

Considérations sur l'art et la critique

Art In Paris

Speculations on Art and Criticism

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Considérations



sur l'art et la critique



1. Raymond GUERRIER
Eygalières, 1975.
2. Louis FABIEN
Aimes-tu les marins?,
1974.
130 cm x 130.
(Phot. Wally Findlay
Galleries)

A Paris, ce que l'on peut voir de l'art contemporain est très décevant. Fait surprenant, cette ville qui était, il n'y a pas si longtemps, le centre de l'art moderne a pris maintenant un air provincial. Naturellement des généralisations aussi absolues sont toujours dangereuses. Le critique risque d'être attaqué avec une arme des plus dangereuses: être mis en demeure de citer des exemples précis. Il arrive un moment, toutefois, où il faut courir ce danger. Certes, Paris renferme beaucoup de choses qui sont dignes de louanges, mais le visiteur qui fréquente les galeries ne peut manquer d'être vivement frappé par la stupéfiante abondance d'ouvrages qui manifestent les symptômes d'une maladie qui a toujours affligé les artistes raffinés à l'excès, c'est-à-dire ceux qui sont trop réceptifs aux suggestions de l'évolution historique de l'art. Je fais allusion à ce mal très commun: l'Art. Les futuristes italiens ont parfaitement diagnostiqué cette maladie et ses séquelles quand ils ont réclamé l'abolition des musées. Boccioni et ses camarades ont relevé avec justesse la corrélation qui, en Italie, au début du siècle, existait entre la médiocrité de la production artistique et les témoignages omniprésents de son brillant héritage artistique. Plutôt que de stimuler la créativité, cet héritage avait pour effet de l'étouffer.

Telle est, me semble-t-il, la situation actuelle en France où un trop grand nombre d'œuvres porte la marque du passé. Je n'ai rien en soi contre le prestige du passé; il n'existe pas d'artistes qui, comme Athéna, soit né tout formé du cerveau de Zeus. Je ne m'oppose pas, non plus, à ce que des artistes œuvrent dans les styles traditionnels car, par elles-mêmes, la nouveauté et l'originalité ne sont pas nécessairement garantes d'un art de qualité exceptionnelle. Deux des meilleurs artistes français de l'heure, Raymond Guerrier et Pierre Lesieur, sont tous deux des suiveurs. Ce contre quoi je m'élève, c'est l'influence qui a tari la source créatrice en imposant à l'artiste une définition de l'art et, ce faisant, entrave l'exploration intérieure d'où émane tout art véritable. A partir du dix-septième siècle et à venir jusqu'au vingtième, ce processus débilitant est passé dans les institutions. Jeunes gens et jeunes filles ont étudié dans des académies où ils ont non seulement acquis les rudiments de leur métier, mais, ce qui est fâcheux, y ont aussi appris ce qui constitue le *grand art*. On leur a inculqué, par exemple, une rigide hiérarchie des genres (l'histoire, au sommet; la nature morte, au bas). Un tel enseignement a engendré, à peu près invariablement, l'ennui et le manque d'originalité, de telle sorte que les ouvrages qui en sont sortis, techniquement satisfaisants, ne touchent que rarement la sensibilité et ne provoquent guère l'inspiration. En notre siècle, le rôle du professeur est devenu plus subtil et se fonde sur la réputation dont jouissent généralement les diverses écoles. Vers 1960, les étudiants en art, à travers le monde, s'adonnaient à l'expressionnisme abstrait, non par nécessité interne mais à cause de la vogue que connaissait ce style. Produire dans cette veine était, par définition, du *grand art*. Et, par suite, l'étudiant était consacré *grand artiste*. On épargnait ainsi aux jeunes bien des soucis.

A en juger par l'art contemporain que l'on montre présentement à Paris, l'impressionnisme, le post-impressionnisme sous toutes ses

formes et le fauvisme tiennent la première place chez les artistes qui exposent dans les galeries de la Rive droite, tandis que ceux qui préfèrent la Rive gauche se portent davantage vers les tendances plus récentes, étrangères, comme l'expressionnisme abstrait et le hard-edge. D'autres mouvements sont aussi représentés, mais les premiers exercent le plus d'influence. Un bon exemple du genre de peinture en montre dans les galeries les plus huppées de la rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré et de l'avenue Matignon nous est donné par *Aimes-tu les marins?* de Louis Fabien. Ce que le sujet comporte de plaisant et d'amusant, ainsi que le soin apporté aux effets de lumière relèvent de l'impressionnisme, tandis que la pa-

lette trop montée mais toujours chaude, les couleurs doucement estompées rappellent Bonnard et Vuillard. C'est dans les nombreuses galeries plus modestes du Quartier latin que l'on a le plus de chances de découvrir une œuvre comme *20.M.1.75* de James Guitet. Par l'atténuation de la couleur et la simplicité de la composition, cette peinture doit beaucoup à l'art minimal, quoique le traitement plus plastique de la partie haute du tableau, à gauche, relève — ce qui est assez plaisant — de l'expressionnisme abstrait, le mouvement de réaction qui l'a précédé. Ce que ces deux œuvres, outre les innombrables peintures qui leur ressemblent, ont de commun, c'est le défaut d'authenticité. Par ceci, je ne veux pas dire que l'artiste manque de sincérité. J'emploie cette expression dans un sens plus absolu.

Pour bien m'expliquer, un léger détour est nécessaire. Pour la critique, le point important consiste à établir la distinction entre l'art qui est bon et celui qui ne l'est pas. Malheureusement, il ne dispose pas de critères objectifs mais seulement de normes subjectives. Avant de lever les bras au ciel et de désespérer de résoudre entièrement la question, il est essentiel d'observer qu'il y a dans la subjectivité deux degrés distincts. L'un, purement personnel, s'exerce selon un discernement des choses et des associations d'idées qui nous sont particuliers ou que nous partageons avec un nombre limité de familiers; l'autre, plus fondamental, possède une valeur universelle et comprend des sentiments et des attitudes communs à tous les hommes. C'est ce dernier genre de subjectivité qui nous permet de partager avec Vermeer l'intimité d'un intérieur et de pénétrer la mentalité des Incas par leur façon de traiter la pierre. C'est la sorte de subjectivité qu'il faut utiliser dans l'examen de l'œuvre d'art pour être à même d'apprécier sa qualité avec justesse. Si l'œuvre traduit un aspect quelconque de ce paysage intérieur universel que nous appelons l'humanité, elle est *bonne*. Je prétends que les deux œuvres en question sont mauvaises parce qu'elles ne nous font pas partager une expérience humaine essentielle. Peintes, certes, avec suffisamment d'habileté et agréables à voir, elles n'en comportent pas moins une certaine superficialité, comme si elles étaient extraites d'une formule; elles ne nous transmettent pas quelque chose de viscéral. C'est ce que je veux dire en parlant de manque de sincérité. Ce qui fait défaut à ces deux ouvrages, c'est d'être l'expression vive et authentique d'une individualité. Il me paraît que l'artiste n'a pas pris pour point de départ une expérience tirée de son fonds personnel mais d'une idée préconçue de ce à quoi l'art doit ressembler.

La règle à suivre est implicitement comprise dans l'affirmation d'Oldenberg à l'effet que son art procède «des lignes de la vie elle-même». Pour lui, la vie est «douce et stupide», un empire de «crottes de chien qui s'élèvent comme des cathédrales». Ce qui est effectif chez Oldenberg vient de son habileté à s'emparer du spectateur par une démonstration irrésistible de son point de vue. Il est capable de transmettre ses convictions sur le monde. Ceci se trouve au cœur même de l'expérience artistique; ceci constitue son essence même. L'artiste véritable ne se met pas en devoir de produire de l'art, comme je suspecte MM. Fabien et Guitet de le faire, mais répond au

besoin de se définir au moyen d'une cristallisation matérielle de ses pulsions intérieures.

J'ai eu un très sage professeur, Norris Kelley Smith, qui disait que la raison fondamentale pour laquelle il n'y que l'homme, de tous les animaux, qui soit apte à produire des œuvres d'art provient du fait que, seul, l'homme ignore comment être lui-même. Des expériences sur les oiseaux ont montré que, même loin de la volée et placés dans un environnement qui leur est totalement étranger, ils connaissent d'instinct la conduite à tenir pour agir comme les autres individus de leur espèce. Ils ne sont pas affligés par les doutes et les incertitudes que nous éprouvons à nos meilleurs moments. L'importance de l'art tient au fait que l'artiste, par la prise de conscience de ses vrais sentiments et par sa capacité de les objectiver, fait vibrer la corde sensible chez le spectateur et le plonge profondément dans ce que Henry Miller définit comme «la seule grande aventure... la descente en soi-même». Grâce à l'art, nous découvrons ou redécouvrons en même temps quelque chose de nous-mêmes, nous en prenons pleine conscience par l'exemple d'une âme avec laquelle nous avons des affinités et, de cette façon, nous sentons surgir en nous un sentiment d'union, d'harmonie, d'intégration avec les choses qui constitue, pour notre espèce, son principal besoin psychologique.

Ce qui me déplaît, chez trop de critiques d'art, c'est leur répugnance à permettre à ces sentiments de se manifester, sauf dans un domaine étroitement circonscrit. Trop d'entre eux ont au départ une idée précise de ce qui constitue la qualité, de ce qui caractérise un effort artistique admissible. Au milieu du 19^e siècle, Jules Castagnary et Théophile Thoré concevaient leur tâche selon les exigences requises pour que l'art soit spécifiquement utile à l'homme en quête de progrès social. Plus récemment, des critiques formalistes, comme Clement Greenberg, ont fondé leur jugement en fonction de la plus ou moins grande contribution de l'œuvre à l'évolution historique du modernisme en art — comme si le manque de relief de la surface peinte et le souci de l'artiste pour les extrémités de sa toile étaient en quelque sorte des préoccupations décisives. A ceux qui voudraient maintenir l'art dans une direction unique, je soumets l'exemple de Zola, qui me semble préférable, quand il écrivait: «En art, je suis un curieux homme qui n'a pas de règles strictes, qui penche volontiers vers les œuvres d'art pourvu qu'elles traduisent profondément un individu... (qui) manifeste une disponibilité ou un sentiment humain.» Tout ce que nous, critiques, pouvons demander à l'artiste, c'est, selon l'expression de T. S. Eliot, d'être «simplement et uniquement lui-même». Mais, *cela*, nous devons l'exiger. Nous devons condamner ceux qui nous donnent l'impression de ne pas être ce qu'ils prétendent. Telle est notre principale responsabilité. Le spectateur, de même, a les siennes. Aucun critique n'est infaillible. Les opinions du critique ne sont que cela — des opinions. Il ne faut pas les prendre pour paroles d'évangile; ce n'est pas un catéchisme, du dogme, ni même un monologue. En définitive, le lecteur doit décider par lui-même. Et je ne suis pas critique à vous relever de cette responsabilité.

(Traduction de Geneviève Bazin)

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3. Pierre LESIEUR

Market, 1974.

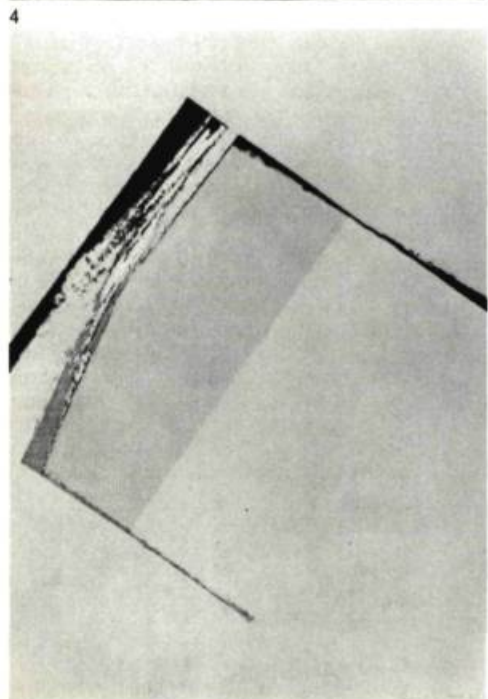
(Phot.; gracieuseté de la Galerie Nichido)

4. James GUITET

20M-1-75, 1975.

73 cm x 50.

(Phot. Atelier 80; gracieuseté de la Galerie Arnaud)



By Bradford R. COLLINS

in the same block there was the Stamperia that sold a variety of 2000 etchings by Giambattista Piranesi. I was able to obtain some plates of *Prisons* and *Monuments de Rome*, as well as a number of plates of his decoration plans from which Neo-classic artists drew inspiration. "What is generally unknown about Piranesi," he continued, "is that he was very proud of his title of Venetian architect and that he had a very bad character. It was said he had a serious quarrel with his master Tiepolo, whom he suspected of hiding the secrets of painting and engraving from him."

I said: "If I were still a journalist I would write, on the subject of campaigns for the preservation of Montreal's old houses, that we should conserve only what is beautiful (it is true that it would be necessary first to agree on the meaning of this adjective), plus some examples of the architecture of different periods, when they are not too ugly. In other terms, the past is valuable but so is the present, and likewise the future (this last sentence: from a hedonist who sometimes expresses himself very badly, but after all . . .)."

M. Cormier: "You are right about old houses which should be preserved if they have an aesthetic value. A few years ago they demolished 150 feet of lovely houses on McGregor St., in order to construct a hideous caravansary. And now the developers, unconcerned with beauty, are getting ready to demolish Bishop Court, a remarkable work of my friends, Archibald & Saxe, now deceased. M. Georges-Émile Lapalme, president of the Cultural Property Commission is taking care of this matter." Good! Having grown up (mostly) on Sherbrooke St. near Bleury St., as a child I walked along and explored the cross streets from Lorimier Ave. on the east to Atwater Ave. on the west. So I have known Bishop Court for a long time and I once wished to live there. These lines were written at the beginning of the summer of 1975. Will Bishop Court still exist when they are printed?

I do not believe M. Cormier places so much emphasis on disputes (nor do I . . .); but how can one not agree absolutely when he states: "It is certainly a duty of all cultured citizens to use their influence to prevent speculators from destroying the beauty of our city, from cluttering the green spaces that still exist."

Many years ago I had greatly admired some of M. Cormier's water-colours at the museum of Fine Arts, if I remember correctly, or rather, at the Montreal Art Gallery, as it was called then. They had revealed sunny Italy to me and I was happy to see them again in his home and to gaze upon many others. Although believing it naïve, I asked this question: "I have the impression that you wanted to be only an aquarellist, for your artistic pleasure. If I am right, would you tell me why?"

And M. Cormier explained: "As in all professions, there are degrees of competence. The true architect is necessarily an artist since Architecture is the first of the fine arts; then come painting, sculpture and engraving. The architect must be at ease in all these domains; that is what I have succeeded in doing. Where painting is involved, the architect generally chooses the water-colour that best suits his profession."

I said: "There are many doors in your works. Would you have an explanation or a theory about this?" "I have always attached great importance," answered M. Cormier, "to the exterior doors of my buildings, because they foretell what will be seen in the interior: the oak doors of my house on Pine Ave. and of the University of Montreal: the bronze doors

with bas-reliefs of the Court House now occupied by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs; the doors of the churches at Pawtucket and Central Falls, Rhode Island, in the United States; of the Supreme Court of Canada and the United Nations Building."

As for literature . . . Finally, what is truly mutual between M. Cormier and me. He also began to read very young. At about the age of eight, his weekly allowance permitted him to buy only little books, *only one* a week, similar to the pocket-books of to-day. When he was very young, he read Cervantes, Boileau, Beaumarchais, and l'abbé Prévost.

He invited me to see his library. It was very kind of him, but unintentionally cruel. I would have liked to spend hours, days, weeks there; I did not wish to be a nuisance, and besides I had little time; I went around it in ten or fifteen minutes! Beside venerable pamphlets that were crumbling under the effects of time and use, there were many bindings each more beautiful than the other, some acquired, others produced by M. Cormier — and these last were not the least splendid.

Besides scientific books in several languages on engineering and architecture, of which M. Cormier has, naturally, made great use, there was almost everything one must have read when one knows French and English. From Rabelais to Giono, through Montaigne, Mme de Sévigné, Saint-Simon, Flaubert, Baudelaire, Barbey d'Aurevilly, Renan, Fustel de Coulanges and, closer to us, Claudel, Gide, Colette, and so many others. Beside the best of Alphonse Daudet there was all of Balzac. And what architect who was a bit of a reader would not have the works of Mérimée, the friend of Viollet-le-Duc? Encyclopaedic minds being brothers in time and space, it is only natural that M. Cormier wished to read Erasmus. On the English (and American) side I remember the names of Walter Scott, Dickens, Kipling, Shaw, H. G. Wells, Wilde, Conan Doyle, Bertrand Russell, Poe, Hemmingway, and, finally, of several poets, such as Byron. I also saw some books in Italian and Spanish. And I was going to forget to mention, among the bindings, some Stendhals and a peerless booklet by Paul Morand, the Stendhal of the XXth century.

During the course of the conversation in front of all these treasures (even the unbound books are very valuable by reason of their text), M. Cormier said to me: "I am pleased to draw your attention to Epictetus' Manual which has served me as guide right through my life." To my shame, I confess that I have not read Epictetus yet. Back at my home, I informed myself on this Stoic philosopher, born in Syria, brought as a slave to Rome under Nero, then freed, and noteworthy for his scorn for pain. It is told that Epictetus said to his master who was twisting his legs in a torture machine, "You are going to break it", adding simply, once his prediction had come true, "Didn't I tell you so?" I am going to read Epictetus as soon as possible.

I must end this article; conclude it. In almost forty-five years of journalism, how many statesmen, politicians, lesser political figures have I met? How many writers and hack writers? How many truly learned men and how many false ones? How many real artists and how many false ones? Rarely as much as in the presence of M. Cormier, honoured by governments, universities, professional organizations, learned societies of several countries, by his confrères and colleagues, rarely, very rarely have I felt so much respect for the knowledge, the taste and the intelligence of a man.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

Contemporary art in Paris is disappointing. Not so long ago the centre of modern art, Paris now seems oddly provincial. Such sweeping generalizations are, of course, always dangerous. The critic lays himself open to attack by the most lethal of weapons: specifics. There are times, however, when it seems important to risk speaking in these terms. Certainly Paris offers much to praise, but what so forcibly strikes the visitor to its galleries is the overwhelming frequency of works exhibiting the symptoms of a disease which has always afflicted sophisticated artists, i.e. artists with art historical awareness. I refer to that most common ailment: "Art". The Italian Futurists fully understood the malady and its results when they called for the abolishment of museums. Boccioni and his comrades rightly observed the connection between the low level of artistic output in Italy at the beginning of this century and the ever-present examples of her great artistic heritage. Instead of an inspiration to artistic creativity, that heritage was felt to be a suppressant.

This seems the situation now in France where too many works being produced bear the unfortunate stamp of past art. I am not arguing against the influence of the past per se; no artist was ever born like Athena full-grown from the head of Zeus. Nor am I against artists working in traditional styles; the new and different have nothing intrinsically to do with higher quality. Two of the best artists now working in France, Raymond Guerrier and Pierre Lesieur are both derivative. What I am against is a certain kind of influence which blocks the creative wellspring by defining for the artist what is art, thereby obviating that inner searching from which true art emerges. From the seventeenth through the nineteenth century this debilitating process was institutionalized. Young men and women studied at academies where they learned not only the rudiments of their craft but, more importantly, what constituted "High Art". They were taught, for example, a rigid hierarchy of subjects (history at the top, still life at the bottom). The results of such training were almost invariably boring and predictable, technically proficient but rarely touching or inspiring. In the twentieth century the teaching rôle is carried out more subtly through the general reputations of different schools. Around 1960 art students throughout the world were producing Abstract Expressionist paintings not because of any internal necessity, but because of the esteem in which this style was held. To make something of this sort was by definition "High Art". And the student, it followed, was a "High Artist". The young were saved a lot of trouble.

Judging from the contemporary art now on display in Paris, Impressionism, Post-Impressionism in its various forms, and Fauvism hold the highest standing among those associated with right-bank galleries while those attached to establishments on the other side of the Seine lean to more recent, and foreign, developments like Abstract Expressionism and Hard Edge. Other traditions are evident, but these constitute the chief influences. A good example of the kind of painting to be found in the plusher galleries along the Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré and the Avenue Matignon is

Aimes-tu les marins? by Louis Fabien. The pleasant recreational subject and concern for effects of light are Impressionist while the exaggerated palette, always warm, and the soft blurring of form recall Bonnard and Vuillard. In the many smaller galleries in the Latin Quarter one is more likely to find something like *20.M.1.75* by James Guitet. Reductive in colour and composition, it owes much to the Minimal Art movement, although the more painterly treatment of the surface in the upper-left quadrant ironically depends on the anti-theoretical movement which preceded it, Abstract Expressionism. What these two works have in common with each other and the countless paintings they represent is a lack of sincerity. By this I do not mean that the artist is consciously insincere. I use the term in a more absolute sense.

To fully explain myself a slight detour is required. The major issue for the critic is the distinction between good art and bad. There are, unfortunately, no objective criteria that one can employ. The only standards we can use are subjective. Before we throw our hands up and despair of the whole enterprise it is essential to note that there are two distinct levels of subjectivism. The one purely idiosyncratic having to do with understandings and associations purely our own or shared with a limited number of intimates. The second and more fundamental is of a universal type, feelings and reactions common to all members of our species. It is this latter type which makes it possible to share the intimacy of an interior with Vermeer or to gain insight into the mentality of the Incas through their stonework. It is this brand of subjectivism one brings to a work of art for the purpose of testing quality. If the work genuinely touches some aspect of that universal interior landscape we call our humanity, then it is "good". I would argue that the two works under discussion are "bad" because they do not put us in contact with a vital human experience. They are certainly competent and pleasant to the eye, but there is something perfunctory about them, as if made from a formula; they are not the record of something felt in the bowels. This is what I mean by insincere. What one so sorely misses in them is the strong, genuine expression of an individual. The artist, it seems to me, has taken his point of departure not from the storehouse of his own authentic experiences but from a preconceived notion of what art looks like.

The prescription to be heeded is implicit in Oldenburg's statement that his art proceeded "from the lines of life itself". For Oldenburg life is "sweet and stupid", a realm of "dog turds rising like cathedrals". What makes Oldenburg effective is his ability to grip the spectator with an enthralling demonstration of his point of view. He is able to communicate his conviction about the world. This is the very heart of the artistic experience, its very essence. The true artist proceeds not, as I suspect *Mistres Fabien* and *Guitet* do, out of a desire to make art, but out of a need to define himself through a material crystallization of interior apprehensions.

I had a very wise professor, Norris Kelley Smith, who observed that the reason only man of all the animals made art had basically to do with the fact that only man did not know how to be himself. Tests conducted on birds show that even away from the flock in a totally unnatural environment they knew how to behave like others of their type. They suffered none of the doubts and uncertainties we know even at the best of times. Art is important

to us because in making contact with his own genuine responses and in being able to objectify them, the artist strikes sympathetic chords in the spectator, thrusting him deeper into what Henry Miller calls "the one great adventure . . . inward to the self". At the same time we discover or rediscover something of ourselves through art, we are confirmed in it through the example of a kindred soul, thus giving rise to that sense of union, of harmony, of reintegration with things which constitutes our chief psychological need as a species.

What I dislike about so much art criticism is its unwillingness to allow this to occur except within a narrowly circumscribed area. Too many critics begin with a precise idea of what constitutes quality, of what constitutes a legitimate artistic endeavour. In the mid-nineteenth century, for example, Jules Castagnary and Théophile Thoré approached the task from the perspective of their demands for an art specifically useful in man's quest for social progress. More recently, formalists like Clement Greenberg have based their criticism on the degree to which a work contributed to the historical development of modernism in art — as if such things as flatness and the artist's awareness of the canvas edge were somehow crucial. To those who would restrict art to a single way, I offer the preferable example of Zola who said: "In art I am a curious person who has no great rules, who leans willingly toward works of art provided they are the strong expression of an individual . . . (which) affirm a human aptitude or feeling." All we as critics can demand of an artist is, in the words of T.S. Eliot, that he be "simply and solely himself". But *that* we must demand. We must condemn those we feel are not, those who are posing. That is our chief responsibility. The reader too has a responsibility. No critic is infallible. The critic's opinions are just that — opinions. They must not be mistaken for gospel. This is not a catechism, not dogma, not even a monologue. In the final analysis the reader must decide for himself. I am not a critic to relieve you of that responsibility.

THREE NEWFOUNDLAND ARTISTS

By Peter BELL

Art is an utterance conceived in solitude, product of an enquiring mind and a discordant environment. It is always a species of protest. It may reflect beauty in the popular sense, it may echo the artist's ecstasy. But its creation is initiated by a sense of denial by society, of rejection. Implicit in the most exuberant painting is the artist's frustration. Some artists function within the physical confines of their antipathetic community, others seek quieter sanctuary in which they may effectively assimilate and express their spiritual conflict. The former often express themselves through styles congenial to aggressive exploitation in balance with their turbulent confrontation with society. The latter pursue more patient styles. Avant-garde, abstraction, and optical-abstraction thrive generally in the metropolis; Realism is more of the country.

Newfoundland has never had a vigorous, coherent community of artists, and it is not surprising that those she has are figurative or realist. It is significant that she has never had

a serious landscape painter. Notwithstanding that the Province is picturesque, none of her artists has found fulfilment in painting it. But in Christopher Pratt we have the most unique Realist painter in North America. His work is intimately associated with social change in Newfoundland. From David Blackwood we have the "Lost Party" series of etchings, a major part of which constitutes one of the most singular visual sagas to come out of this continent. It is a monument to the fortitude and tragedy of the great sealers, to a legend which shaped David's childhood background.

Of the serious artists practising in Newfoundland, it is interesting that only one resides and works in the capital, St. John's. The rest have adopted a rural way of life. Only one or two of them are native Newfoundlanders, most come from mainland Canada.

Don Wright, Heidi Oberheide and Frank Lapointe are three of these artists. They have settled, as have other artists, in villages along the coast south of St. John's. One important amenity for them is the Print Shop at Burnt Cove, which is sponsored by Memorial University Extension Service with financial assistance from The Canada Council. But the artists were there first, the print shop followed.

Don Wright has been an etcher and lithographer for many years and, though he lives quite a distance beyond Burnt Cove, the Print Shop is an inevitable rendezvous for him. Frank Lapointe lives in an old priest's house in Tors Cove. While he is not a print-maker, proximity to facilities must have contributed in some way to recent developments in his work. Four years ago he worked in company with Don Wright on large water-colour paintings of sea, surf and rocks. At one time it was easy to confuse the work of one with that of the other, but each has since moved in his own direction. Before that time Don Wright's painting and prints were comparatively rigid, and Frank Lapointe was executing large canvases in a hard-edge, geometrical abstraction. The freedom and diversity of their current work seems to date from that year of the rocks and sea-spray.

It was about the same time that Heidi Oberheide came to Newfoundland and soon became involved with Memorial University Extension Service, whose art department was supervised by Don Wright. Both she and Frank Lapointe gave evening classes — Heidi in print-making, Frank in painting. The three of them have been close associates since. The work of each of them differs markedly, yet they have two significant things in common. Diversity of media, and a conscientious enquiry into aspects of their local environment.

Don Wright's summer Extension programs took him to many outports where he organized lively activities for local children. Often conducting painting classes on fishing wharfs, he came into close contact with fishermen splitting codfish. He was fascinated by the split-fish as a visual form and his large output of water-colour paintings of the subject was one of his first artistic commitments to Newfoundland. His work with children, too, was reflected in many paintings of kite-flying and other group activities. These water-colours were large, fresh and spontaneously painted. In contrast his prints — wood-cuts, etchings and aquatints — were more rigid. One of his etchings, "Codfish No. 1" monumentalizes less this humble fish than an occupation basic to a disappearing way of life.

When he purchased an old cottage at Port Kirwin he became interested in local crafts and artifacts. Parts of old iron stoves, implements, branding-irons, old fish-barrels with their man-