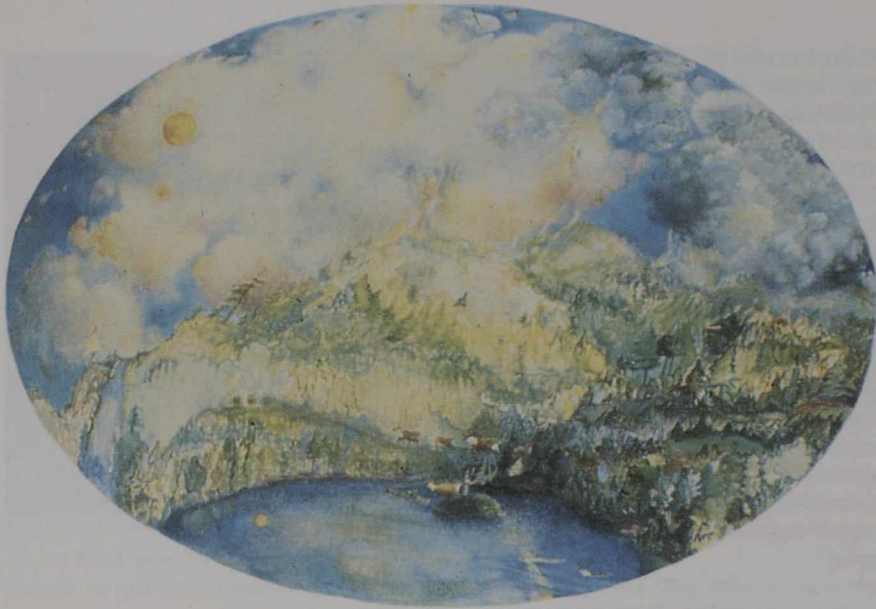


The work of Joyce Wieland,



Goddess of the weather,
Oil, 30"x40"

If the name of Joyce Wieland is not all that familiar to art-lovers on this side of the Atlantic, that situation will soon be remedied as Canada House pays tribute to one of Canada's leading artists and filmmakers with exhibitions and showings of her work in London.

Wieland was born of English parents in Toronto in 1931. Her father died when she was seven leaving the family penniless; her mother died two years later. The family disintegrated still further when, at the outbreak of the Second World War, her brother joined the army leaving Joyce and her elder sister to fend for themselves.

In 1944, Wieland enrolled for a dress design and home economics course at the Central Technical School in Toronto, but Doris McCarthy, a protégée of the Group of Seven, was sufficiently impressed by her artistic potential to encourage her to study art instead. After graduating, she joined a commercial printing house where she worked for four years as a packaging designer.

In the mid-1950s, she joined Graphic Films, an animated film company, where she developed a lifelong interest in film-making. One of her colleagues at Graphic was Canadian artist Michael Snow whom she married in 1956.

Her first solo exhibition was at the Isaacs Gallery in 1959, and she became the only woman member of the Isaacs group of artists which dominated Canadian art in the 1960s. In 1962, she and her husband went briefly to New York with the intention of exhibiting their work there. Instead, they became involved with a group of experimental filmmakers.

Later, Wieland developed a strong sense of Canadian patriotism which found expression in her work. The culmination of this trend was an exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada in 1971 entitled *True Patriot Love*.

In 1974, in a bid to reach a wider audience, she started work on a feature film, *The Far Shore*. It is very much an allegory set in the Edwardian era da

with its heroine, a sensitive Québécoise, torn between her philistine engineer husband and a painter whose sympathies lie with the natural world. The film won three Canadian Film Awards and one London Film Festival Award in 1977.

Throughout her career, Wieland has won numerous awards. In 1983, she was made an Officer of the Order of Canada.

A multi-media artistic quest

In the eyes of many critics, Joyce Wieland is the most original and versatile artist working in Canada today. Over more than three decades, her paintings, drawings, portraits, collages, sculptures and quilts – often containing a patriotic, feminist or ecological message – have taken the Canadian art world by storm.

Her early paintings were essentially figurative, but she moved on to abstract expressionism and neo-Dadaism, gaining much acclaim. 'People got to know my drawings', she says. 'They had a lot of sex and humour in them.'

When she arrived in New York, the pop art movement was in full swing and she came under its influence. Her film-making background also appeared in paintings and drawings of the period, such as *Sailboat Sinking* (1965), which uses a multi-unit grid system; it is also reflected in three-dimensional assemblages like *Cooling Room I* (1964) and plastic hangings such as *Home Movie* (1966).

For her exhibition *True Patriot Love*, she enlisted the aid of expert craftswoman (and sister), quilt-maker Joan Stewart. 'I wanted to elevate and honour craft, to join women together and make them proud of what they had done,' Wieland explains.

During a trip to the Arctic in 1978, she became aware of the mystical quality of light, which she sought to reproduce in her work. She began a series of delicate coloured pencil drawings, often circular or oval in shape, of which *The Birth of Newfoundland* (1980) is one of the most integrated.

Since then, she has executed some striking oil

Crepescale for two,
Oil, 20"x15", 1985

