

## Masterpiece painted in the wilderness



Ian Ferrier

Painting by three artists in small church north of Quebec City.

Three artists, James Hansen, Myriam Laplante and Claude Simard, have created a 372-square-metre painting in a small Quebec community with a population of about 1 000. A painting of this size is rarely displayed in such a small town.

Larouche, which is Mr. Simard's home town, lies off the main highway, southwest of Lac St. Jean and 150 kilometres north of Quebec City. North of Lac St. Jean is 1 600 kilometres of wilderness.

The work covers all the walls of the church of St. Gerald-Magella, a modern building, designed by the Quebec architect Charles Tremblay. The centre of the roof is stretched like a tent between high rectangular windows at the north and south ends. Four curving triangles form the walls, each arching upward from a height of 2.7 metres at the side entrances to over 7.6 metres where the two windows meet the roof.

### Stories from the Bible

The painting, on canvas, depicts the history of the Bible from creation to apocalypse.

Adam and Eve and the fall of the Tower of Babel appear just inside the church entrance and, the stairway to heaven is a tier of figures, lost souls striving towards the angels halfway up. The passion of Christ moves along the right hand wall beside the altar, and on the left the four horsemen of the apocalypse race towards the high window at the back.

For the artists, the painting was the culmination of a series of huge collaborative paintings they had done in New York, Provincetown, and Montreal. It represents

a year of planning and a month of work.

The painting has created a great deal of interest and support among the residents of Larouche who came out to celebrate its completion. Initially considered as a temporary installation, the painting has become something they want to keep and the whole community is working to raise the \$125 000 to pay for the work of art.

According to the parish priest, Father Isadore Taillon, "elderly people are coming to see this work. They know the Bible and when they find the stories on the wall they're amazed. It is a painting that speaks to them directly, and they bring their grandchildren here to see the history of their religion in a form they can easily understand".

Gallery owner Samuel Lallouz and financial consultant Georges Vezina, both of Montreal, backed the church project by the three artists after seeing their collaborative painting called *Trilemma*.

Mr. Lallouz and Mr. Vezina set up a trial project, a chance to see the artists work firsthand, in Montreal, during the last two weeks of August. The result was their first large collaboration on canvas, a painting that covers the downstairs walls of the Samuel Lallouz Gallery.

The work is a blend of the styles of three painters who share a number of common concerns. It is figurative, primitive, emotional, and direct. The holy, pre-renaissance cast to Mr. Simard's figures blends with Mr. Hansen's interest in medieval and African art, and Ms Laplante's figures that are reminiscent of Bosch or Munch.

(Condensed from an article by Ian Ferrier.)

## 1984 Molson prize winners

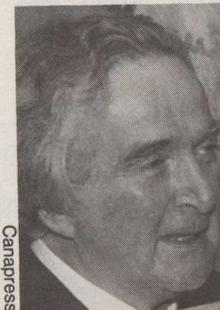
The two 1984 Canada Council Molson Prizes with a value of \$50 000 each were awarded to Quebec dramatist Marcel Dubé and to teacher, scholar, and writer James G. Eayrs of Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Canada Council Molson Prizes are funded from the income of a \$1-million endowment, given to the Council by the Molson Family Foundation. The awards are intended to encourage Canadians of outstanding achievement in the fields of the arts, the humanities or the social sciences to make further contributions to the cultural or intellectual heritage of Canada.

The first prizes, given in 1964, were \$15 000 and in 1976, they were increased to \$20 000. To celebrate Canada Council's twenty-fifth anniversary in 1982, four \$25 000 prizes were given. The Canada Council's Molson Prizes were increased in value to \$50 000 each in 1983. Two awards are made annually. Applications are not solicited or received; the laureates are simply invited to accept the honour.

### Contribution to Quebec theatre

Marcel Dubé has been very active in Quebec theatre since the 1950s and has produced many works for the theatre, radio, and



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Marcel Dubé

television. Among his works are such well known plays as *Un Simple Soldat*, *Le Temps des lilas*, *Au retour des oies blanches* and the popular television series *La Côte de Sable*, *De 9 à 5*, *Le Monde de Marcel Dubé* and *La Vie promise*.

In 1952, his second play, *De l'autre côté du mur*, won the prize for the best Canadian play at the Dominion Drama Festival.

A writer whose creativity springs from the political and social reality of the moment, Mr. Dubé considers himself as a spokesman for his generation and contemporaries in Quebec.

Marcel Dubé was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1961. In 1966 he was awarded the Prix Victor-Morin by the Saint-Jean Baptiste Society for his contribution to Quebec theatre. The Quebec government honoured him and his work by awarding him the Prix David in 1973.

Through his numerous books and articles analyzing Canada's positions on various foreign policy issues, James Eayrs has made significant contributions towards the