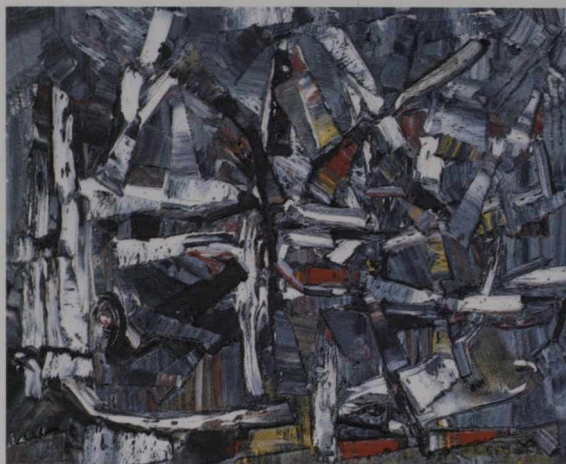


Jean-Paul Riopelle,
Peinture grise, 1958,
oil on canvas



The Canadian painter best known internationally is Jean-Paul Riopelle. His style is intensely personal, just as his personality is strictly private. Many changes have occurred in the way he paints, but, when asked, he affirms 'For me, everything is landscape'. *Peinture grise* (1958) reflects his subdued vitality. The paint is heavily applied in bold palette strokes. One can read into the picture traces of landscape features blended with an emotional response. This is a dynamic and happy painting. Riopelle is a profound and restless painter whose imagery is boundless.

In Jean-Paul Lemieux's early years, his romantic period, he painted traditional landscapes of lakes, rolling farms and wooded areas, followed by a more free-flowing portrayal of scenery along the lines of the Group of Seven, and figure studies. A dramatic breakthrough occurred in 1956, when he developed a style that made him known as a unique Quebec painter. His paintings depicted sombre-looking people in severe and often hostile landscape. The figures had unemotional, stolid faces against a flat land, bleak winter or melancholy summer. They reflected man's loneliness and a sense of timelessness. Now, for over a quarter of a century, Lemieux has been a loner as he paints the soul of Quebec, the land and its people.

Port au persil (1953) reveals his transition from traditional — painting on occasion in hazy Impressionistic style — to more simplistic and serene versions which were to become the hallmark of his later career. Lemieux is a proud Quebecois whose haunting portrayals of the unfathomable mystery of his heritage have given him a distinct place in the Canadian art scene.

Western Canada and Atlantic Canada

Canada's western artists live in two distinct regions: one is British Columbia, the other the prairie provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. British Columbia is the country of the Gold Rush, Salmon fishing and giant trees. Its climate is the warmest in Canada.

The work of three British Columbian painters is included: Emily Carr, Jack Shadbolt and Joe Plaskett. A fourth, Maxwell Bates, straddles both British Columbia and Alberta.

The scenery of the prairie region is quite different from the coast: chiefly flat lands, largely grain-

Emily Carr,
Sunlight in the Forest,
1912, oil on canvas



growing areas with oil derricks, uranium mines and a host of other resource industries.

The work of two painters from this region is included: Otto Rogers and Lemoine Fitzgerald.

While most of the painters of central and eastern Canada have had a European orientation, western painters have largely looked towards the United States, mainly to New York or California.

Emily Carr (1871-1945) was Canada's greatest woman painter and her work continues to be regarded as an outstanding contribution to her era. She scoffed at her male colleagues who tried to keep women out of their elite circle and was determined to let the quality of her artistry speak for her. In her later years, the country that held women could not paint professionally began to acknowledge that she was indeed an accomplished artist. It was only after her death, however, that her true genius was recognized, and she is now ranked among the best painters Canada has produced.

The crucial time in Carr's development came in 1910-11, during her stay in France. Where before 1911 her paintings had reflected the conventional academic tradition of the times, after her return to Canada from France her work became much bolder and showed greater richness of colour, less attention to detail and greater economy of brushstroke. *Sunlight in the Forest* (1912) was painted in the Post-Impressionistic style she had acquired in France. It shows her sense of pictorial control, her vigorous, free brushstrokes and vibrant colours. It also illustrates her concentration on key features of a scene.

Atlantic Canada is comprised of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland. The chief art movement in the Atlantic region is High Realism, a style internationally known through the work of Alex Colville, Michael Forrester and Christopher Pratt. Most of the artists in this school paint in egg tempera in a style which combines strong content orientation with subtle interpretation. However the two artists who are included in this exhibition are individualists who do not belong to the prevailing school of their region: Molly Lamb Bobak and Anthony Law.

Individualists

Each of the thirty-three artists exhibited are individualists, but some have developed in greater isolation from artistic influences: Henri Masson, David Partridge and York Wilson. David Partridge's most original contributions are his nail configurations, or 'nailies'. These are abstract creations using nails on plywood backing or wood blocks. The nail heads are coloured, and he builds up mountains and valleys using different sizes of nails and varying depths and densities. In this exhibition, *Arctic Sun* (1959) is an imaginary composition using nitro-cellulose.

Canada is a land that has inspired the explorer, the innovator and the artist. Its sheer immensity, its colourful diversity and its unique character are all features that have aroused the free-wheeling spirit of Canadian landscape painters over the last seventy years and resulted in the works which appear in *The Canadian Landscape* exhibition. ♣



Jean-Paul Lemieux,
Port au Persil, 1953,
oil on panel

The Canadian Landscape is on view at the Canada House Gallery Trafalgar Square, London, from 14 September to 4 November 1983. It will be at the City Museum and Art Gallery, Plymouth from 21 January to 15 February 1984. After that it will go to the Municipal Museum in Madrid and the Canadian Culture Centre in Paris.

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