

A Dictionary of Canadian Artists

Compiled by Colin S. MacDonald

EWEN, William Paterson

b. 1925

Born in Montreal, Quebec, his interest in art began after his discharge from the Canadian army at the close of the Second World War. He attended McGill University in 1949 where he studied under John Lyman and in 1950-1, he took classes at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts under Goodridge Roberts, William Armstrong and Jacques de Tonnancour. He was influenced in his early work perhaps more by Roberts and Armstrong but later became fully obsessed with the challenging and alluring work of the Automatistes who had been inspired by the leadership of Paul Emile Borduas. In 1961 Dorothy Pfeiffer¹ noted his work as follows, "Ominous and somber, yet paradoxically painted in intense, rich, color, the thickly modelled, prodded, plastered and raked expressions of Canadian artist, Paterson Ewen, as seen at Galerie Denyse Delrue, transfix one's almost awed attention . . . To my mind, Paterson Ewen's brilliantly demonic paintings add an archaic echo to the 20th Century's clamorous unrest and fear . . ." In 1956 The Non-Figurative Artists' Association of Montreal was founded and Paterson Ewen became a member. As its President in 1960 he wrote the introduction for the Association's exhibition catalogue²; the showing was at the National Gallery of Canada and was organized by Claude Picher who was at that time the Gallery's Eastern Representative. In his recent non-objective work he has employed the media of oils, water colours, tempera and pastels. He held a one man show at the Galerie du Siècle in 1966. His awards include the Prix des Laurentides, 1957; Second Prize, Province of Quebec Painting Competition, 1958; and in 1964 received a Senior Arts Fellowship from the Canada Council. He is represented in the permanent collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the Provincial Museum of Quebec. His wife Françoise Sullivan is a dancer and choreographer and they live in Montreal.

References

¹ Document from artist

² *The Gazette*, Montreal, Nov. 25, 1961, a review by Dorothy Pfeiffer

³ *The Non-Figurative Artists' Association of Montreal, 1960-1 exhibition catalogue*, prepared by Claude Picher who organized the exhibition.

⁴ *Montreal Star*, Feb. 24, 1964