

which relates more to the notion of developing form from paint instead of colour than to the significance of action. On the other hand, gesture is crucial to the *Black Out* series (Cat. 14) for it produces the furrows and ridges of a saw blade being run across the surface and the lumps of pure colour squeezed from the tube, left on the surface to dry, that give the work a rawness diametrically opposite the lyricism of the *Untitled 1962*. Texture is again used as compositional strategy but here it is the directness of the activity it records rather than its relationship to composition that determines its importance.

The later works in the *Life Stream with Time Intervals* (Cat. 27, 29) series were painted by establishing the colour of the ground, choosing the second colour instinctively and then, as Ewen describes it, "standing back, looking at the canvas almost as if I were playing a football game, and then attacking it with tape, running it from one end of the canvas to the other, as quickly as I could, and then running a second piece of tape alongside that and splitting it up into the dashes that run through the colour field."⁵ In these works gesture becomes a function of the intellectual process that determines the parameters of its spontaneity. This sense of gesture stands in contrast with what is seen in the earlier *Stream of Life* (Cat. 12), where the image itself, a broad, orange band, slanting across a black form on the white ground, is a visual metaphor for movement.

It is impossible to generalize about Ewen's use of gesture because it is a quality that has a different meaning in each of the series. Each series produced vital, convincing work that cancelled the assumptions of earlier work. He destroys the myth that the serious artist devotes his career to the pursuit of a single body of concerns, allowing his work to chart the changing sensibilities of painting during a period of rapid innovation. Although his progression, from figurative paintings of European derivation through quasi-automatic paintings which yield increasingly to the order of geometry until, in 1965, the gesture of painterly action is replaced by the manipulation of tape, can be observed, the work develops along a meandering path along which the observer is asked to pause to look at the individual paintings.

In 1968 Ewen moved to London. Here, the work of several younger painters involved the use of mixed media to portray interests located outside of art. Where Surrealism had been a source for Borduas' work, Dada, Surrealism's source, had influenced the development of art in London during the 1960's. Responsive to the work he found here as he had been responsive to the work of the Automatistes, in 1970 Ewen rejected the