figurative painting among the works of the young artists shown. "Of hard-edge or geometric abstraction there is no sign among this group. Are these urban-sophisticated forms of expression unsympathetic in this nature-dominated climate?" In the same article concerning this 'New Talent' show which was to tour Canada, Doris Shadbolt commented prophetically:
There appears to be a growing pattern among the younger artists to find living and working quarters right in the commercial areas of the city, in empty stores, lofts or offices rather than the city's fringes with their opportunities for living close to nature; the significance of this will undoubtedly be more manifest a few years from now that it is in the present exhibition.  

By mid-Sixties the growing international flavour of the Vancouver scene and the corresponding change in subject matter was acknowledged by Alvin Balkind at the U.B.C. Fine Arts Gallery exhibition, Beyond Regionalism.

In the majority of the works currently on exhibit at the Fine Arts Gallery, the landscape has disappeared and with it any claims to regionalism. In its place, a new internationalism steps to the forefront. It has certain qualities which may be seen simultaneously in Los Angeles, Winnipeg, Chicago, Stockholm, and Dusseldorf. For one thing, a preoccupation with form is in evidence.  

From the mid-Sixties a group of vital young artists in Vancouver turned to hard edge painting. Anthony Emery notes that the Vancouver artists owe much to London and Los Angeles in their painting styles differing in this way from the dominantly New York influenced Montreal and Toronto artists. In Vancouver a considerable involvement with illusionism is noted within the hard edge style.
Michael Morris, (1942 - ); Reg Holmes, (1934 - ); Bodo Pfeifer, (1936 - ); Takao Tanabe; Gary Lee-Nova, (1943 - ); embraced the hard edge style with its preference for precision of line, clear colour, lack of tonal modelling and smooth surface. These hard edge artists are concerned with visual sensations unrelated to any form of literary suggestion. They are interested in the facts of colour and shape, and the spatial illusion engendered by their employment of these elements. These artists, like the Montreal conceptual painters, make an avowed aim against concern for subject matter. Bodo Pfeifer has stated:

. . . but my paintings are purely visual.
Any literary association takes away from the concept of painting. 14

A year following Alvin Balkind's exhibition Beyond Regionalism, Michael Morris won a purchase award at The Vancouver Art Gallery's Painting 66 Exhibition, with his Problem of Nothing, 15 a hard edge work.

Philip Leider in 1967 commented as follows on the work of Morris:

In his work, narrow bands of colour replace all figuration, but far from declaring the surface as an inviolate two-dimensional space, the bands miraculously establish almost classical foreground, middle-ground and background spaces in which the various shapes and areas of stripe-made forms align themselves. 16
Subject matter has disappeared: the concern is with purely formal problems.

The extent of the prevalence and significance of hard edge painting in Canada in the late Sixties, in the opinion of William Seitz, an American, is suggested by his statement:

... flat abstraction surely seems to be an essential style, if not the style of our age.

These hard edge artists of the Sixties vigorously deny any association with subject matter. The connection with nature would seem to be emphatically broken. The landscape as such no longer provides for them a meaningful vehicle of expression, and in their works nature is no longer present. These artists are intimately involved with new international styles and trends that find beauty, purpose and significant meaning in simplified forms of geometric precision.

Although nature is not present in their art, these artists reveal in their work, albeit unconsciously, an unmistakable response to environment not to the environment of a regional area, but to their total environment as artists of the Sixties. They reflect an involvement in, and assimilation of, the growing urbanization and the growing mechanization of their world, and the continuing growth of internationalism in art.
Artists, including landscape artists, have always selected. These artists do, according to their experience. Each gives his view registered according to his particular sensibility and the facts of life to which he is attuned.

Many artists of the Sixties reflect an acute awareness of the man-made world, in their choice of colours, their geometric forms, their smoothly crafted surfaces and their use of new materials. The works reveal an instinctive awareness and appreciation of the potential aesthetic delights inherent in twentieth century technology. They have created 'new objects of delight' in their use of forms that are "eternally, and by their very nature, beautiful."18 Perhaps in the contemplation of such forms one might discover a new source of joy to replace those aspects of nature that are fast disappearing.

A significant appraisal of the work of a group of young American artists was recently given by E. C. Goosen. His remarks were made concerning an exhibition of works in New York: The Art of the Real: U. S. A. 1948 - 1968, but seem relevant to our concerns.

E. C. Goosen noted at the time of the exhibition, The Art of the Real: USA 1948 - 1968:
Yet despite their preoccupation with "problems," these young artists, along with many of their generation, are using art for its most classic end. . . to redirect and revivify our senses. Instead of taking the lofty route to this end, however, the artists of the 1960's, in contrast to those of the 1940's, have addressed themselves to the seemingly mundane, the world of simple forms and the simple physical realities. Their new art is assisting us to appreciate the full sensual presence of our ribbons of concrete, our lush electronic circuses, our colour chemistry, and our computer systems. They are making possible an aesthetic recognition of the underlying shapes and forces of the American cultural landscape. The ultimate result of such recognition could well be an increased capacity and desire to dispose the efficient elements of our civilization with an eye to their positive formal values rather than to continue to cling desperately to our ostrich-like romantic prejudices against them.

They in their own ways are helping to train the senses and the sensibility required to embrace a world which is coming into existence willy-nilly, though it wants to be born legitimately. There is no surrealist or psychedelic escape from the new realities. We spend too much time on the highway to correct its pragmatic effects on us with only an occasional dream.19

The predominance of the hard edge style of painting in Canada among so many significant artists has taken its toll on the disappearing Canadian landscape tradition. David Thompson emphatically states, in his opinion, the extent of the damage.
Canada's landscape-tradition is now past history, something overtaken by events and consciously rejected.\textsuperscript{20}
CHAPTER IX

HINTS IN HARD EDGE

The breadth of sky there that sheltered nothing but the naked eye has something to do with my paintings.

William Seitz at the time of the 1968 Biennial noted the continuing decline of the Canadian landscape tradition, but suggested that the tradition was not dead. He did question, however, the chances of survival, commenting as follows:

Geographical isolation no longer means cultural banishment. . . .

As Toronto's Pop philosopher has reiterated the world has taken on certain of the characteristics of a village. However isolated and insulated by preference of necessity a studio may be, new winds born by TV and Time, if not by exhibitions and art journals, blow in through its chinks. As a result landscape painting, that last stand of self-conscious Canadianism in art, is in decline. Will concern for landscape survive in the new generation? . . . it may be threatened more by unmodulated tones and clean edges than it was by abstract expressionist or tachist brush, . . . 1

However, in the same article, he notes, perhaps optimistically:

. . . atmosphere, color, light and space - the essential qualities of landscape - can be eloquently visualized within restrictions. . . 2

Within the hard edge styles of the Sixties can one detect overtones of landscape - continuing manifestations of nature? When tonal qualities are employed, is atmosphere suggested? Does the use of illusionistic space within the confines of the formalistic styles suggest a landscape space? With the use of natural forms can nature be suggested? Gestural strokes and
flowing lines give one a feel of natural things. Is this enough? Can the presence of these qualities - singly or combined - conclude a concern for nature on the part of non-objective artists? Could such non-objective works, then signify a stage in the conception of nature?

Within the formalism of the Sixties, it would seem that landscape overtones are at times apparent - perhaps as the result of a nostalgic tendency on the part of a romantic viewer, or a lingering attachment towards landscape on the part of the artist. In either case the approach is subjective, stemming from a committed habit of association. "Metaphor is still the prime agent of transfer, . . ."\(^3\)

Within this context overtones are sometimes indicated, even though the prime concern of the artists may be with formal problems. With some artists there is only a hint in an occasional work. With others the hints are more consistently noted.

Marcel Barbeau was originally an Automatiste under Borduas. In his paintings of the last few years his concern is with a rigidly controlled composition structure, and a smooth surface. Barbeau frequently juxtaposes rigid linear colour areas of vibrantly contrasting hues, which induce active retinal response.
His works have consequently been classified as 'op' art. (Barbeau's work was included in the New York exhibition, The Responsive Eye, 1965). Although Barbeau is concerned with formal problems in his art, it is interesting to note how frequently he makes a landscape connection - possibly on the work's completion.

*Bas du Fleuve*, 1964, (fig. 64) is an example of his precise, controlled style in which he employs weaving linear bars of vibrantly contrasting colour. The flow and movement of the river - essential aspects - are indicated in his rhythmic arrangement of forms. Rigid, alternating linear bars of black and white are used in *April Shower*. The angled 'lines of rain' induce considerable retinal activity by their positive-negative juxtaposition.

In *Roncosditioselle*, 1968, one assumes, Barbeau's concern, to the end, was purely formal.

Jacques Hurtubise (1939 - ) is considered "the most recent exponent of Montreal 'op' to emerge . . ." As recently as 1964 Hurtubise was involved with abstract expressionism. Following this he became fascinated with an art of optical effects attained through the employment of overall positive-negative patternings.
64. Marcel Barbeau. Bas du fleuve, 1964. 80 x 60 inches.

There are hints of nature inspiration in his use of flat leaf form as module in Veronique, 1967, (fig. 65). In his juxtaposition of tonally balanced complementaries there is a lyrical vibration. The superbly modified nature colour effects activate, but do not assault, the eye. It is gorgeous decoration.

There are overtones of landscape suggestion in the work of Charles Gagnon, who "stands somewhat apart from his colleagues in Montreal." In his works are traces of his former commitment to abstract expressionism. Gagnon's work has been described as "subliminal action painting."

In his brushwork and in his spatial relationships, there are suggestions of atmospheric and illusionistic depth. "He dotes on the enigmas posed by the juxtaposition of two spaces, one flat and one deep, one positive and one negative." In Tampon, 1966, (fig. 66) landscape overtones are undeniably present. The emphatic horizontal division of light and dark areas suggests horizon, and the painterly quality of the brushwork in the lighter area lends an atmospheric quality, and thus makes further connection.

The painting of Roy Kiyooka has always had an organic, fluid quality which even the austerity of his more extreme hard-edge
canvases has been unable completely to abolish.10

In Shaula, 1967,11 flat ovals are set in broad vertical areas, and arranged assymetrically. They seem to float in their finely divided panels. The edges of the forms and the dividing lines are of geometric perfection, but the tonal quality lends a softness to the precise effect. Kiyooka's former assertive colours have been replaced with subtle tonal relationships within an overall colour - in this case an atmospheric blue.

A combination of the use of oval forms with this use of subtle tonal modulation gives a strong organic quality to this recent work, one of a series.

Within the past year Kiyooka has referred to the lasting impressions made on him by the nature of the prairie landscape, particularly in Alberta, that he knew as a youth.

The breadth of sky there that sheltered nothing but the naked eye has something to do with my paintings.12

This use of tonal qualities in the recent works of Roy Kiyooka is noted with other important artists. There seems to be a softening of the hard edge in many works. This fact, of course, does not indicate evidence of landscape overtones - nor does it denote a trend. It does, indicate, however, that with some important
artists, there is a change in sensibility that cannot be ignored.

In perusing the catalogue for the Canada 101 show, in Edinburgh in 1968, one detects the change. The following are quotations from the catalogue of this show:

**Roy Kiyooka:**

The linear orientation of Kiyooka's compositions came to an abrupt halt in 1967 with new works such as Pleiades, in this exhibition. The flat oval became the theme of these paintings, subtly arranged within areas bounded by quiet line. Tone replaced colour as the vehicle of Kiyooka's art.

**Jacques Hurtubise:**

His new paintings in this exhibition suggest a greater level of sophistication in the subtle balancing of tone to achieve quieter tension rather than the strident colour schemes of earlier work.

**Bodo Pfeifer:**

While not losing that combination of colours which identifies his work, Pfeifer has recently dispensed with symmetry and begun to soften his compositions. The mood of these works has become more romantic and delicate, and the balance is now one not of opposition but of unity.

**Yves Gaucher:**

The first canvases played with intense hues on a colour field. Since then the drama has
subsided in favour of a heightened subtle play with combinations of tone rather than colour, and the optical effects are less harsh.\textsuperscript{13}

Alap, 1968,\textsuperscript{14} of Yves Gaucher (1934 - ), was exhibited in Edinburgh. It is one of his 'grey on grey' paintings in which the artist shows a concern for tonal qualities. "The simplicity and quiet of his new paintings are unique in Canadian art."\textsuperscript{15}

In this series Gaucher employs thin horizontal bars (his 'signals') that take their place individually on the surface by way of their tonal contrast with the grey ground. The contrast is subtle, but perceptible: the paintings activate the eye in a most minimal manner. Gaucher shows a marked restraint in his use of formal elements, but by his unique sensibility, in a strange way, there is a heightening of perception.

But even as one holds the surface in the eye, it dissolves into space and openness as the canvases assert themselves symbolically as well as pictorially. The signals are read as being fixed in the ground matrix but also seen metaphorically: tokens of some high-frequency communication and in turn part of a constellation of that energy which rests, hovers, moves, - in and on the grey of the canvas which becomes a segment of an infinite space continuum. In this elusive abstract illusionism the reference cannot be named, described or rationalized but is immediately grasped and understood within our contemporary sensibility. The peculiar dimensions and rhythms of today, distilled through an artist's senses and emotions into viable and poetic images.\textsuperscript{16}
These artists are not motivated by nature, but the increasing sensibility noted in their work would indicate a more 'romantic' turning. There seems to be reflected a sensibility that suggests an 'intunement' with the world of nature. The mood is softer, and there is a noted turning from the strident to the delicate, and from the brittle to the soft. This is only part of the story, but it seems to claim a part recently.

In the works of some American artists a new tendency has been noted. Time Magazine recently commented on the softer form of expression of many of the works at the 31st Biennial of the Concoran Gallery, Washington, D. C. In organizing the exhibition the director had set out to introduce Washingtonians to "the most avant-garde developments taking place elsewhere in the country."

The general effect is of jet-age space. Within gigantic canvases, Harithas' young artists explore a dozen variants of the new, airy, softly Expressionistic forms.\textsuperscript{17} Darby Barnard's \textit{Western Air}\textsuperscript{18} is illustrated in \textit{Time} to show this trend.

One thinks, too, of Kenneth Noland's latest work. \textit{Vista}, 1969\textsuperscript{19} one of a group, is a shallow twelve foot wide canvas, in which Noland employs the
familiar narrow horizontal bands of colour. In his new works, however, he has turned to pastel colours, creating, in Vista, a melody of pinks. Certainly, there are hints in this hard edge.

Truly discernible hints of landscape are found in William Ronald's works of the late Sixties. In the Chapel of the Anglican Rectory on Ward's Island in the Toronto Harbour there is a large mural (covering three walls and part of the ceiling) of bright colour and unfurling form. This work was executed by Ronald in 1966.

... the painting is an extension of the outside environment - a reinforcement of the unique naturalness of Ward's Island on the walls of the rectory.

Ronald has recently returned to painting from a television career. Overtones of both television and landscape are apparent in his Horizon, c. 1967. He combines both geometric and organic forms in a screen-like context to suggest a kind of tele-scape. Ronald's concern, one assumes, is primarily with the impact of colour and shape, but the suggestion of nature is present in the arrangement of the organic, floating forms: it is a landscape several times removed from source.

Gundiga-Uppans, 1968, (fig. 67) is another example of his evocative combination of hard edge and flowing horizontal form.
There are strong overtones of nature inspiration in the Magnetawan series of Gordon Rayner (1925 - ). In Magnetanights, 1967, (fig. 68) the suggestion of moving form appears as underwater life.

The flowing movement in the works of Tony Tascona (1926 - ), suggests something more specific. Seitz refers to Tascona as one of the artists who is "... bridging the gap between painting and new technology." Horizontal Vibrations, 1967, (fig. 69) is a work of lacquer on masonite, "... a sleek composition deriving its lines from sound waves and aerodynamics, carefully builds pigment into an even higher relief. One thinks too, of electric circuitry, which to Marshall McLuhan is an "organic thing, an extension of our nervous system." 24

Hints in the works of Kenneth Lochhead (1926 - ) are faint but perceptible. It was the open landscape of the prairies that strongly influenced his art of the early Fifties. Under the influence of the New York artists he was to turn from the unique surrealist style he had evolved. His art, however, retained a sense of openness that is found in these earlier works. Sky Location, 1967, (fig. 70) was exhibited at Canada 101 in Edinburgh.

His new interest would seem to be thoroughly formal - what one can do with this much yellow on a given shape and size of canvas. But the strong affection for the prairies still shows and many of his compositions resemble arbitrary markers on open untouched landscape.25

In a 1968 exhibition of serigraphs and paintings of Gordon Smith in Montreal, overtones of landscape were noted by a Montreal critic:

...strong emanation of the world around us, although little sign of a natural phenomena is present.26

In the hard edge works of this exhibition, Gordon Smith employed what Seitz referred to as 'the essential qualities of landscape - atmosphere, color, light and space.' Irene Heywood refers to this as a new form of landscape and suggests that "a former landscape painter speaks to us in a new medium."

Here is hard-edge painting with optical properties which offers a quiet intense search for more than the problems of color movement. It gives us a subliminal glimpse of the world of natural objects and a feel of the air of landscape in an experiment which could well lead to an enlarging of the original tenets of this form of expression.

Gordon Smith has used tonal qualities and illusionistic space within his hard edge style.

In Tak Tanabe's Summer Cloud, 1968, (fig. 71) there are more than landscape overtones. This is

really a traditional landscape presentation, although rendered in a hard edge 'technique'.

Tanabe's landscapes are not just hinted at as Smith's - they are stated strongly.27

The strident geometric landscape forms are combined with an unusual use of light to make a strong impact. Tanabe's works of this nature would seem to have evolved from his non-objective spatial abstractions.

In discussing recent works of Tanabe, we are into a new consideration - that of a conscious continuation in the Sixties of the landscape theme. Such works as *Summer Cloud* reveal not overtones, nor hints - but are a form of direct landscape expression. No matter how strange the 'manner', it would seem that Tanabe has returned to the traditional Canadian 'matter'.
There has never been an age however rude or uncultured, in which the love of landscape has not been in some way manifested. And how could it be otherwise? For man is the sole intellectual inhabitant of one vast natural landscape. His nature is congenial with the elements of the planet itself, and he cannot but sympathize with its features, its various aspects, and its phenomena in all situations.

Meaningful expressions involving traditional landscape subject matter have not completely disappeared from Canadian art. Nature as inspiration persists in the Sixties, and a small number of painters are preoccupied with approaching traditional landscape themes in a conventional manner. They have chosen for their mode - representational expression, and for their theme - traditional landscape subject matter.

In Canada today a rather remarkable concentration of such landscape painters is found in the prairie provinces where the direct impact of the region is apparent in their work. They show a deep attachment to the land, and a genuine concern to capture something of its haunting beauty in their art.

Clement Greenberg, the well known (and controversial) American critic generously praised Canadian landscape painting at the time of his visit to the prairies in 1963. His enthusiastic appraisal is interesting to note:

'It is not so surprising... to find that what makes a visit to Canadian art, in the present as well as the past, most generally rewarding is its landscape painting... Landscape painting is where Canadian art continues, I feel (allowing for Borduas, Bush, McKay), to make its most distinctive contribution... Nothing in Canadian landscape contributes to the "mainstream," exactly; nothing in it amounts, that is
to major art. But this hardly dilutes my pleasure in its freshness and authenticity, or makes it less valuable. Least of all does it justify condescension. In praising it I make no allowances whatsoever.

Further in the same article Greenberg states:

The tale of landscape painting, both in Canada and the United States, is far from told. I would hazard that more good landscape painting is still being turned out today in both countries than painting of any other kind.

This certainly proved true in prairie Canada, where landscape painting everywhere but in Saskatchewan rescued situations I would otherwise have had to report as discouraging.

The leading artists on the prairies that are involved with representational landscape painting are cognisant of international styles and trends, and conservatively make use of methods of abstraction — indeed, Andrew Hudson points out (concerning these artists and others):

Many of today's representational painters served their apprenticeship with abstraction, and use what they learned, there, in their new trade — . . . .

The impact of the prairie landscape has had a profound effect on George Swinton, who presently resides in Manitoba. He freely acknowledges his love for the particular beauty that is found there.

I have, I think, found my roots in the prairies and in the north. . . . And I declare my sensuous, spiritual love for the prairies and the north as much as for the human figure.
in repose and for the passion of Christ. They are not merely subject matter for me, they are my life.³

This depth of feeling is tangibly expressed in Swinton's romantic, but powerful, descriptions of the vast prairie space. In *Prairie Song*, 1963, (fig. 72) there is a lyrical, singing quality with the rhythm of the movement across the vast scene.

In Saskatoon, landscape painting is a flourishing regional art form with a number of strong, relatively unknown painters making important contributions to the Canadian landscape tradition. Dorothy Knowles (1927 - ); Rita Cowley, Wyona Muclaster, Ernest Lidner, (1897 - ); and Otto Rogers, (1935 - ), are all landscape artists of this region. Terry Fenton has stated:

These are all strong, relatively unrecognized painters working in an idiom that, while it is not popular today, is capable of producing works of real quality that are less affected by fashion than the majority of more ambitious art.... landscape painting has a character that is often undervalued. At best it has a clarity and humility that is lacking for the most part in the figurative and abstract art of our time...."⁴

Dorothy Knowles has stated that the purpose of her art is "to paint nature with love."⁵ *Summer Day*, 1965,⁶ is a romantic, but faithful, rendering of the prairie scene. She has confined herself to the blues
72. George Swinton. Prairie Song, 1963. 51 x 60 inches
and greens one associates with the vision of Goodridge Roberts, but her 'limpid' brushwork conveys an almost melancholy mood. The breadth and infinite distance are sensitively conceived, and there is an over-all stillness. Greenberg stated concerning the landscapes of Dorothy Knowles: "Aside possibly, from George Swinton, she was the only landscape painter I came across in prairie Canada whose work tended toward the monumental in an authentic way."

Wynona Mulcaster interprets the vastness in a more vigourous form in *Prairie No. 1, 1963*. Her emphatic brushwork energizes the broad winter scene and gives emphasis to the infinite space of the isolated area. Immense prairie wheatfields are sensitively described in *Prairie Landscape, 1959* of Reta Cowley.

Ernest Lindner, (1897 - ), who has lived in Canada since 1926, is a "stylistic misfit in the prairies." He shows a familiarity with the methods of the European Dusseldorf School in his art, and yet he is thoroughly familiar with contemporary art directions, having participated in Emma Lake workshops. In *The Fledgling, 1967*, one notes the extremely literal style and the great attention to detail. He has focused on a tree trunk with such concentration that every crevice of the wood, and every
moss filament and leaf growth is revealed. Lindner's work shows an intensity of vision that is frequently found in the work of 'realistic' painters of our day. Here, too, the feeling of the surreal emerges.

Ernest Lindner reveals his intentions as an artist:

I paint what I can't say in words. I try to express my thoughts and feelings as I observe life in the forest, on the prairie, in people, everywhere. Life as revealed in the smallest growth is, to me, most meaningful. Forms change life goes on.12

In their individual ways these prairie artists are endeavouring to interpret their region faithfully.

Gabriel Laderman is quoted concerning, in his opinion, the future of landscape painting:

In order for landscape painting to exist as an independently valid form an ambience, a conceptual framework, a philosophy or distinct social need must be present. . . . It is difficult to say exactly what the current landscape painter will draw on from among recent cultural and social developments. To some degree he must act as any modern artist, choosing out of his own interests eclectically among ideas, paintings and attitudes, both ancient and recent, those which are esthetically and pictorially useful. But nothing comes from nothing. The artist who wants to paint landscape new but does not trouble himself with the meaning of landscape painting in this new context, . . . , and who does not re-form his painting on the basis of his thought as well as his perception, may find himself repeating an ever more and more stereotyped formula which continues but does not expand the vision of some artist or group of artists
in the distant, or not so distant, past. The greatest danger here is perhaps the production of ignoble pastiches of realistic styles which were hard-won and thoughtfully achieved in their own time.
NEW ATTITUDES AND NEW TECHNIQUES:

THE LANDSCAPE TRANSFORMED

I feel I am the new Hudson River School traditionalist, using water, air, sky, land, clouds and boats.

The majority of significant artists concerned with landscape as theme in the Sixties, are involved with new attitudes, and frequently new techniques. These artists have brought about drastic changes in the presentation of traditional landscape subject matter. Their theme is not necessarily new, but their approach most decidedly is. It is not a 'new landscape' so much as a landscape transformed.

J. Russell Harper, in surveying recent trends in Canadian Painting (1966), has stated that "artists of revolutionary ways have lost interest in the Canadian landscape. . . ." In the Canadian landscape, perhaps yes: but in the idea of landscape, I think, no. Although most of Canada's most distinguished artists no longer find landscape a relevant theme, there are several significant artists who do. Their works, however, are really expressions of nature experienced within a broad context. Their concern is general and universal: no particular region is depicted nor suggested. This universal attitude is perhaps inevitable as Canadian artists, like Canadians in general, have become increasingly part of the larger world.

The response of these artists to the natural world is realized in art forms of originality and significance. With some the delight in the use of
new materials is obvious. There is little "play-it-straight" painting.

Toni Onley, (1928 - ) recently remarked concerning his works:

I want them to be achetypal . . . Basically, I'm interested in the shape and form, and the landscape comes after. But I'm always pleased when someone will say, "That reminds me of the coast of Oregon or Spain."³

Toni Onley transforms the British Columbia landscape in a deeply poetic way. In the Fifties Onley was preoccupied with oil and collage, and produced non-objective works of great force. A gradual reduction took place in his form accompanied by an increased use of the water colour medium. It was in 1965 that his simplified shapes took on the character of landscape forms. The manner of their placement on the ground confirmed this suggestion.

The non-objective shapes that had formerly been so important to him began, in their isolated placement upon a white field, to suggest the natural forms of rocks, logs and lake-ovals. These forms in conjunction with landscape-evoking-horizontals and colors, began to have increasingly representational connotations.⁴

Since this time he has produced evocative landscapes in a variety of media: water colour, oil, acrylcs, etching, drypoint, and serigraphs.

Onley's use of simple forms, and restrained colour unite to form works of poetic grandeur. There
is a serenity and stillness in all his work. In Valley to the Sea, 1967, the powerful landscape is reduced to its essence with his use of elemental shapes and limited colouring. It is silent and remote.

Toni Onley has increasingly turned to print making for his evocative expressions. Silent Sentinals, 1968, is a small etching with enormous impact. Two large rock forms are set against the horizon and sea, and stand for all time resisting the forces of nature.

Onley has recently experimented with serigraph techniques achieving with remarkable skill the subtle and muted effects of his evocative water colours.

Anthony Emery has stated concerning the art of Toni Onley:

All his paintings, collages and etchings derive from his intense scrutiny of landscape: his work represents the distillation of that experience and its refinement into equivalent visual metaphors.

Gershon Iskowitz transforms the Ontario countryside in his vibrant, romantic paintings, into vivid impressions of landscape. They are in no way representational but reveal an unmistakable emotional response to nature. In the poignant water colour Autumn Reflections, 1965, "shreds of landscape flare with emotion in a fiery bouquet of leaves and sky and radiant growth." He combines the use of flowing, melting forms with boldly
strident colouring, creating a passionate landscape expression. The shimmering, fluid colour forms fill the picture surface. *Autumn Images*, 1964, (fig. 73) is a work of similar expression in oil.

Albert Dumouchel (1916 - ) looks to the earth, (where Iskowitz seems to look to the sky). In paintings and engravings Dumouchel has created works of great tactile quality. In *Untitled*, 1964, (fig. 74) one seems to look at the earth's surface and is stirred by the warmth and richness.

His deep, introspective look at the land goes to the dark fertile earth itself with its life-giving qualities, its velvet-textured beauty, and its skeletal patterns.¹⁰

Earlier in the Sixties also, Yves Gaucher achieved fascinating textural effects in his exquisitely coloured prints on laminated paper. In *Aji*, c. 1963,¹¹ there is a strong presence of nature in the geological-like quality of the forms.

The island landscape of Bowen Island acted only as a point of departure for the fertile imagination of Claude Breeze in a recent series of works. This series, of which *Island #9*, 1968, (fig. 75) is one, is a result of a visit during August and September of 1968. In these works Breeze has combined landscape elements and organic forms, suggesting growth and reproduction in all its aspects.

The spectator is drawn into this strange world of merging forms, by the concave canvas structure. Mists of nature abound and hauntingly suggest the mysteries of life itself. The deep earth colours add to the sense of mystery. A landscape world and the world of man seem to merge, inter-penetrate and become one.

In recent works of John Meredith, (1933 - ), 'landscape' and organic forms do not 'float and merge' as in Breeze's recent work - they explode, collide and then settle into a kind of landscape order, as in *Courier*, 1967. Meredith's present style was first seen in Toronto at an exhibition in 1967. These works cannot be considered as based on traditional landscape theme, but the overpowering organic quality of his work confirms the nature derivation.

Meredith's organic abstractions are filled with vitality and exuberance. His unique style exudes a sense of energy and life with an almost explosive force. His forms fill the canvas and his colours are electric.

His highly personal language of abstract symbols, deployed over the canvas like the growth of some richly elaborated surrealist organism, owes something to the Abstract Expressionist wave... but has been able to move beyond it without totally rejecting it.
Gary Lee-Nova, (1943 - ) makes some interesting landscape references. Untitled, 1967, is a landscape of ink on graph paper, in which symbols of lyrical landscapes are employed, but not lyrically assembled. All the elements of a romantic landscape: flowers, rainbow, cloud, sun and moon, are arbitrarily organized on the geometric format of the equilateral triangle. Overtones of humour result from the gentle parody.

It is a 'graphed' landscape in the planning stage, with charted forms and a colour designated rainbow. It is a landscape to be executed. Untitled, 1967 is a unique combination of the romantic landscape idea, and an inclination toward the hard edge.

Gary Lee-Nova frequently makes landscape references in the hard edge paintings. In Western Union, 1966, (fig. 76) he has created an emblematic landscape enclosed in an impressive hexagon frame - a form of 'pop' landscape in an 'op' environment.

The stark, denatured landscape is executed with the cut-out forms and the solid, clear colours of billboard art. The two dimensional qualities of the painted surface are stressed. The landscape is set off in tondo and surrounded by an imposing burst of rays.

There is a complex play of illusionism at work, which is characteristic of much of the work of Lee-Nova.
The flatness of the surface, acknowledged in the landscape, is denied by the aggressively foreshortened cube, which alternately thrusts forward and veers back into depth. The dark base also emphasizes the three dimensional quality. The rigid landscape, therefore, surrounded by the emblematic rays, alternately asserts itself as distance and surface: its position is regulated by the play of shapes and colours that surround it.

Alvin Balkind in a recent article quotes Lee-Nova in part from a discussion with the artist concerning recurring images:

I really like images of boxes as well as forms of boxes. I like circles, and yet I like arcs. I like tangents of circles, so rainbows become a sort of interesting device at that point. And I like pyramids and I like triangles, and I like sky images, clouds and occasionally star images and sunset images: Rays, light, lightbands, and stripes and things like that.¹⁵

Western Union would seem to be a parodying of both illusionism and landscape art. Lee-Nova's landscape forms are traditional, but they are removed from nature - transformed by his dynamic hard edge style.

... Curnoe's work is autobiographical: he is more conscious than anyone I know of his environment - his roots, branches and maple leaves.¹⁶

FROM THE LEFT - PUTTY SMOKE ON THE GLASS, A DARK GREEN FRAME HOUSE WITH WHITE TRIM, ITS LEFT SIDE IS ALSO VISIBLE THROUGH SEVERAL SMALL TREES, A GROUP OF LARGE TREES OBSCURE THE HOUSES TO THE RIGHT OF IT, THE EAST (THIS IS TRULY GREAT ART) WALL OF A ONE STORY BRICK COTTAGE, ITS EAST WINDOW WITH AN AWNING, IN FRONT OF IT A DEAD ELM TREE, ACROSS THE STREET PART OF THE FRONT OF A WHITE FRAME HOUSE, ABOVE IT PART OF THE JACK-TAR BUILDING AND

77. Greg Curnoe. View of Victoria Hospital #1, 1968. Marking ink on latex on canvas. 118 x 94 inches.
The 'art' of Greg Curnoe (1936 - ) from the beginning has revealed an absorption in his urban environment, but in his latest works he has completely transformed it. *View of Victoria Hospital #1*, 1968, (fig. 77) is based on a section of the view from his studio window. He has, however, translated the view into a rubber-stamped description of it - an ironic acknowledgement of landscape. This verbal landscape is one of a series in which each work covers a defined area, marked out and sited along a string across the window. Curnoe sits at his studio window and writes these descriptions - verbally recording what he sees.17

The work of Greg Curnoe has always been direct and straightforward - deliberately anti 'fine art'. Earlier in the Sixties he created large brash, brightly coloured, pop-inspired works into which he incorporated small printing set words. It is only recently, however, that the verbal descriptions have become the image, rather than a minor accessory to it. David Thompson points out that Curnoe intends his 'lettered landscapes' to be read, not considered as formal constructions, but notes that the ambiguity involved between

"... a beautiful articulated kind of field-painting and straight *reportage* remains. The description itself has a Robbe-Grillet-like factualness visual rather than literary, and the double
process of reading and seeing, like certain types of concrete poetry, builds up as an integrated experience of imaginatively rich complexity. These works are both visual and factual; abstract and concrete, at the same time. Lucy Lippard states that Curnoe's intention is "... to make people, all people look at things, everything."
power of actual materials, actual color, actual space."20

Barbara Rose, further, describes some of the thinking behind 'the new aesthetic' that developed:

According to Donald Judd, the new aesthetic grew out of a dissatisfaction with certain aspects of painting and sculpture and an appetite for a fresh, unexplored set of visual criteria: "The disinterest in painting and sculpture is a disinterest in doing it again, not in it as it is being done by those who developed the last advanced versions." Judd's dissatisfaction with painting is that "oil and canvas are familiar and like the rectangular plane have a certain quality and have limits." He advocates the use of three dimensions, not because it is opposed to the space of painting and like the space of sculpture, but because it is less restricted than two dimensions and offers more varied possibilities, being freer because it "opens to anything." Three dimensional work, in other words, has possibilities for new shapes, surfaces, and a visual experience more direct and actual than that available from painting with its familiar shape and inert materials.21

Although the group of American artists involved with the 'new aesthetic' deplore any form of reference in their art of 'specific objects', and spurn any association with the depiction of an idea or an image - their art and ideas have undoubtedly influenced these Canadian 'landscape' artists we will discuss. The Canadians make specific nature reference in their work, but reveal the American influence in their inclination to achieve "thingness", "concreteness", "actuality and specificity of the art work as a material entity; a real object in the world."22
Andre Bieler (1935 - ) is a sculptor who acknowledges the fact that he has always been concerned with organic form. In Sculpture 67, Bieler exhibited a huge, bulging organic sculpture - a section of seascape, entitled Wave, (fig. 78). Arnold Rockman suggests that the large, curving fibreglass mass resembles the sea suddenly frozen, "... and its endless curves succeed in humanizing any space with rectilinear boundaries." Bieler makes some interesting comments concerning the artist and his responsibility:

Recently I was building out in the country, cutting down trees, pulling the bark off. I used to laugh at that sort of thing, but now I realize that there is a quality about cities that requires that we go back to that kind of experience; though not to deal with nature as it was thought of in the nineteenth century but to see it in the terms of modern science.

The scientist analyzes reality: he can reveal to us the nature of materials, the nature of structure. It is then the responsibility of the artists to interpret this reality through an environment more in tune with the way the sun and moon go round.

Roy Kiyooka (1926 - ) during the past two years has turned to sculpture and has created elegant curving forms from fibre glass. Kiyooka's associations with prairie landscape are interesting:

The moulded ridges and fillips in the pieces, especially the white ones, make
me think of my years on the prairie, of seeing the surface of the land, snow or soil, shaped into momentary appearances and memory by the weather, winds loosed from Rocky trenches, given room to play on the slightly undulating flatlands. 26

Don Jean Louis has also turned to industrial materials and techniques for his 'landscape' expressions. In a 1967 Toronto show at the Isaacs Gallery he exhibited his brilliantly coloured vacuum-formed plastic sculptures, among which was *Air Flow II*, 1967. 27 This deep black-purple object is constructed to hang on the wall where it appears as a fascinating, free-flowing shape with immaculate light-reflecting surface. It is a gorgeous cloud form. There is a marked contrast between the shape, which is so organically alive, and the surface, which is so non-atmospheric. *Amoeba*, 1967, (fig. 79) is another similarly constructed form. His former landscape drawings with their detail, delicacy and subtlety have disappeared, in favour of these sensually attractive, industrially crafted, well-formed nature-objects.

The Canadian landscape tradition continues in the recent three-dimensional works of Tony Urquhart, who is undoubtedly making some of the most interesting and important statements concerning landscape in Canada.
today. Urquhart acknowledges that the landscape comes into everything he does. In a variety of unfamiliar formats he reveals his deep concern for the life cycle of organic growth and decay.

In *Broken III*, c. 1967, Urquhart uses a large disc form to make his statement. The circle is a common form in Urquhart's vocabulary; here it lends a self-contained quality, a characteristic feature of his work. Urquhart discusses *Broken III*:

> Broken III works outdoors against the urban background like a landscape painting indoors, juxtaposing the country to the city situation. Surprise and paradox just seem to happen in my work. In this sculpture, has the circle been broken? Has it been cut or did its ends never meet? Am I spoofing hard edge? There's that unexpected tear in the tidy outline; the creeping encroachment of landscape relief onto the geometric surface; the strong suspicion that nature, not man, is getting the upper hand!

Perhaps the most significant recent landscape statements of Urquhart are found in his recent series of boxes, e.g. *Opening Box-Phoenix*, 1968, (fig. 80). Arnold Rockman describes these boxes:

> He has made a series of boxes, painted on the outside in a sort of lyrical abstract expressionist mode. The boxes open up along complex, curving breaks to reveal a space filled with painted, bumpy, rocky, sometimes mammary, undulating surfaces which may be arranged and rearranged in

many different positions. Sometimes when the boxes are opened up and folded back on themselves, the painted surfaces all align themselves into new patterns. Urquhart's boxes seem to express a theme reiterated over and over again among Ontario's sculptors: the conflict between the natural world and the manmade, mechanical world. Urquhart's boxes imply that the natural side of man can break out of its confines any time it so desires.

In these works there is a strange surrealist juxtaposition of hidden, decaying, organic life, and smoothly crafted box. The latter is a unique and evocative container for Urquhart's haunting landscape imagery.

Gary Michael Dault referring to Urquhart's Box Series has stated:

... that Tony Urquhart has been making some very important statements about landscape and about the human apprehension of the natural world. ... It seemed quite inevitable to me that the best way to talk about nature in our age is to think of it as an experience which can be boarded, unlocked, but increasingly kept protected in certain man-made environmental situations, a World Elsewhere.

In the main the artists making three-dimensional landscape statements in the Sixties have concentrated on the details of traditional landscape in their art. They have created interpretations of clouds, waves, earth, sea, streams, rainbows and stars. But they have approached these details in a general sense.
Specific aspects of the natural world are presented as idea, rather than as a particular topographical detail. It is this universal approach that would seem to hold meaning for these 'landscape' artists of the Sixties.

Iain Baxter, (1930 - ), a self-described 'maker of things' has transformed a coastal landscape into a shiny, palpable world of plastic. He has found in plastic an exciting medium for the transformation of traditional landscape subject matter into a three-dimensional realm.

Baxter's N. E. Thing Co. has many divisions and has been involved in many original and controversial art projects. Baxter became obsessed with the use of plastic and has used it to 'bag' images of every kind.

His work is full of references to the world, and his concern with traditional subject matter is evidenced in his landscape and still life creations. He is perhaps most frequently involved with landscape imagery, and has made plastic mountains, plastic landscapes, plastic streamscapes, plastic trees, plastic clouds, plastic sunsets, and plastic moons.

Baxter's delight with the material is obvious, and he has made others aware of its inherent beauty. He speaks of plastic as "constantly alive, shiny and
new all the time, kind of a fun-thing in a sad world."  

He considers what he has created as 'Visual Sensitivity Information'.

Baxter has stated:

I feel I am the new Hudson River School traditionalist, using water, air, sky, land, clouds and boats.  

Baxter's landscape creations have appeared as bas-reliefs vacuum molded in vinyl, (fig. 81) or as inflatables, either in the form of self-contained bagged landscapes, (fig. 82) or as blow-ups of individual landscape details. One cannot escape a mocking reference to our 'packaged' society in his use of plastic material for his own form of packaging.

The following is from a taped interview of February, 1967, and is enlightening as to Baxter's thinking concerning plastics:

As you drive through society now, you find all sorts of things bagged, even whole cars. This led me to the idea of the "bagged landscape": sealed vinyl with water in it, and a little boat and perhaps a little plastic cloud - a heightened microcosm. A painted landscape blends with the environment, but bagging a landscape adds an extra dimension of awareness, like looking at it through a window.

From bagging, I went on to the idea of inflated vinyl sculpture. I started making clouds and other huge shapes, floating and tethered. Inflateds have a built-in physical fitness program;
they have the advantage of being deflatable. Shipping problems were solved. I could make a very large sculpture, seal it off, and mail it with pumping instructions.

and further in the same interview:

Plastic is the clothing of our time, not cold and sterile, but an extension of our "human-ness" like a new skin, a membrane: warm to touch, laughing, shiny, happy.36

Baxter's concern with environment in the last while has been of a more direct nature. He has turned from his imaginative recreations of nature (which were frequently placed in outdoor environments) to the environment itself. In the catalogue for an exhibition of 'Piles' at the U.B.C. Fine Arts Gallery, 1968, viewers were directed to different points throughout the city where in an outdoor setting, further examples of piles might be seen. The piles at these various sites included logs, saw-dust, garbage, and a local mountain.

This direct involvement with environment is seen further in a work such as Erosion Fountain, 1968, (fig. 83) where the 'pile' is of the earth itself. The pile is an eroded hill of earth with a crater depression at the top and is described in Baxter's 'Selected elemental and landscape projects completed' list.

83. Iain Baxter. Erosion Fountain, 1968. (Model, scale: 1" = 200').
Erosion Fountain: Pile of earth around large plastic pipes in earth; when water is turned on, earth erodes and alluvial fans develop; can be stopped any time; model executed, 1968.37

In a recent article on Iain Baxter, Lucy Lippard comments on the extent of Baxter's experimentation:

Baxter works in and out of the various identities offered by his environment. His endless ideas admit no limitation to an artist's activities.38

A sample of the variety of the activities can be seen by the following projects:

Project Department N. E. Thing Co.
Shadow on snow (painted) 1968-69
Closeup of shadow on snow by trunk of tree.

Project Department, Ecological Projects
N. E. Thing Co.
Moss cut, 1968-69

Ski-line track, 1968
1 section of 1 mile skied line through woods on Mount Seymour, North Vancouver, B.C.39

Other artists have departed recently from a preoccupation with industrial materials and techniques and turned to outdoor environments in rural and isolated areas, and are finding in these regions, not only inspiration, but medium as well.

The new media are not bridges between man and nature; they are nature.40

We have noted that Don Judd in 1964 advocated the involvement of artists with actual materials, actual colour and actual space. Sidney Tillim wrote concerning the October, 1968 exhibition of Earthworks:
The recently concluded exhibition of Earthworks at the Dwan Gallery in New York brings to a climax the subsequent involvement with "actual" media in recent art.

He defines Earthworks as follows:

The Earthworks were just that - works made either with actual soil or by marking lines, digging holes and cutting rings on and into selected portions of the earth's surface (illustrated in the exhibition by photographs of the various sites.)

He continues further on the Dwan exhibition:

Earthworks represent a special and conceptual involvement with literal nature and it is not an accident that almost every artist in the show exhibited "minimal" art in seasons past. Either passages of landscape are turned into art or object-art is turned into a kind of landscape, or object and landscape are combined in a way that is both esthetic and atavistic.

Iain Baxter in both his background and approach differs from these artists.

Unlike most of his American colleagues he comes into photography not from a minimal-serial background, and into the new landscape not from single structures, ... but from science into art, from a fundamental interest in the physical make-up of his surroundings, which led to a fusion of surroundings and information about them.

However different Baxter's approach may be, he does share with these Americans a concern for aspects of the physical environment, and a concern for 'place' and 'site' as a general thing (although
they may be specifically named). These artists have turned to the actual elements of the natural world as media: different location is only significant in that it provides different media.

These artists, too, in their involvement with the natural world, still select, reorder, and manipulate in varying ways and degrees, in order to present. This transforming process has always been a part of meaningful art. In Earthworks the process may be accomplished by photographic selection, but selection is still an integral part of the process.

Lucy Lippard concludes her article on Baxter:

Baxter, is, however, probably the prototype of the new artist, a product of the McLubricated era but also of the vast natural landscape in which he lives. Like the archetypal artist, however, he is concerned with ways of seeing, and seeing the natural and the artificial environment, and he is concerned with communicating these ways so that others see more clearly the world about them.

Earthworks are only one manifestation of an interest on the part of some artists in the natural world. They are, however, an interesting and perhaps significant manifestation. One wonders if, at the base of this preoccupation with environment, are hidden elements of a form of romanticism that was so overwhelmingly present with the members of the Group of Seven. This urge to create in outdoor natural situations
is surely - perhaps unconsciously - a form of reaction against the existing technologically-dominated urban society. Robert Smithson speaks of the city today giving the illusion that the earth does not exist. He quotes Michael Heizer who calls his earth projects "The alternative to the absolute city system." Do these works indeed suggest an alternative?

In the spring of 1970 it will have been fifty years since the Group of Seven held the first exhibition of their controversial art. The responses to nature by Canadian artists since that time have persisted, as has been noted, and the variety of approaches has been considerable. Arthur Lismer, when viewing some contemporary expressions in Montreal at the time of Canada's Centennial, was heard to remark: "They make us look old hat, don't they?"

The Canadian landscape tradition as established by the Group of Seven has not flourished since the Forties. But within the broader nature theme (of which landscape is a part) many artists have found a powerful motivating force. Undoubtedly the world of nature will continue to be a deeply influential factor for a number of artists in the future as they endeavour to come to terms with ever-changing world situations. The forms
their expressions will take, however, one could not possibly predict.

The harbinger of the Renaissance sensibility was St. Francis of Assissi, who was enthralled by the beauty of the physical world and its creatures. St. Francis delivered sermons to birds and flowers, drawing them into the world of man. The small world of St. Francis is still with us, but we need men who can speak of today's extended world of nature, with its far-off galaxies, ultra-microscopic forms, split-second milkdrops, turbulence patterns, and invisible radiation. Unimaginable beauty is locked within these obscured vistas, as stirring as sunsets, flowers, and the white mantle of winter snow.46
Footnotes: Chapter I


3 Quoted in Graham McInnes, A Short History of Canadian Art, 1939, p. 79.


6 Ibid., p. 10.


8 Lawren Harris, "The Group of Seven in Canadian History," The Canadian Historical Association, 1948, p. 31.

9 Ibid.


12 Lawren Harris, "The Story of the Group of Seven," p. 10.

13 Nancy E. Robertson, "In Search of Our Native Landscape," p. 38.

Footnotes: Chapter I (cont'd)


16 Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art*, p. 78.


19 Reproductions of Group of Seven paintings mentioned in this chapter may be found in *Vancouver, The Vancouver Art Gallery, Group of Seven*, exhibition catalogue, 1954.


22 Franz Johnston, Franklin Carmichael, A. J. Casson, Edwin Holgate and L. L. Fitzgerald, all became members of the Group of Seven for varying periods, before it disbanded.

Footnotes: Chapter II

1 Harper, *Painting in Canada*, p. 330 notes: "The way in which the Group of Seven spirit permeated art through the influence of the Ontario College of Art is readily seen in the paintings of Illingworth Kerr from Lumsden, Saskatchewan."


3 Robert Ayre, "The Canadian Group of Painters," *Canadian Art*, Vol. VI (Spring, 1949), p. 99. It is interesting to note how long the imitative process continued among 'accepted' artists. In this article Ayre notes that five or six years after the formation of the Canadian Group of Painters, landscape remained the dominant theme in their exhibitions. However, by 1949, out of the 63 paintings in total, only nine were in "the tradition of seeing and painting inspired by the original group."


5 It speaks something of the power of the landscape legacy left by the Group of Seven to note how little of the effects of the Depression are reflected in the art of the Thirties. There is little art of social protest, and little of the Canadian scene, compared to what was being produced in the United States during the same period.


Footnotes: Chapter II


11 Harper, Painting in Canada, p. 337.


15 David Milne quoted in Buchanan, The Growth of Canadian Painting, p. 66.


20 Ibid.

21 Coll: The Vancouver Art Gallery.

Footnotes: Chapter II (cont'd)

23 The works of Roberts include portraits, nudes and still-lifes as well as landscapes.


27 Roberts, "From This Point," p. 321.


29 Doris Shadbolt, text, *ibid.*
Footnotes: Chapter III

1 McInnes, Canadian Art, p. 66.

2 Ibid., p. 78.

3 John Lyman was a former pupil of Matisse and a disciple of Morrice. As well as an artist, Lyman was a writer and organizer. He became art critic for the Montrealer and later, in 1939, he founded the progressive Contemporary Art Society. J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada, p. 365, states: "Lyman's return in 1931 was the first event in a more permanent shattering of the local calm. . . . Painting in Canada was academically sterile. . . ."

4 Lyman quoted in McInnes, Canadian Art, p. 73.

5 The return of Pellan coincided with the arrival in Montreal of artists, clerics and scholars, at the time of the fall of France. Père Marie-Alain Couturier, lecturer and writer, condemned the strength of academicism and regionalism in the painting of Canada. He encouraged artists to be aware of the great modern movements in Paris.

6 Hubbard, An Anthology of Canadian Art, p. 28.


9 de Tonnancour, "Alfred Pellan," p. 21, states: "Pellan had worked in Paris for fifteen years. He had seen all the best in contemporary art as well as the best of past centuries. . . . By some of the leading critics he was recognized as one of the most gifted of this new generation. . . ."

10 Buchanan, Pellan, p. 9.
Footnotes: Chapter III (cont'd)

11 Ibid.


17 Peter and Linda Murray, *A Dictionary of Art and Artists*, p. 310, quotes André Breton: "...by which it is intended to express verbally, in writing or in any other way the true process of thought. It is the dictation of thought, free from the exercise of reason, and every aesthetic or moral preoccupation."


20 Coll: The Vancouver Art Gallery.

21 Borduas was the leader of a group of painters in Montreal during the 1940s who called themselves the Automatistes. In 1948 this group began to rebel openly against the existing attitudes in Quebec. They issued a manifesto, *Refus Global*, which attacked not only the traditions of art, but aspects of society as a whole. Maurice Gagnon in *Canadian Art*, Vol. V (Winter, 1948), pp. 134-35, referring to the works of followers of Borduas in a Paris exhibition, describes automatism as an aspect of Surrealism. "Artists
practicing this form of art undertake the difficult task of unveiling the most reserved part of themselves, reserved because it is subconscious." He then goes on to explain that the automatism that is practised by these artists has nothing of the robot to it, nor is it merely a release for all the follies within the artist. He states that to create true works of art in this manner, one needs the ability, as in all art, to translate feelings and emotions into formal values. "Otherwise, the relationship of shapes and contour can scarcely result in anything but sham compositions, parodies of true abstract art."


23 Reproduced in Hubbard, Development of Canadian Art, Pl. 212.


Footnotes: Chapter III (cont'd)


35 Reproduced in de Tonnancour, No. 35.

36 de Tonnancour quoted, *ibid*.

37 Coll: Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Longstaffe, Vancouver.


Footnotes: Chapter IV

1 Harper, Painting in Canada, p. 351, notes: "Canada's first interest in abstract painting, which would lead to non-objectivity, developed in Winnipeg. The movement as a whole would not reach national or even significant proportions until the Second World War. The new awakening in Winnipeg and the experimentation it encouraged is much more important for the underlying thought and intention than for actual accomplishment in terms of painted canvases. This early experimentation with the abstract approach is primarily the story of five men - Bertram Brooker, L. L. Fitzgerald, Fritz Brandtner, Lawren Harris and J. W. G. (popularly 'Jock') Macdonald. They echoed various European trends. . . ."


3 Harris, "An Essay on Abstract Painting," Canadian Art, Vol. VI (Spring, 1949), pp. 103-04, states that he considers these paintings a form of representation "not of things seen in nature but representations of ideas, plastic, philosophical and social; representation of inner perceptions, thoughts, emotions and intimations similar to the evocations of music, but in its own autonomous terms. It is expressive of the world of ideas, of beautiful and moving proportions and relationships; a world of the imagination and of the perceptive spirit, and this has dictated the use of new techniques, idioms, and forms."


6 Ibid., p. 104.


8 Jack Shadbolt, In Search of Form, pp. 40-41.
Footnotes: Chapter IV (cont'd)


10 Reproduced in Shadbolt, In Search of Form, Pl. 37.

11 Ibid., p. 46.


15 Ibid.


18 Hubbard, Development of Canadian Art, p. 128.


20 Ibid.


Footnotes: Chapter IV (cont'd)


Footnotes: Chapter V


Footnotes:  Chapter V  (cont'd)

14 Reproduced in Harper, Painting in Canada, Pl. 363.
18 Hubbard, Development of Canadian Art, p. 131
19 Marcel Brion, "France," Art Since 1945, p. 51, states: "The term 'Tachisme' was coined by the critic Michel Tapie to characterize paintings consisting of dabs or splotches of color. . . whose arrangement at first sight seems to be governed by no constructive idea, to be determined by caprice or chance. . . . For the Tachiste painters, however, the splotch of color is a direct projection of emotion, without the intervention of reason, constructive ideas or meanings; the dabs of color have an autonomous value. . . . The artist's rational activity is reduced to a minimum; . . . ."
Footnotes: Chapter V (cont'd)


27 Reproduced, ibid., p. 135.


30 "Donald Jarvis," ibid., p. 28.


34 "Tanabe," ibid.

35 Shadbolt, In Search of Form, p. 234.

36 Ibid., p. 185.


38 Buchanan and Ayre, "The Second Biennial of Canadian Art," pp. 142-47.
Footnotes: Chapter VI


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Reproduced, ibid., No. 95.

5 Ibid., p. 7.

6 Helen J. Dow, "The Magic Realism of Alex Colville," Art Journal, Vol. XXIV (Summer, 1965), pp. 318-29, discusses the use of the term 'Magic Realism,' and the various meanings that have been attached to the term. Among her comments: "Generally speaking, the style is characterized on an international level by an impersonal insistence on the individual objects of immediate reality so that they preserve their separate identities with a precision which endows them with an emotional presence."

7 Avery Shaw, "Towards Personal Realism," Canadian Art, Vol. III (Summer, 1951), p. 163. In this same article (pp. 162-64) Shaw includes an illustration of an early work by Colville: The Nijegen Bridge, and quotes Colville concerning this painting: "When I did this I was essentially a landscape painter, like most Canadians . . . ."


9 Ibid., p. 23.

Footnotes: Chapter VI (cont'd)


15 Magic Realism in Canadian Painting.


17 Reproduced, ibid.


19 Reproduced in 5th Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting, 1963, No. 11.

20 Reproduced in artscanada, Vol. XXIV (November, 1967), artscan, p. 11. In this issue Paul Russell discusses Tap from the same exhibition: The austere grey image of an everyday domestic episode has a frozen timelessness about it, a grey memory of an active incident, detached, past and dead, . . . ."

Footnotes: Chapter VI (cont'd)

22 Turner, "Toward an Appreciation and Understanding of 'Primitive Art,'" Canadian Art, Vol. XX, No. 3 (May/June, 1963), p. 163.


24 Reproduced in Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art, No. 331.


28 Ibid.


30 Reproduced in E. J. Hughes, No. 13.

31 Reproduced, ibid., No. 24.

32 Ibid.

33 Reproduced, ibid., No. 31.

34 Ibid.


Footnotes: Chapter VI (cont'd)


Footnotes: Chapter VII


3 Clement Greenberg, "Clement Greenberg's View of Art on the Prairies," Canadian Art, XX (March/April, 1963), p. 91.


7 "Clement Greenberg's View," p. 92.

8 Barbara Rose, American Art Since 1900, p. 210: "If the end of an art style may be marked by the moment when no young painters of the first rank choose to work with it, then 1960 constitutes such a date for Abstract Expressionism." In Canada, a turning from gestural art expression was first noted in Montreal in mid-Fifties, see Chapter VIII.


Footnotes: Chapter VII (cont'd)


16 Ibid.

17 Chandler and Lippard, "Visual Art," p. 27. Indeed, Cross Section of a twig, Kepes, New Landscape, Pl. 269, there is a remarkable similarity.

18 Doris Shadbolt, text, Images.


20 Hubbard, Canadian Painting 1939-1963.

21 Godwin quoted in Five Painters from Regina.

22 Brian Fisher quoted in Regina, Norman Mackenzie Art Gallery, Statements 18 Canadian Artists, exhibition catalogue, p. 49.


26 Lancelot Law Whyte quoted, Ibid.

27 Ibid., p. 29.
Footnotes: Chapter VII (cont'd)


29 Reproduced in Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art, No. 310.

30 Coll: The Vancouver Art Gallery.

31 Hubbard, Canadian Painting, 1939-1963.

32 Reproduced in Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art, No. 351.


35 Illi-Maria Harff, "In the Studios - Winnipeg," ibid.

36 Shadbolt, In Search of Form, p. 209.

37 Reproduced, ibid., Pl. 198.

38 Ibid., p. 211.


40 John E. Burchard, foreword, New Landscape, p. 15.

41 Antoine de Saint Exupery quoted, ibid., p. 81.

42 Coll: The Vancouver Art Gallery.


44 Reproduced in Harper, Painting in Canada, Pl. 357.

Footnotes: Chapter VII (cont'd)


47 Ibid.

48 Kepes, New Landscape, p. 104. Kepes' statement of 1956 is interesting in the light of recent photographs from the moon.
Footnotes: Chapter VIII


4 Guy Robert, École de Montreal, p. 21, states: "... the Plasticians, Belzile, Juaran, Jeromo and Toupin worked their way towards the methodical study of a space set up by the multiple co-ordinates of structures and already broached by Mondrian, Van Doesburg and in a different way by Kandinsky, Malevitch, and the Cubists. In 1956 Fernand Leduc became the leader for the time being of the Plasticians until another group calling themselves Espace Dynamique was formed."


6 Robert, École de Montreal, p. 22, lists the artists taking part. Belzille, Goguen, Juneau, Leduc, Molinari, Toupin, Tousignant. Hard edge painting is not the only direction taken by the School of Montreal. A more subjective form of art is seen in works of Steinhouse, Letendre, Rene Gagnon, and Arsenault. Reproductions of their work are found in Robert's École de Montreal.

7 Guido Molinari quoted in Statements 18 Canadian Artists, exhibition catalogue, p. 73.


Footnotes: Chapter VIII (cont'd)

12 Balkind, Beyond Regionalism.


18 Kenneth Clark, Landscape into Art, p. 139.


Footnotes: Chapter IX

1 Seitz, Seventh Biennial, p. 9.
2 Ibid., p. 11.
3 Chandler and Lippard, "Visual Art," p. 27.
4 Reproduced in Montreal, Expo 67, Canadian Pavilion, Painting in Canada, exhibition catalogue, No. 34.
6 "Jacques Hurtubise," ibid.
7 "Charles Gagnon," ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 "Roy Kiyooka," ibid.
11 Coll: Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Longstaffe, Vancouver.
12 Kiyooka quoted in Bowering, "Kiyooka's Sculpture," p. 76.
13 Canada 101.
14 Reproduced in "Yves Gaucher," ibid.
15 Ibid.
17 Time, February 7, 1969, p. 60.
18 Reproduced, ibid., p. 61.
19 Reproduced in Time, April 18, 1969, p. 63.
Footnotes: Chapter IX (cont'd)


23 Seitz, *Seventh Biennial*, p. 11.


25 "Kenneth Lochhead," *Canada 101*.

26 Irene Heywood, "Smith's Year of Discovery," *The Gazette* (Montreal), March 9, 1968, p. 33. A work from the exhibition is illustrated, but not titled, in the article.

Footnotes: Chapter X


6 Reproduced in Canadian Art, Vol. XXII (March/April, 1965), p. 34.

7 Greenberg, "Clement Greenberg's View," p. 104.

8 Reproduced in Canadian Art, XXII (March/April, 1965), p. 35.


11 Reproduced in Seventh Biennial of Canadian Painting, No. 21.

12 Ernest J. Lidner quoted in Eleven Saskatchewan Artists.

Footnotes: Chapter XI

1 Harper, Painting in Canada, p. 414.


3 Toni Onley quoted in Kay Kritzwiser, "Toni Onley, Shape Form Comes First, Then the Landscape," The Globe and Mail (Toronto), January 13, 1968, p. 26.


10 Harper, Painting in Canada, p. 388.

11 Reproduced in Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art, No. 334.


Footnotes: Chapter XI (cont'd)


17 Ibid., p. 8; Chandler states: "Curnoe is now doing the Victoria Hospital landscape again, this time with a pictorial rather than an alphabetical language (the words will still be there but spoken on a loop of tape). Chambers is painting the same landscape; their work is set up back to back in Curnoe's studio."


22 Ibid., p. 5.


25 Andre Bieler quoted, Sculpture 67, p. 36.

26 Roy Kiyooka quoted in Bowering, "Kiyooka's Sculpture," p. 76.

27 Coll: The Vancouver Art Gallery.


29 Reproduced, ibid., p. 41.

30 Urquhart quoted, ibid., p. 40.

Footnotes: Chapter XI (cont'd)


36 Baxter quoted in Sculpture 67, p. 84.


38 Ibid., p. 3.

39 Ibid., pp. 5-7.


41 Sidney Tillim, "Earthworks," p. 43.

42 Lippard, "Iain Baxter," p. 3.

43 Ibid., p. 6.


I. Books


I. Books (cont'd)


Shadbolt, Jack. In Search of Form. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited (1968)

II. Catalogues


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II. Catalogues (cont'd)


First Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting, 1955.


Lawren Harris Retrospective Exhibition, 1963, with text by Ian McNairn, Russell Harper, Paul Duval, William Hart and John Parnel.


Jean-Paul Riopelle, Paintings and Sculptures, for the XXXI International Biennial of Art, Venezia, with an introduction by Franco Russoli, 1962.
II. Catalogues (cont'd)


Second Biennial of Canadian Art, introduction by Donald W. Buchanan, 1957.


Six East Coast Painters, 1961-62.

Sixth Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting, with an introduction by William Townsend.


Painting in Saskatchewan, 1883-1859, with a foreword by Terry Fenton, October/November, 1967.


II. Catalogues (cont'd)


Emily Carr, her paintings and sketches with text by Ira Dilworth and Lawren Harris, 1945.


Gershon Iskowitz, with a foreword by H. Malcolmson, February, 1966.


Emily Carr, a travelling exhibition, with biography by Doris Shadbolt, n. d.

*Group of Seven*, with text by Lawren Harris and R. H. Hubbard, 1954.

*E. J. Hughes*, with an introduction by Doris Shadbolt, October, 1967.

*Images for a Canadian Heritage*, with text by Doris Shadbolt, September, 1966.
II. Catalogues (cont'd)


Molinari. April/May, 1964.


III. Periodicals, Bulletins and Newspapers


Bell, Dennis, and Lowndes, Joan. "Two Views of the Man of the Year in the World of Art," The Province (Vancouver), August 25, 1967, Spotlight Section, p. 11.

Canadian Art, (now artscanada), October/November, 1943 - October, 1968.


III. Periodicals, Bulletins and Newspapers (cont'd)


Hubbard, R. H. "Painting." Food For Thought, Vol. X (May, 1950), pp. 31-34.


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III. Periodicals, Bulletins and Newspapers (cont'd)


