

Jocelyn Jean, Gilles Lapointe,
Ginette Michaud, eds.

Edmund Alleyn, *Indigo sur tous les tons*
Montréal: Les éditions du passage,
2005

280 pp., 100+ colour & b/w illus.
Out of print (paper) ISBN 2-922892-14-X

Edmund Alleyn

De jour, de nuit: Écrits sur l'art

Jennifer Alleyn and Gilles Lapointe, eds.
Montréal: Les éditions du passage,
2013

102 pp. 49 b/w & colour illus.
\$19.95 (paper) ISBN 978-2-922892-65-9

Mark Lanctôt, ed.

Edmund Alleyn: *Dans mon atelier, je suis plusieurs*

Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain
de Montréal, 2016

216 pp. 100+ b/w & colour illus.
\$39.95 (paper) ISBN 978-2-551-25749-2

Gilles Lapointe

Edmund Alleyn: *Biographie*

Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université
de Montréal, 2017

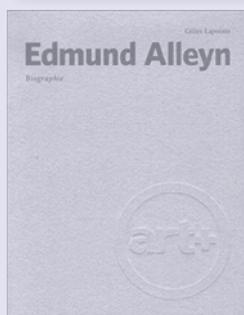
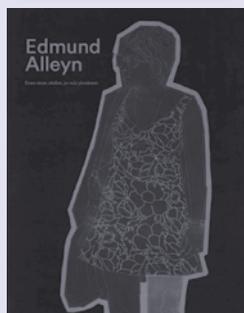
448 p. 100+ b/w & colour illus.
\$59.95 (paper) ISBN 978-2-7606-3712-2

Ray Ellenwood

*Au début, il ne s'agissait que d'être peintre,
plus tard, il importait d'être aussi un artiste.
Eten devenant artiste, il devenait de plus en
plus difficile d'être peintre.*

—Edmund Alleyn, "Fragments
posthumes," in *De jour, de nuit*

Although I was invited to write about the last three titles on this list, I can't really do so without mentioning the first, a celebration of Edmund Alleyn that includes texts and artworks of various kinds by more than fifty writers, artists, friends, and family members, collected just months before the artist's death, with his participation. The book also had two inserts: one was a DVD including a film made by Charles Chaboud at the time of the 1970 showing in Paris of Alleyn's *Introscape* (discussed below) and also a 2001 film by Jennifer Alleyn, in



which she interviews her father in his Montreal studio; the other was a small, fifty-page "carnet" of Alleyn's notes and poems edited by Gilles Lapointe and Ginette Michaud. I can remember being struck, at the time, by the bold and beautiful design of *Edmund Alleyn*,

Indigo sur tous les tons. The book is now out of print, but anyone who really wants to appreciate the other three publications would be well advised to consult a copy, if possible.

My interest in these books was piqued by the involvement of Ginette Michaud and Gilles Lapointe, whom I have known as friends and collaborators over many years. Michaud is a celebrated editor and writer on Quebecois and French authors, notably Jacques Ferron, Jacques Derrida, and Hélène Cixous. Lapointe is recognized especially as a prolific scholar on Borduas and the Automatist movement. Edmund Alleyn was an infamous thorn in the side of us Automatistophiles, ever since he participated in a mocking submission of "false" abstract paintings, chosen for exhibition by Borduas at the last major show sponsored by the Automatist group, *La matière chante* (1954). I have learned that Alleyn and Lapointe met, at Alleyn's request, after the latter read Lapointe's book *L'Envol des signes: Borduas et ses lettres* (1996). While Alleyn never understood or appreciated what he regarded as the Borduas cult, Lapointe was ready to defend it heatedly, and Alleyn liked an argument. Thus began a friendship that led to interviews, to the collecting and editing of some of Alleyn's writings, and eventually to this series of remarkable publications. *De jour, de nuit: Écrits sur l'art* is based on the "carnet" of short texts by Alleyn inserted in *Indigo sur tous les tons*. It has been augmented with more texts and with original drawings to make a handsome little volume. The catalogue of the 2016 solo exhibition organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC) includes texts by Lapointe and others (described below), and was obviously the starting point for Lapointe's biography, which has to be at the centre of this review, because it provides the information I need to explain not only the genesis of Alleyn's work, but the genesis of this interesting and varied series of books.