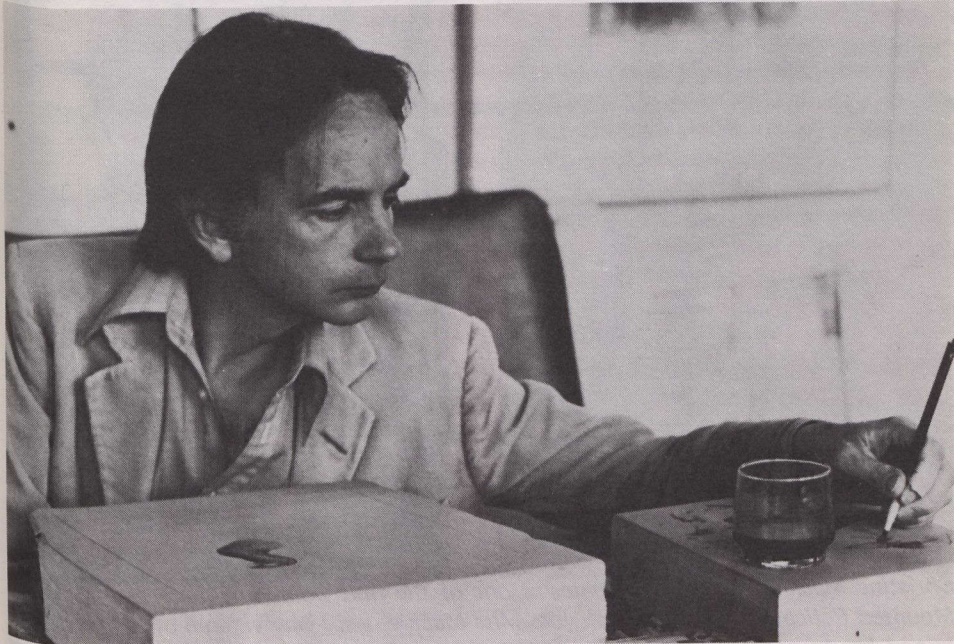


Lansdowne watercolours displayed at Vancouver gallery



Fenwick Lansdowne works on one of his watercolours in his studio.

A retrospective exhibition of paintings by Fenwick Lansdowne, considered one of the finest wildlife artists of all time, is on display at the Vancouver Art Gallery until October 25.

Works never before exhibited or published are included in the exhibition of some 160 works produced between 1954 and 1980.

Lansdowne's rise to international recognition and acclaim has been meteoric. Stricken with polio as an infant, he and his mother were evacuated to Victoria, British Columbia from his native Hong Kong in 1940 when the Second World War broke out in the Pacific. Confined

to bed during his childhood, Lansdowne was encouraged by his mother, Edith, a naturalist and accomplished artist, to develop his gift for drawing. He began painting birds at 13, spending the summer months studying the ornithological collection at the British Columbia Provincial Museum. His talent was such that two years later the institution sponsored an exhibition of the youth's exceptional work.

No training

Lansdowne, a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, has never had any formal art training. As early as 1956, John Livingstone at that time executive director of the Audubon Society of Canada, said Lansdowne's paintings were "absolutely gorgeous — too good for anyone but a trained, mature artist".

When Livingstone learned that the paintings were the work of a self-taught teenager, he arranged for a one-man exhibition of 40 watercolours by the then 19-year-old at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. His work was instantly acclaimed by art critics and naturalists alike.

Since that time Lansdowne's work has been exhibited in many major galleries and museums including the Tryon Galleries in London, England; the Kennedy Galleries in New York; National Museum of Natural Science, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.; and the Peter Wenning Gallery, Johannesburg.

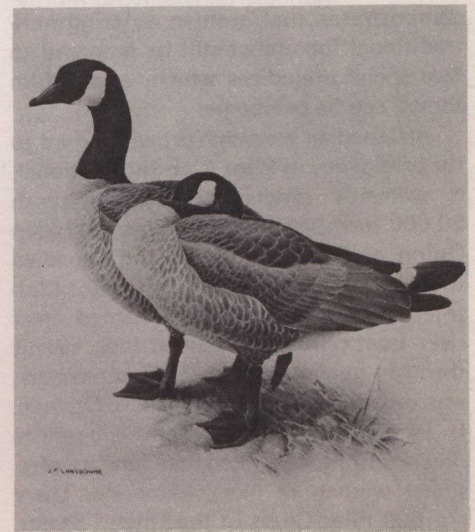
The city of Victoria presented one of

Lansdowne's paintings to the Princess Royal in 1962 and another was given to former United States Vice-President Walter Mondale by the Canadian government for inclusion in the permanent vice-presidential collection. Other paintings have been acquired by such collections as the Beaverbrook Foundation; the Ulster Museum, Belfast; the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; the Art Gallery of Victoria; and by numerous private collections including that of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

Uses skins

Fenwick Lansdowne takes extensive field trips in order to familiarize himself with the natural habitats and postures of his subject. He makes sketches of their characteristic attitudes and movements, which he later develops in his studio using skins or stuffed birds to work out the intricate details of their plumage.

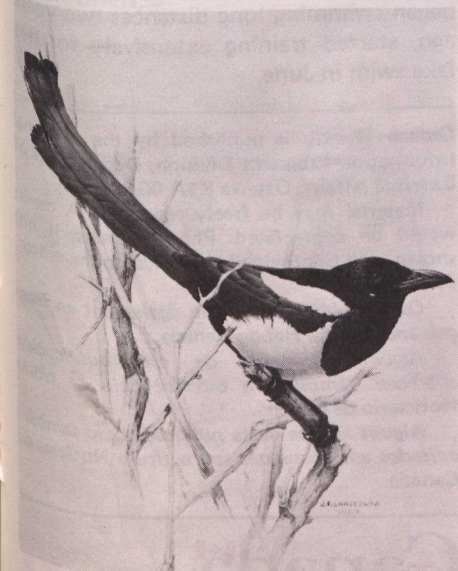
In recent years, Lansdowne has expanded his range of subject matter through exploring the uses of different



Canada Goose

materials. He has developed his paintings to a larger size and has experimented with using tinted or rough textured paper, and adding the use of charcoal and white chalk to his gouache (an opaque watercolour paint) medium.

Generally, his work is distinguished by a stark and beautiful simplicity of design. He uses only a few twigs or rocks, a single branch or flower, to indicate the environment of the subject. This simplicity of design, in combination with the accuracy of detail, exquisite colour, and natural position and stance of the bird, produce a finished painting of rare beauty and impact.



Belted Kingfisher