

could include the Currier and Ives prints after Bartlett which reflect a nostalgia and sentimentality for the past rather than accurately documenting New Brunswick of the late nineteenth century.

The catalogue entries contain good basic information about the works, including carefully transcribed inscriptions taken from each print. This is a boon to further research since the catalogue reproductions are cropped to the image and are of only fair quality. Unfortunately, the measurements are given only for the image, while platemark and even sheet sizes are equally important for further study of these prints. In general, the catalogue information is accurate and reliable; however, in some instances there is a lack of information which could be misleading. For instance, two states of a view of the *St. John River* from the *Atlantic Neptune* are included, but no mention is made of the fact that they are insets on much larger maps. It is only upon viewing the exhibition that this point is discovered.

Another curious catalogue entry appears for a panoramic view of Saint John after W.H. Hunt. The print is actually two prints joined to form a larger view, but this is not mentioned. Dates are given to some prints, such as the view of Long Reach, where dates are not documented in inscriptions or other publication information. However, no reason for the attributed dates is given. An index of artists' biographies (incomplete, however) is provided with information drawn from standard dictionaries. There is also a useful selected bibliography, but it does not contain a listing of the books from which a number of the prints are taken. Two indices for subjects and artists are included at the end of the catalogue.

A number of minor criticisms could also be made but it is enough to say that more complete comments on the prints and their subjects would have greatly increased the value of this catalogue. One feels Hachey withdrew too soon from his examination, assuming, as stated in his introduction, that he could leave the material for others to analyze further.

Alongside Charles de Volpi's books of Canadian views, this catalogue will

serve as useful *aide memoire* with its reproductions and basic catalogue data. Together with the recent exhibitions prepared by Mary Sparling (*Great Expectations*, Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, 1980) and Mary Allodi, this exhibition enhances the appreciation of our visual heritage and encourages further thought and research. The comparison with Sparling and Allodi, however, does not fully hold since one feels Hachey has not fully shared his knowledge and ideas on the New Brunswick landscape print.

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Jock Macdonald: The Inner Landscape/A Retrospective Exhibition

Joyce Zemans
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Joyce Zemans' catalogue comes as a welcome addition to scholarly art historical writing, especially for an artist as crucially important and as little known in a critical sense as Jock Macdonald. The author, with her diligent research, immensely readable prose and masterful organization, has eliminated many of the lacunae which plague the serious study of Macdonald.

Professor Zemans' method of approaching her subject from a chronological viewpoint works remarkably well. Such an approach runs the risk of turning biography and criticism into an incoherent stream of facts and comments. Yet Macdonald emerges not as a character in search of a novelist, but as a celebrity in need of just such a biographer as Zemans. Her success in this regard is due largely to her decision to use Macdonald's striving, from the early 1930's onwards for an art which would match his own philosophical beliefs, as the leitmotiv of the catalogue. So strong is this current that the reader feels a disappointing sense

of regression with the landscapes of the early 1940's after the enthusiastic discussion of Macdonald's emerging symbolism during the 1930's. Following the artist through his experiments with theosophy, the modalities, the automatics and his work with Painters XI, we arrive at the late works, the most completely successful of his entire oeuvre, with a sense of relief and pleasure. We finally see Macdonald's art as the successful search for reality beyond matter and in harmony with all Nature. In having thus given her catalogue such a strong sense of artistic inevitability leading to an ultimate goal, the author has created a solid framework which she can decorate with anecdotes and analyses without allowing them to obscure her central thesis.

A secondary and related theme is that of nature and of Macdonald's reliance upon it as a source of his art and imagery. Zemans gives this theme excellent consideration, especially in the late, non-representational paintings. It is only after finishing the catalogue that the reader realizes the full implications of Zemans' two major themes, and therefore fully appreciates the subtitle *The Inner Landscape*.

One of Professor Zemans' greatest problems involves terminology. "Surrealism" has unfortunately become a generalized and fuzzy term, as have so many other words denoting aesthetic styles. The tendency towards the use of such terms encompasses virtually every artistic movement, and numbers "Impressionism", "Expressionism" and "Surrealism" among its most maligned victims. This is, of course, not particularly surprising: these styles have great popular appeal, and it is this very quality which tends to submerge many tenets of basic doctrine beneath an avalanche of generalizations and truisms. Inaccurate use of such words in laymen's conversation, however, is a far cry from their misuse in scholarly publications.

Professor Zemans uses "Surrealism" without sufficient concern for its accurate definition. She (justifiably) discusses at length the influence of the British Surrealist Grace Pailthorpe upon Macdonald, dealing specifically with their shared use of the technique of automatic painting. So far, Zemans is on solid

ground. Automatism, which theoretically allows the subconscious mind to express itself without being saddled with the censoring and organizing tendencies of the conscious mind, is a basic element of Surrealism. The author does not go on, however, to consider Macdonald's Surrealism on its many potential levels, and it is at this point that her argument weakens. She never, it is true, attributes qualities to Surrealism which it did not have; the weakness lies in her brushing over aspects of Macdonald's art which are clearly surreal in derivation. She makes constant references, for example, to bird and animal imagery in his work, without seeming to realize that such imagery had the clear stamp of approval of the Surrealist movement in general, and of the major European Surrealists in particular. In this regard, one wonders where Macdonald found these Surrealist traits. The author deals with Pailthorpe's Surrealism only in terms of its automatic aspects, completely neglecting any discussion of her imagery and philosophy, (despite the fact that *The Spotted Oozle*, the only work by Pailthorpe illustrated in the catalogue, contains clearly animalistic forms). Surrealism is, at root, a philosophy for an improved world, art being only one of its manifestations. Did Macdonald absorb these aspects of the movement? If so, was it only through the influence of Pailthorpe? Certainly Macdonald's entire oeuvre mirrors his ongoing search for an art suitable to his philosophical outlook, which seems to have had much in common with Surrealism. ("Because a work does not aim at reproducing natural appearances it is not therefore an escape from life but may be a penetration into reality — and an expression of the significance of life — a stimulating to greater effort in living.")¹

Perhaps Macdonald was fascinated by the work and thought of some of the major Surrealists or by the work of the Montréal school (with whom he shares some fascinating characteristics). He was a prolific letter-writer, and many of his lecture notes survive. One would expect these sources to indicate at least some of his thoughts on Surrealism, especially the ones regarding artists whom he admired. This suspicion is

reinforced by the inclusion of Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* in the bibliography.

Interestingly, despite the fact that she stresses Pailthorpe's influence upon Macdonald and compares one of his works to that of a major Surrealist painter (see below), Professor Zemans nowhere makes specific reference to Macdonald as a practising Surrealist, even during the 1940's. This seems peculiar in light of the artist's anthropomorphic imagery and of his automatics being "created in a mood of 'ecstasy' and totally lacking in preconception,"² two eminently Surrealist qualities. Why does Zemans seem so reluctant to classify Macdonald as a Surrealist, even if only for a short period in his life? The implication is strongly and repeatedly made in the text, but is never explicitly stated.

As a final word on Zemans' treatment of Surrealism, one wonders about her visual analysis. Her comparison of the background in Macdonald's *Fish Family* (1943) to those of Tanguy's seems awkward. The former, with its ambiguous but limited background, has little in common with Tanguy's endless vistas.

Just as Zemans dances around the notion of Surrealism without ever quite committing herself, so she marches a parade of philosophical influences upon Macdonald before the reader without ever defining the degree to which Macdonald may be considered and adherent of any of these schools of thought. Annie Besant, Lawren Harris *et. al.* are cited in a discussion of theosophy which somehow never quite goes beyond hinting at what it has to say. Too often we are not told whether Macdonald's acquaintance with these thinkers and artists was first - or second-hand. The author's use of these sources (such as Kandinsky's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*) in analyzing Macdonald's paintings seems to be minimal, despite the importance which she attaches to them.

Professor Zemans' visual analysis of Macdonald's work seems too often to restrict itself to describing the placement of forms, information which could as easily be gleaned by glancing at the reproduction in question. True,

this sort of approach has a long, if not illustrious, history in the writing about art, but that alone cannot justify it. Zemans is, in this regard, trapped by her very laudable attempt to fuse in this catalogue a solid introduction to Macdonald for the layman with the first truly comprehensive study of the artist for the art professional. Such an approach will almost inevitably lead to superficial pictorial analysis in the interests of maintaining everyone's interest.

Zemans is clearly capable, however, of insightful visual analysis. Her remarks regarding the nature-derived imagery of Macdonald's art are among her best. There are, in addition, many examples throughout the catalogue of thoughtful correlations drawn between Macdonald's work and that of other artists. These comparisons, however, are not consistently good. The similarities between Macdonald's *Polynesian Night* (1953) and Graham Sutherland's *Thorns* (c. 1946)³ do not seem strong enough to support the author's argument for their importance. (On the other hand, the clear presence of Miró in *Polynesian Night* is not mentioned, despite the fact that this may constitute another element of proof for Macdonald's essays into Surrealism.) The comparisons to other artists' work, notably that of Kandinsky and Carr, occasionally suffer from a lack of relevant pictorial reproduction in the catalogue.

Thus, the most serious problems in Professor Zemans' catalogue may be seen as relating to the thorny issues of influences upon the artist. (One such probable influence, entirely ignored by the author, is that of the presence of Neo-Platonism in the early part of this century. Manifesting itself as Christian Science, it played a strong role in the landscapes of the Group of Seven,⁵ to which those of Macdonald owe much.)

The reproductions are consistently sharp and clear, and the colour plates almost always admirably capture the subtleties of tone in the paintings. Unfortunately, the illustrations are not identified by plate numbers, and the text does not indicate whether or not a discussed work is reproduced. This is ameliorated somewhat by the fact that reproductions are generally within one

or two pages of the relevant textual passages. An index would also have been appreciated in a catalogue as comprehensive and lengthy as this one, and the very short bibliography is a disappointment in such an important book. There is included a most complete chronology of the artist's life, a listing of principal exhibitions, and a listing of all the art works included in the exhibition, with appropriate documentation. There are, of course, the inevitable errors of a large text, the most serious being the dating of John Vanderpant's death as having occurred in 1938 instead of 1939.⁶ Comparatively minor problems, however, must not blind the reader to the tremendous value of Professor Zemans' catalogue. It is a *magnificent* work of scholarship, and will stand as the dominant authority on Macdonald for many years to come.

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Notes

- 1 Joyce ZEMANS, *Jock Macdonald: The Inner Landscape/A Retrospective Exhibition* (Toronto: The Art Gallery of Ontario, 1981), p. 229.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- 3 *Ibid.*,
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 5 Charles C. HILL, *John Vanderpant Photographs*. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1976), p. 28.
- 6 Zemans, p. 96.
Hill, p. 32.

Jock Macdonald: The Inner Landscape/A Retrospective Exhibition

A comprehensive retrospective exhibition of the work of J.W.G. (Jock) Macdonald (1897-1960), a founding member of Painters Eleven in Toronto, is certainly overdue. Dennis Reid and Ann Pollock's small but estimable 1970 exhibition of Macdonald's work at the National Gallery was the first since the artist's death, but still was not based on a great deal of original research. This current exhibition, organized by Joyce Zemans, Associate Professor in art history at York University, includes 157 works and reflects several years of research and study on her part.

Both the exhibition and catalogue are divided into thirteen time periods, providing a useful breakdown of a rather complex and varied *oeuvre*. To Zemans' credit, she has managed to convey a good idea of Macdonald's social milieu during his years in Vancouver (1926-47); his musical evenings with the Vanderpant, for example, and his relationships with Lawren Harris and F.H. Varley are well documented. Much of this cultural/social history has been recorded in published form concerning Montréal and Toronto artists but Zemans' research makes one aware that this sort of work should be undertaken on other cities in Canada in order to shed light on artistic production in smaller centres.

Her work on British Surrealism and its influence on Macdonald's art (largely via the bizarre Grace Pailthorpe) was a huge undertaking in itself, the British movement being more or less an offshoot or backwater to the European one. As Zemans describes the role of British Surrealism in Macdonald's work, one begins to see it as an intriguing foil to the exploration of French Surrealism by francophone artists in Québec such as Pellán, Borduas and their followers. Zemans brings out the fact that Macdonald felt Borduas and his students to be rivals to English-Canadian abstractionists for the limelight of having introduced abstract art to Canada.

She lays to rest a long-held misconception often referred to of Mac-