

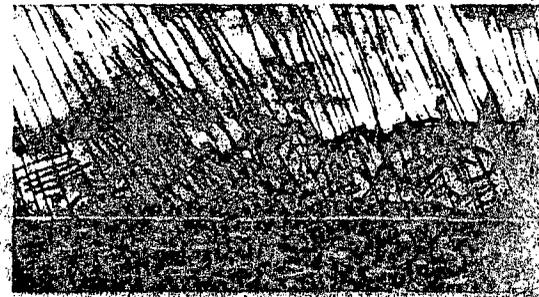
*Thunder Cloud as a Generator #1, 1971  
acrylic on canvas, 84" x 60"*

I never really felt that I wanted to stop painting.

JOHNSON: It is amazing how that came about. Those early lines had a secret and you dug it out. They really were life-lines. Still this could have led you in other directions, to other subject matter and less earthful ways of dealing with it. Have you always been interested in cosmic phenomena and weather and was this a beginning that had been coming for a longer time?

EWEN: Yes I think so and there are several things mixed in there. My father came over from Abergail when he was 17 years old and he spent eleven consecutive years in the far north with the Hudson Bay Company before he came back down to civilization. So as a boy I heard his stories of northern Canada and Indians and Eskimos and I guess I always had this almost romantic attitude to the space up there. I always tell myself that when I take a long holiday I will go to the tundra. The other thing was that as a boy my ambition was to be a geologist. Some boys are going to be firemen but I was going to be a geologist. And when I was older I went to McGill to study geology. But I think in a lot of fields education starts or used to start at the wrong end. I thought we were going to begin talking about mountains and rocks and I was very excited and there was a blackboard and a man standing up there telling us to memorize the following formula for the specific density of some mineral. I really had no interest in that and I quit the course and pretty soon with enough of that and things like it I began to draw, and I became an artist. But it was only when I did the minimal work that looked like phenomena that these things came to the surface.

*Science and art, meteorology and Ewen. A diagram from a typical weather textbook: little clouds sitting above the curved earth speckled with tiny black plus and minus signs and with colored arrows pointing up and down around them. Children's marks about feelings about clouds, an old philosopher's invocations of something invisible, poets' wordless words about something about weather, wonder about weather? Ewen's earlier weather paintings make use of this ambiguous language of meteorology, but inside out. Where such weather diagrams are concrete*



*Coastal Trip, 1974  
set of three pieces, acrylic on  
plywood, each: 24" x 96"*