## the gallery

Every now and then a country produces an artis gifted with the natural insigh and talent which enable him or her to capture the overall spirit her his or her time. Alfred Laliberte (1878-1953) was such Laliberte (1878-1953) was such an artist. It is with due cause that among many Canadians he has earned the title of "our great sculptor of the rural tradition." Sixty-three of his works, out of an approximate body of seven hundred, are exhibited at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery (Sept. 21 - Nov. 1, 1990).

In an age where just about anything is accepted in the name of artistic expression, it is refreshing to view the works fa man whe labour of love of a man whose labour of love demanded great precision, ume and dedication. Sculpture is probably the most arduous of piece can be cast in bronze, it must have undergone an elaborate process beginning with a clay maquette from which a plaster mold is created which is used to create a plaster model. A second plaster mold is then made, using this las model, from which the fina bronze statue is cast.

Baring this in mind, one can
begin to appreciate the amount of work involved in Laliberte's art.
An artist is in many ways the product of the society in which he or she lives. Laliberte makes no exception to this rule. "I depict the rural tradition " he wrote because I radition "he wrote because I was born in the country. I grew up there, lived there. "His oeuvre displays a profound knowledge of his subject matter. When entering the Canadian Gallery one is brought back in time to a world where working the soil is central to every woman or man's existence.
Laliberte's finely detailed sculptures bare testimony to a mode of life that has slowly come to pass. Rural life is frozen in time: the Canadian Woman Worker, the Fiddler, Woman Wergith his cane and the Beggar with his cane and empty hat, the Horse Dealers, stand among many others, relics of a rural past. his sculptures are realistic in nature without being static and bare hints of expressionism.
In the Brunswick Gallery, a series of allegoric figures are displayed. Here, the artist's poetic vision is exhibited in poetic vision as "Soul

Feeling," "Dying Land" (represented by a nude woman wrapped around herself, body blending into the stone) as wel as the memorable "Self-Made Man" (represented by a man who sculpture himself out of stone). Laliberte's sculptures are made of bronze, marble clay or plaster. Along with the rural and allegorical figures, he has created many busts as well as works of a thematic nature.
Since much of what is Since beautiful in art is in considered beaurin in he eye of the beholder, I invite all art lovers, connoisseur or amateur, to visit the Beaverbrook Art Gallery and to
judge for themselves. I am of judge for themselves. I am of the opinion that there shall be at least a few items in the vast array of works by Alfred Laliberte that will appeal to the beholder's eye.
by Lise Elsinger

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