

A Dictionary of Canadian Artists

Compiled by Colin S. MacDonald

MOLINARI, Guido

b. 1933

Born in Montreal, P.Q., the son of Joseph Charles and Marie Mathilda Evelyn (Dini) Molinari, his father a noted musical director, had many artist friends visiting his home which created an exciting background for the boy's youth. From the age of twelve Guido wanted to become an artist. He received his regular schooling at the Sisters of Providence Kindergarten in Montreal (1939-41); the Lady of Mt. Carmel Elementary School (1942-47); St. Stanislas High School (1948-49) Mtl.; and was privately tutored during 1950. His formal art training began evenings at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Mtl. (1948-50) then he attended the School of Art and design of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts under Marion Scott and Gordon Webber (1951). In his early painting he was influenced by the work of Monet, Kandinsky, later by Russian Constructivists, Suprematists, The Stijl Group and the Automatistes of his home province. His first one-man show was held at Galerie de l'Échourie, Montreal, in 1954. He had by then become interested in a group of artists strongly influenced by Mondrian, in that they were exploring simple geometrical shapes with emphasis on pure colour. He participated in an exhibition with them called "Espace '55" held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Fernand Leduc emerged as the leader of this group called "Les Plasticiens" but Rodolphe de Repentigny, art critique for *La Presse* (1952-59), painting under the pseudonym of Jauran was the theorist and founder of the group which included Belzile, Jérôme and Toupin. In 1955 Molinari, with the help of Claude Tousignant and Robert Blair opened a new gallery to provide exhibition space for non-objective painters who had virtually nowhere else to show their work on a regular basis. The new gallery was called "Galerie l'Actuelle" and became a subject of an article by *Weekend Magazine* in 1956. This added publicity (reaching people all across Canada) helped give some impetus to their cause. In 1959 a second exhibition was held at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts under the title "Art Abstrait" which was a collection of work by seven geometric painters who were Louis Belzile, Jean Goguen, Denis Juneau, Fernand Leduc, Guido Molinari, Fernand Toupin, and Claude Tousignant. Galerie l'Actuelle became a focal point for serious abstract painters who in 1956 banded together under the name Association des Artistes Non-Figuratifs de Montréal. In 1960 the National Gallery of Canada held an exhibition of their work in Ottawa under the title "Association des Artistes Non-Figuratifs de Montréal." A catalogue was published for the occasion by Claude Picher who organized the show in his capacity as Eastern Liaison Officer of the Gallery. During those years Molinari was also exhibiting his work in group shows like the Spring Exhibitions of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.