

which Borduas and his circle talked. In spite of Molinari's conclusion, which rejected the claims of the Automatistes, he produced six important paintings in that style. In the eight month period of experimentation, Molinari also tried the drip technique of Jackson Pollock and the pallet knife application of paint favoured by Borduas. *Emergence* (ill. p. 165) is an example of the latter.

The history of art is littered with the battles of two basically opposed forces, both of which have contributed richly to our visual experience: those for whom painting is an expression of the intuitive, the emotional, the poetic, and those for whom it is cerebral — formal, disciplined, carefully thought out. In the early fifties, that battle was being waged fiercely in Montreal and Molinari was a vigorous participant. Far from wanting to follow what was going on in New York, Borduas and his disciples, adherents of the emotional side of the argument, were antagonistic to it; they found Pollock too mechanical, not poetic enough. Up to the middle of the 1950s Borduas was held in such personal reverence that the concept of automatisme had not been fully aired in the art world. But a show, *Matière Chant*, at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art ended that era; one of the judges of the show, which was the last flowering of automatisme, was Borduas, who had been invited back from New York for the event. Molinari took his stand by refusing to exhibit in the show — a particularly bold action from a young artist, but inevitable for a man who had decided that he had to take a stand in opposition to the automatistes.

From the decline of one artistic idea another, inevitably, rose: in the same year, 1954, came a reaction from a group who called themselves Les Plasticiens and whose works were cool, hard-edged, geometric abstractions. Although not ever a formal member of Les Plasticiens, Molinari found in its output a concept close to his own; in time, after the group had disbanded, Molinari became the acknowledged leader of Plasticien-type painters.

Molinari was then pursuing a type of painting we now call hard-edge. He claims that his inspiration for this came from watching garages paint automobile bodies using masking tape. He also says that this innovation preceded any knowledge of the hard-edge style from New York; e.g., Ellsworth Kelly, who was at that time still in France. In retrospect it appears that the Borduas circle in Montreal and Painters Eleven in Toronto were engaged in "action painting" of a type which became known by its New York practitioners as abstract expressionism, while Molinari and his loosely formed group were well into hard-edge.

Like Tousignant, Molinari had found that there were only two galleries where he could hope to exhibit and one of these was attached to a restaurant. Molinari (with Tousignant and Robert Blair) founded the Galerie l'Actuelle;