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This allows professor Jean-PaulAudet, of the Université de Montréal, president of the conference, to explain that the phenomenon of culture is an entity, like the humane phenomenon itself. Its universality is a basic fact, as is its continuity across space and time.

The participants were troubled then about the method or the means to be taken in order that the constants, such as the good, the true, the beautiful, should be considered as normative or descriptive. Some participants favoured an *a priori* method; others stressed the necessity of proceeding *a posteriori*. Examination of the two methods leads us to conclude, if we use the *a priori* method that favours the interpretation of constants as previous conditions in all cultures, that it is necessary to go deeply into those conditions. The *a posteriori* method will rather look for the constants where a convergence of cultures is found. We must therefore deepen those convergences. The methods are not exclusive of each other; they should also complete each other. And what is of equal importance, they ought to be interdisciplinary, intercultural and self-critical.

We have added that the most efficient method should depart from the *status quo* offered by present reality; the dominant culture in to-day’s world is that of science and technology associated with Western culture. Other cultures are not secondary but tributary to this scientific-technological milieu.

Only in a few months shall we know the recommendations contained in the report of the conference, prepared by professor Raimundo Panikkar of the University of California according to the instructions of the members, when UNESCO decides to make it public, but from the interventions we can already anticipate the points of agreement that will arise and which will provide food for research in the future.

Here and now we can imagine that there exists, for all those who believe in peace and transcultural harmony among men, the necessity of assuring respect for all human culture in the spirit of the Charter of the Rights of Man and of seeking always to know better the culture of others through the interpretation of facts according to criteria appropriate to the respective cultures.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

**TANABE AND THE LAND**

By Joyce ZEMANS

For the last ten years Takao Tanabe has painstakingly evolved a personal vision in works which have been labelled his “prairie” landscapes. Yet Tanabe is not a regional landscape painter in the traditional sense.

The refine in the tonality and composition of recent work (especially the black paintings and drawings) emphasizes the fact that Tanabe’s work cannot be easily slotted into a regionalist categorization and must be examined within the context of modern abstract painting. If, however, Northrop Frye, writing about Canadian literature is correct in suggesting that “Everything that is central in Canadian writing [for our purposes, read art] seems to be marked by the imminence of the natural world”1, then Tanabe is equally one of the inheritors of the contemporary mantle of that Canadian tradition.

For the Group of Seven in the early part of this century in Canada, it was clear that landscape, immersed in overtones of transcendentalism, represented the source of national pride and the symbol of national potential. For subsequent generations of Canadian artists, the impact of the land has remained inescapable but its significance is less obvious. The landscape has influenced works as disparate as the expressively carved and gouged dramas of Paterson Ewen, the metaphysical colour fields of Otto Rogers, the ecological quilts of Joyce Wieland and the filmic, photographic site pieces of Michael Snow. Few of these artists attempt to record a specific region or to inspire patriotism on the viewer’s part. Yet there has been much emphasis upon the importance of site in discussion of their work. Artists such as Gordon Smith or Tony Onley are labelled west coast painters; and Tanabe is classified as a prairie artist (although he has spent a greater part of his life in British Columbia than on the prairies and currently lives on Vancouver Island). For many, in fact, Tanabe has become the ultimate prairie artist—harmonizing the insistent duality of earth and sky, but the question must be asked: Is the notion of a new prairie art anything more than a romantic fallacy? What in fact is Tanabe’s art about and how does it fit within the context of “Canadian” art?

A brief history seems essential at this point to discover how Tanabe came to construct his painterly world. Born in Seal Cove, British Columbia, in 1926, the son of a commercial fisherman, Tanabe spent his summers in fishing camps on the Skeena River. At the age of eleven he moved to Vancouver; at sixteen he was interned as a Japanese-Canadian. At art school during the post-war years in Winnipeg, he discovered the work of Josef Albers and of the abstract expressionists. In 1951, he spent a year in New York City, a student of Reuben Tam and of Hans Hofmann. He frequented the Cedar Bar, met Gonzalez and Kline and revealed in works from this period, like Fragment II (Monster), a familiarity and ease with the abstract expressionists’ approach.

From 1953-55, he travelled through Europe on an Emily Carr Scholarship. His drawings from Italy are those of a young western-educated artist, overwhelmed by the experience of the Renaissance—documentary and literal in interpretation. In Denmark he was drawn to the coast, and the works from this sojourn are strangely prescient of his later painting.

Like Mondrian in Holland, half a century earlier, Tanabe painted the dunes. Struck by the endless vistas, the energy of the sea, the simplicity and immutability of the horizon line which defines the experience of the coast, Tanabe sketched and painted.

Takao TANABE

On his return to Canada, Tanabe completed a series of “white paintings”—lighter, looser, more open than the works of the past—they were based upon the freely interpreted dark line Tanabe had observed on the Danish coast, “dividing the land from the sky” and the contours of the dunes sighted during the rainy winter of 1954. Works like Portrait of an Interior Place — A Divided Landscape (ca. 1955), led Rodolphe De

2
Tanabe's real achievement lies in his ability to synthesize formal means and content and, through masterful manipulation of light and shade and tonal control, to create powerful visual statements that speak of the essence of the experience of space. Evolution is not so much from one pictorial schema as to an increasingly potent image. Parochial concerns of nationalism are foregone in works that address the collective experience in their archetypal nature. The compositional unity of Tanabe's mature paintings speaks to a larger unity. Tanabe has forged the personal style which De Repentigny foresaw, "creating another sort of realism" - not a record of place but one of the aesthetic experience.

Takao Tanabe is not the painter of a region or of an idealized landscape, his subject is not the politics of ecology or national pride: though his landscapes are empty, man is present in his response to the vast spaces that represent not only the Canadian but the universal experience. For Tanabe has painted the experience of the land.6

3. A sort of wash— a drawing made with ink.
5. Roger’s fields of colour speak’ more of a universal af and the content of the work are one: material presence or lack of particularization of place, or the introduction of atmospheric skies that repre sent the significant characteristics within Tanabe’s work. "The Land" endures and each of these elements represents an artistic device for further exploration.
6. Whatever happened to Structurism?" you may ask. The simple answer is: "It is both thriving and ignored the way it has always been." It thrives in the sense that its few adherents continue to practise it with the perseverance and devotion born of genuine conviction. In Canada, C. E., Borden Spears's "In the Land that moves Tanabe." Amongst the most abstract and the most powerful of Tanabe’s work are his graphite drawings of the last few years. Constantly pushing towards total abstraction, the works are as subtle in the relationship of tonality and texture as those of Tanabe’s sumi-e masters or Ad Reinhardt’s black canvases. In these works the act of drawing and the material of the work are one: material and mind merge.


THE STRUCTURISM OF RON KOSTYNIUK
By Oliver BOTAR

Whatever happened to Structurism?" you may ask. The simple answer is: "It is both thriving and ignored" the way it has always been. It thrives in the sense that its few adherents continue to practice it, with the perseverance and devotion born of genuine conviction. In Canada, the founder of Structurism, should demonstrate that...
pointed in 1971 to the faculty of the Department of Art at the University of Calgary. During the first half of the seventies, he exhibited often, including one-man shows at the Meldel Art Gallery (1971) and the Chicago Institute of Modern Art (1973). Since then, he has concentrated on research into the constructed relief as a medium, including study trips to the Soviet Union, the United States, Western Europe and Great Britain, as well as the development of his own œuvre. His research has resulted in a monograph entitled The Evolution of the Constructed Relief (Calgary, 1979). The Nickel Art Museum of the University of Calgary is organizing a retrospective of Kostyniuk's work this year, on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his art. A 104-page monograph on his work has been published to coincide with the show, which will also be staged in Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Regina. It will no doubt be ignored, for the most part, by the Canadian art world.

Ron KOSTYNIUK Relief Structure, 1963. Enamel on wood; 47 cm x 36,2.

According to Biederman, "in the past the artist 'imitated' the results of nature-art; today the new artist (i.e. the Structurist) 'imitates' the method of nature-art." Thus "...the new reality-level from which the artist can now abstract is the Structure Process level, the building method of nature and no longer the macro-level, the form-results of nature." This statement has constituted the central program of the Structurist movement, and has been the impulsion behind Kostyniuk's work as well. Thus, Kostyniuk's publications contrast his own work visually with examples from the natural world. What exactly is meant by the production of art following the structural processes found in nature, however, remains unclear to me. Structurists (Kostyniuk included) often use the mathematical equivalents/descriptions of the spiral, the "Golden Section" and the Fibonacci Series, (found in nature with the nautilus shell, e.g.), in the production of their work, but this has as much to do with the structural process involved in the growth of a nautilus shell as Piet Mondrian's 1944 painting "Broadway Boogie-Woogie" has with the urban development of New York City. What the Structurists do in such cases, rather, is make use of mathematical descriptions of a phenomenon found in nature. According to the 1983 monograph, Kostyniuk's various series of works were based on different patterns of organization found in nature; on cellular structures, for example, in the case of his work of the sixties. With the seventies, Kostyniuk turned from the microscopic to the macroscopic level for inspiration, as evident in the "Winged Form" series (based on moths and butterflies), the "Dancing Stick" series (inspired by grasses moving in the wind) and the "Crystalline" series. Indeed, in the "Crystalline" series, each piece is based, in colour as well as form, on specific and identified mineral types. Thus, an inspiration of form as opposed to one of structural process is certain, and the assertion that the work is non-mimetic is less than accurate. The mimetics, which was conceptual in the case of the orthogonal planes-as-cells in Kostyniuk's work of the sixties became generic in the case of the "Winged Form" and "Dancing Stick" series, and more specifically so (i.e. specific to varieties of minerals) by the time of the "Crystalline" series. The more recent "Crystal in Landscape", "Horizon" and "Foot-hills" series continue the mimetic trends of the past. It is interesting to note that in their work both Kostyniuk and Bornstein have moved from works built up of elements (orthogonal planes) with only conceptual equivalents in nature, towards actual abstractions from landscape-types (Kostyniuk's "Horizon" and "Foot-hills" series, and Bornstein's "Sky-Earth-Summer" series). Though probably not identical in the process of their production, these recent landscape-inspired works are closely related to Van Doesburg's and van der Leck's orthogonal abstractions of the late teens.\[^{9}\]

The discrepancy between theory and practice in the work of the Structurists reflects the fact that Canadian Structurism is changing, a further sign of its vitality. Its adherents, very conscious of the historical position of their work, tend to cling to precepts which, on further investigation, may have been less than clear or accurate to begin with. All this has little bearing on the value of the work itself, however. Kostyniuk's reliefs are stunning in the beauty of their form and colour (the two being inseparable in his work), amazing in the technical virtuosity of their execution, and, to me at least, moving in their positive orientation to the world. The relative isolation of these artists amid the physical beauty and socio-political stability of the heart of North America may explain the production of their art in part at least, but it does not necessarily imply a lack of awareness of, or concern for, the more unpleasant realities of our planet any more than a lot of the amorphous angst visible in today's trendy art necessarily entails a really constructive will to improve on things. Indeed, given awareness of the way things are, an art such as Kostyniuk's probably does more to strengthen the positive elements of our psyches than does the art of fashionable fear.

\[^{1}\] On the origins of the term and the movement, see, e.g. Michael Greenwood, "Relief Structures," Artscanada 202/203 (winter 1979-80), pp. 33-36.

\[^{2}\] The Structurist has been produced by Eli Bornstein (who teaches at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon) since 1960, and is both published and financed by the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.

\[^{3}\] See, e.g. the biography in the catalog Charles Biederman, London, Arts Council of Great Britain, 1969. It was Biederman's Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge (Red Wing Manor, 1975) which started Structurism as a movement.

\[^{4}\] Biedermann was born in Cleveland, studied in Chicago and lived from 1942 on at Red Wing, Minnesota. Eli Bornstein was born in Milwaukee, and studied there before he assumed his position at the University of Saskatchewan at Saskatoon.


\[^{6}\] Biederman, Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge, p. 390.

\[^{7}\] The Structurist is a movement which puts man's entire history of art; the problem always was a matter of degrees and kinds of Mimetic and Inventive behaviour. This is still true as regards (Structurist) art..." (Art as the Evolution of Visual Knowledge, p. 309.)
