

Meredith believes that, if he has been influenced at all, it is by Borduas and Les Automatistes and even that was not a stylistic influence but rather brought about a change in attitude, a kind of release that helped him find his own personal language of expression.

His first exhibition, in 1958, was at the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Toronto; two years later he joined the group, jocularly known as Isaacs' Allstars, who show at the Isaacs Gallery. He has had five one-man shows at the Isaacs since 1961.

In the years since then, he has been included, in Canada, in the National Gallery's Biennial (1965), and in every major survey show mounted to the present day; internationally, he has been represented in a group show at Buffalo's Albright Knox Gallery (1963-64), the International Biennial in Paris (1965), the Gallery of Modern Art, Paris (1967), the *Nine Canadians* show at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston (1968), *Canada 101* in Edinburgh in the same year and in the Tenth International *Black and White Exhibition* in Lugano (1968) and *Eight Artists from Canada* in Tel Aviv (1971).

Meredith regards 1962 as particularly important in his artistic evolution; in that year he produced *Bengal* (ill. p. 149) which, to his mind, is a key work. In it he transferred a drawing technique to painting; the blurring of the ink line which was to become his unique trademark intrigued him for some years and in *Bengal* he moved it for the first time from drawing to painting. From 1964 on it became his signature.

Meredith's technique is painstaking and of great interest: he does his work first in the form of small drawings, which he has collected over the past fifteen years; he selects one of these and then enlarges it (his canvases often exceed eight feet in size) almost without change in what he calls the most "traditional manner possible," graphing the small sketch and the large canvas. This method releases him from the problem of form so that he can throw all his energies into the challenge of colour. The astonishing and delightful mystery of his work is that, despite its meticulousness, it has the spontaneity and excitement of art created in a single burst of inspiration.

Meredith's unique imagery is spontaneous and comes purely from his unconscious. Because his work is perhaps the most original of that of any Canadian artist, critics have pressed him to discuss its origins. In an interview with Barry Lord of the National Gallery of Canada, he finally protested: "don't try to explain it all away." He does, however, say that the style which has grown out of his pen and ink sketches lends movement to his paintings; although this style was initially uncalculated, its artistic exploitation continues to give him pleasure. What he does with these forms is not accidental; the inspiration may