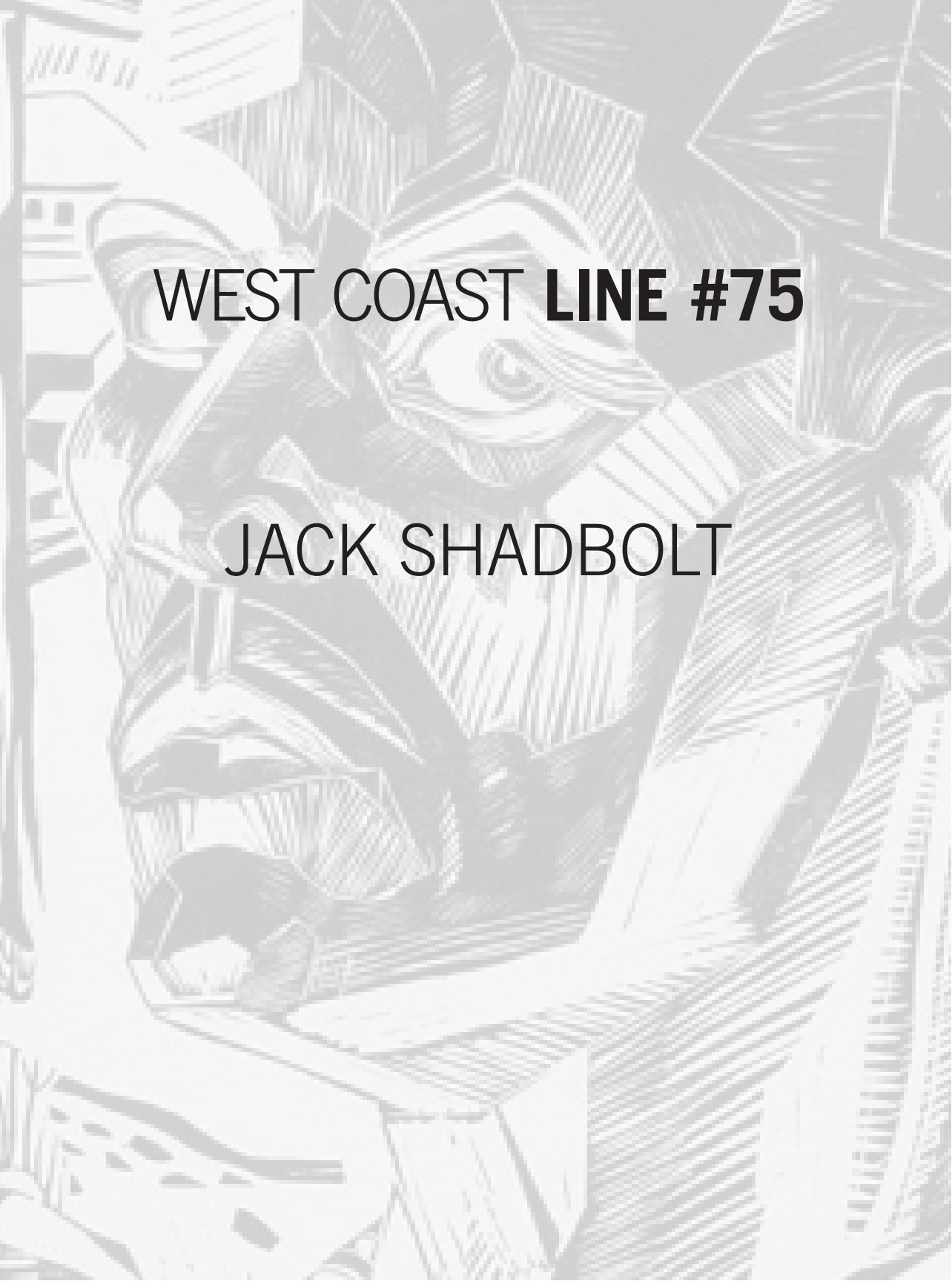


WEST COAST **LINE #75**

JACK SHADBOLT

West Coast Line 75 vol46 no 3,Fall 2012

ISSUE EDITOR Tom McGauley
MANAGING EDITOR Michael Barnholden
ADVISORY EDITOR Jerry Zaslove
FOUNDING EDITOR Roy Miki
EDITORIAL BOARD Sabine Bitter, Colin Browne, David Chariandy, Stephen Collis, Glen Lowry, Ashok Mathur, Kirsten McAllister, Roy Miki, Henry Tsang, Rita Wong
COVER DESIGN: Jeff Derksen and Michael Barnholden
PRINTING AND DESIGN: Printed in Canada by Hignell Books, Winnipeg, MB
TYPESETTING Michael Barnholden
SUBSCRIPTION RATES
CDN & US $20 for students, $40 individuals, $60 institutions / libraries per year (US outside Canada)
INTERNATIONAL $20 US for students, $40 US individuals, $60 US institutions / libraries per year
BACK ISSUES $12, GST included. Outside Canada, please pay in US funds
CORRESPONDENCE c/o west coast line, 6079 Academic Quadrangle, 8888 University Dr., Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC, V5A 1S6, Canada. wcl@sfu.ca, www.westcoastline.ca
LIBRARY SUBSCRIPTION AGENTS SMS Canada, Box 2382, London ON N6A 5A7; Blackwell's, Box 40, Hythe Bridge St, Oxford UK OX1 2EU; Faxon, 15 Southwest Park, Westwood MA 02090; Ebsco & Canebsco, 17–19 Washington Ave, Tenafly NJ 07670; John Coutts Library Services, 6900 Kinsmen CT, Box 1000, Niagara Falls ON L2E 7E7; SWETS, 650 Swedesford Rd, Box 517, Berwyn PA 19312; Readmore, Box 1459, Blackwood NJ 08012.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT *West Coast Line* is grateful for the support of the Simon Fraser University Publications Committee, the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Government of British Columbia through the British Columbia Arts Council.

Canada Council for the Arts | Conseil des Arts du Canada

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL
Supported by the Province of British Columbia

Acknowledgements:
Caroline Robertson for her kind and generous financial support.
Ralph Maud, for getting things started.
Noel Hodnett, for keeping things going and permission to use AT THE JASMINE GATE, 1964 and the back cover swatch.
THE ART EMPORIUM for permission to use:
UNTITLED 1949; WINTER BIRDS, 1955; BARN EXPERIENCE #2 1963;
ITALIAN TERRACE, 1964: STORM WARNING, 1984.
Maynards Contemporary and Canadian Art for permission to use RED FORK, 1990-1994, Private Collection (Vancouver, BC)
Cover photograph of Jack Shadbolt appeared on the May/June 1964 cover of Canadian Art—photographer unknown.
Violet Redl for her kindness and generosity in giving permission to use photos.

CONTENTS

JACK SHADBOLT: PRAGMATIST OF THE TRAGIC

>> TOM MCGAULEY

One must be a poet at the deeper levels—and for a great work the command must be so thorough that one can forget it. This is the real authority—to have learned how to use one's instincts at the other end of the line—after the long conscious training and the stubborn practical necessities of living have been outlived—the end of the race when one runs for the sheer mindless joy of running and is hardly aware of having crossed the finish line.

Jack Shadbolt to Joan Lowndes,
personal letter, quoted in 'Metamorphosis and Metaphor.',
Vanguard, March, 1981.

Global events such as the Great Depression, the Second World War, post war optimism and anxiety, the threat of ecological catastrophe are indelibly present in Shadbolt's work. But that work always features the local effect of world drama and highlights the terms under which identity comes into being on the local stage. I believe they re-enact the traumatic and violent relationship to the natural world that has characterized British Columbia's resource-based economy from colonial times to the present. The historical struggle of First Nations people against the obliterating forces of colonialist culture and law is also intrinsic to any attempt to achieve a distinctly regional landscape painting.

Scott Watson, *Jack Shadbolt*.

I demand of a drawing, a painting, that it shall have… a certain tragic power, serious, definite, heavy, sternly intellectual, of tremendous impact, having not only a light lyricism… but a strong under-rhythm… a certain heavy surge moving beneath a rigid geometric control—a life rhythm… moving and ponderous as the whole rhythm of history… These pictures would have a certain depth, a mystery, the meeting of forms with a certain heroic impact, aspects which in their foreordained collusion, in their rhythmic dignity, in their resonance of colour, I can only refer to as, in the Greek sense, tragic. Yet my tragedy must be 'clean in the sunlight' and not the literary one of subject but the serious grandeur of abstract and permanent relationships.

Jack Shadbolt, *Journal, November 1939*.

Form in Shadbolt's painting is emblematically phallic: the dog, the pruned tree, the uprooted stump, the disconnected limb or wing and the butterfly cocoon are all representations of this emblem under the duress of castration. Shadbolt's thinking about form, his drive to make it compact, pent up, holding energy under pressure, is an allegory of orgasm. In his paintings form is under threat; the field of energy in which he places form will not allow stability but subjects form to external corroboration. Form is then a fragile ephemeral apparition, defined by the meeting of building internal pressures with external force. At any moment, form can implode or explode. There are Shadbolt drawings of seeds, plants and butterflies which celebrate transformation as a mystery. There are others, of a face being ripped from a skull by tightening constraints, of phallic monsters locked in cages that give a more terrifying account of experience in a world of ceaseless form.

Scott Watson, *Jack Shadbolt*.

Jack Shadbolt, one of the most important of BC artists, was born in England in 1908, crossed the Atlantic to Canada in 1912, putting down in Nelson BC for two years, and then at a very early age, along with his family, came to reside in Victoria. He moved through the school system there and early in his career took up a devotion to drawing and painting, studying art and artists. This would remain the practical reality of his entire life. He would strengthen this artistic preoccupation, certain of its high seriousness, and would make it his vocation, insisting on art's crucial role in understanding the myriad aspects of life itself. From this perspective he would take up the role of instructor and teacher, commentator and creator.

A quick compass of the life of Jack Leonard Shadbolt notes the date of his birth, 4th February 1908, that his father Edmund was a sign painter and paper hanger, and mother Alice a dressmaker, and marks Jack's death in Burnaby on 28th day of October in 1998. Jack acknowledged his storytelling propensity as "a legacy which came from my mother who was a perpetual dreamer of grand dreams, [albeit cast in the mode of bourgeois romance."] [Halpin 18] Jack taught art to children and high school students in Duncan and Vancouver between 1928 and 1937. In Vancouver he studied under Fredrick Varley at night school, in London at Euston Road School in 1937 and in Paris, at the Andre Lhote School of Art in 1939. He undertook further studies in New York at the Art Student's League in 1948. He enlisted with the Canadian military in 1942 and became engaged in various military art projects from 1942 to 1945. He married Doris Meisel* in 1945 after they met while looking at a painting by Paul Cezanne at the National Gallery in Ottawa.

His life of making art is represented in many private, corporate and public collections. He gave more than 70 shows of his work over 6 decades. He showed at the Venice Biennale in 1956, and had four major retrospectives, at the Vancouver Art Gallery [1959], the Glenbow.[1991], the National Gallery [1969] and the Museum of Anthropology [1986]. In 1955 he was appointed the first instructor at the Emma Lake Art School, a crucial incubator of Western Canadian artistic modernism. He also designed costumes, sets and posters for Vancouver Little Theater productions and a ballet, *Daphnis and Chloe* [1953]. He painted murals at the Edmonton Airport [1963, 5.4 m x 10.8 m], the National Art Center [1963, *Flags*], the former CBC building in Vancouver and the *Chilkoot Experience* [1971, 30 panels, 2,136.6 cm.] as well as others. He authored two books, *In Search of Form* [1968] and *Act of Art* [1981] and a volume of poetry and drawings entitled *Mind's Eye* [1973]. Before the Second World War he taught at the Vancouver School of Art as the head of the painting

and drawing section, and resumed this position after the war until his retirement in 1966. He was the recipient of a Guggenheim in 1957, and won the Molson prize [1977], the Gershon-Iskowitz award in 1990, and received four honorary degrees from various Canadian universities. As well as being a respected and loved teacher he was a benefactor setting up the VIVA award with Doris Shadbolt in l988 and endowing the Jack and Doris Shadbolt Fellowship in the Humanities with a three million dollar bequest to Simon Fraser University. The first fellowship was awarded in 2006.

Shadbolt's career continued a long creative struggle with modernity emphasizing many of its compassionate values. He was an enduring social critic with an intuitive affection for the powerless. He possessed a deep suspicion of 'culture' charlatans, all the while being deeply entertained by them. Throughout his life he seems to have maintained a healthy distance from the pretentions of the art world.

Shadbolt began as somewhat of a social realist, full of the loam of a quintessential strangeness. Gradually he would come to produce and elaborate forms, organic and biomorphic, abstract and symbolic, images drawn from what the ordinary was teeming with. He writes that he was 'led by historical inevitability toward abstraction'. He sought to find and explode, to give heft, shape and colour to the organic, and sometimes, things flying apart, and to capture the drama of their unexpected re-combinations. He came to understand he was bound within his own large talent and sought to subvert his genius. By pushing at the boundaries arising from the skill of his draftsman's hand he moved to more and more non-representational forms so that his paintings would tell many truths.

There is a social agenda to this lecture, delivered on the 12th of April, 1975, which moves consciously and articulately through the great and often terrible history of the period. World Wars, genocides, world market collapses, oppressions of whole peoples, yes, but in the midst of this an often invisible golden impulsion, his craft aimed towards the heart's eye. The talk entitled "The View of a Young Painter in the Thirties", was given in conjunction with an exhibition entitled "Canadian Painting in the Thirties." Peter Malkin characterized the show as 'the malaise of the Thirties on a two dimensional plane, the preponderant tonality is brown-green, the paintings are not full of brilliant colour or so it seems. [Vanguard 6]

Jack came to speak to the city as part of a gallery series, to warn and enlighten. During his career he rode through richly alternating cycles of the depressed and ecstatic. Innovation, laceration of complacency, impulse towards the dream of the fractional that would express the broadness of the whole; that part and whole would make a life's work, and that the accompanying narrative would provide method and traction for others to keep up their own work as creators, these are some of his talk's impulses and imperatives.

Jack knew the untimely frost of death and the 'liquidescent' climb of the lark, 'his tensile song/ ten meadows long/before the dying fall.' He also knew of the meadow's rind, 'iron to the heel', the heart as hard as ice. He notes 'no song of mine climbed skyward/like this escalating lark's/ sheer pristine call.' [Shadbolt 23]

This Vancouver talk then is a small moment in the deeply conscious and continuous production of an artist who in diaries, lectures, letters, fills a complete archive with observations. These describe how he comes to create, what moves his mind, all of which retrospectively trail over into writing. Of any western Canadian artist his must be one of the more complete observational recordings of the self-creating persona. Marked

by a deep sense of loss, he would write 'nothing is easy, for profound levels there must be a working over and over, a perpetual risk of losing the image, a dismembering and re-assembly—a growth out of confusion into coherence… things have to go through the fire, through a terrible sense of loss of identity to emerge, and then only in the tatters of one's former innocence.' [Watson 193]

In this talk Shadbolt names himself a reader, a comrade of the poets. Lorca and Hopkins, Eliot and Lautremont come into his world as exciters and sustainers. As a reader he ingests and is tutored in the delirious. He thereby takes the road of surpassing the purely sensible and mundane. He is moved towards the increasingly difficult task of penetrating the murk of history, to record the release of the grip of daily life, and the surmountable crises of one's own existence.

Shadbolt parses out a life-narrative of getting there, making the crest of the hill, taking the tangible and making something beyond speech, beyond words. His deep imaging defies not only the ordained rational world of proper aesthetics and formalist academicism, he never defaults to a cold intellectualism, but triumphs in the paradox of the visible which does not yield or speak its self easily, an art of difficulty a lifetime in the making.

In his lecture we rediscover why it still speaks so clearly as cultural and historical memory, and as a curriculum of and for an artist's becoming. It impresses with Jack's omnivorous consumption of artists and poets, like Lautremont, Blume, Varley, Macdonald, Rivera, Cezanne, the New York painters Pollock, Rothko, Motherwell. Here we have a rare frankness of the heart, its own need to be spoken, to explain, with its psychology of the enumeration of faults, heroes and bad guys. The murderous realities of Estevan and the glow of the Trecento, however incongruent, are correctly brought together. Here is the artist's coming of age, the cramming, the rambling, the poverty, the endless learning, a transmission of mastery, of mentors and schools.

The Victoria boy goes out into the world, the wild colonial boy who will later help forge a Canadian modernism, growing through imperial dependence to independent ways. He will take up the vocation of artist as seriously, in his own way, as Emily Carr did. He shows the importance of unmasking the colonial, and the colonial unconscious, with its permeation into all aspects of the consciously driven artist. Scott Watson observes Shadbolt would remain infiltrated with post-colonial anxiety, manifested in many paintings filled with masks and emblems of First Nations peoples.

Shadbolt also contests and finally breaks the shackles of the Group of Seven. He comes to reject the possibility of the northern Ontario landscape model becoming a metonymic grapple for Canadian artists. The Group of Seven's exclusion of the aboriginal fact, and their subordination to belief, demands another way, which his work evolves towards. His account, of becoming an artist, teaches the necessary humility the artist becomes schooled in. The artist is always being taught, always produced, not only by his own will-to-create but by the history and culture he is submerged in.

Shadbolt's art makes a counter-proposal to these limits which caught up the Group of Seven. With Shadbolt's tale we move from poverty to splendor, as the BC motto, indicates, a shining without sunset, *splendor without limit*, beauty everywhere. But Shadbolt's is a reconfiguration of a kind of terrible beauty, a turn to the organic soil, the dark, dark forest, the clear-cut landscape, the instability of the higher upon being so infiltrated with the weedy chiaroscuro of the lower, the garden of ripeness and failure.

Tragic is his word, he repeats. Within a natural empiricism of the terrible he notes

discord breeds creativity. Shadbolt's is a will to narrative, Jack as the jack of all stories, the great talker, the relentless raconteur, the impelled historian-artist. Jack tells us where he got it all from. His is a constant remembering of the sources of his shaping and bringing-out. We are told of disjunctions and meetings, breaking of friendships, an acknowledgement of the dangers of self-progress—leaving others behind. He notes the ruptures with Varley and Harris and what the implications of those breaks were. In Jack's account there is a pleasing chaste modesty in the description of the creative and aesthetic differences between himself and others. He possesses an admiration for that which he was not, or did not approve of. The other-than-he, Jack does not dissolve into nothingness with his criticism.

There is a Mark Twainish turn to his story when it comes to this art world filled with scoundrels who parasitized a colonial elite and the nascent urban upper middle classes of Victoria. Here we also hear of his delight in drama and performance—how much he loved to put on skits and plays. Yet Shadbolt would see in Caravaggio's paintings too much melodrama. He remarks in a number of interviews, his attraction to artists such as Grunewald who painted within the medieval gothic mode where the ugly, deadly and painful are vividly set to confront and inflict [Moxey 1]. Here, in this lecture, Shadbolt expresses the trope of the poet-painter, the smithy of self-production, the smelter of reality. The transmutation of the real must be muscular and multiply sourced. He notes Thomas Hart Benton's dismissal of efetism and aestheticism in art.

Shadbolt is entranced with the form of Harry Tauber, an itinerant Viennese puppeteer and teacher who animated the Vancouver art scene for a few years in the 1930's. Shadbolt repeats Tauber's story often in subsequent interviews. He loves the anthropology of the beloved fake shaman—the moo cow moo of Mu and Lemurea. Jack Shadbolt gave great credence to the critical need to live alongside the fake and the fraudulent because they were such a great opening into the nature of culture. High culture cannot exist without its mountebanks and spiritual vampires, as most certainly it can be said that all layers of society are similarly attended. These magicians, fantasists, are crucial, and to know them, and this knowledge Shadbolt says comes out of experience, is to turn to one's own world with a deeper sense of the disenchanted. That wonder, awe, darkness and mystery can lie elsewhere and maintain their powers despite tomfoolery. How image is produced within and outside the demands of a devouring modernity. To move beyond the mass fragility of style, fad and the cool, to a world where what is made permanent is deeply marked by the absences that surround and envelop. Jack issues a wholesome call to exploring, knowing, and then abstracting from the real, with all its fissures and folds, fraudulences, class savageries and the perpetual delays of economic and political justice.

Shadbolt's narrative insists on the continuing abrasion by the larger world, how it puts its aching violent hands on the mind, life and body of the artist. He traces a jocular voyage out into a panzaic world, marked and mustered by it. All this is spoken without the milk of theory, yet is obviously deeply thoughtful. Estevan and the murder of strikers by the RCMP becomes a corroborating noun of place and opposition, where the *New Masses* confront the owners and agents of the state. Shadbolt, years later remains deeply aware of that skirmish, yet is full of his will to supersede, to pass beyond through image-making.

Implicitly Shadbolt registers the telling truth that the artist is as big as his or her mind.

The lyricism of his encounter with the golden atmospherics of the Trecento still sings. His boyish ability to report, without blushing, great crushes on art and artists, knocked a block by Cezanne. Here also the kindness of acknowledgement of the importance of the Scranton painting of Peter Blume, of Charles Burchfield's and Paul Marin's watercolours. 'During this time he experimented with surrealism and cubism but the model to which he kept returning was the classical modernism of Cezanne and Paul Nash and the regional idiom of Charles Burchfield and John Marin.' [Watson 23]

Shadbolt highlights how art institutions are necessarily founded on the dubious largesse of the wealthy and illustrates his point by references to Vancouver Mayor Malkin, and the patron of the new Vancouver Art Gallery, a Mr. Stone. Jack shows himself deeply aware of economic stratification, class, and caste. He speaks of the lacunae in the intelligence of the elites on matters of culture and race, their gullibility and subordinations to perceived hierarchies and alleged reputation, and the false aesthetics of profit and prophets. His tale is full of implicit instruction of how to foster the dream of becoming substantial, weighty in the world of art. In his own life and work he embraced aspects of the terrible present. During 1944 and 1945 he cataloged the Signal Corps daily photographs of the Belsen and Buchenwald death camps.

Shadbolt presents a paradigm of autonomy, against erosion by the mystical and half-baked—the heat of style and surface versus a more accurate desire for organic form. Indeed his talk implicitly poses and suggests the answer to the question of how to become a producing artist. His is a deeply gendered evocation of his evolution, the boy to man story, transitions towards an artistic masculinity. His task narrated here is to break the circle of tradition and history. He never shies away despite bouts of severe self-questioning. He is driven through the realities of experimentation and discovery, pushed beyond the edge of sense by his own passion to defy, escape, defeat, and despite a terror of the void, to keep on painting, thinking, writing and learning.

This then is the modernity Jack went out into and actively intercepted. This is his broad and strong shouldered account of resistance and discovery. Here Jack narrates a deeply conscious opposition to how art was practised, its subjects and objects, the ruling ideologies of the big houses of the master class, with their Garry Oaks in Victoria. Shadbolt's stance arises from a deep resistance to the bad taste of their prevailing ethos, strangulating aesthetics, provincial havens of galleries and schools, art clubs, high society dances and seductive charlatans. This is all described within a lecture of mild criticism and personal revelation. Here Jack remembers the traces of that ongoing broad education provided by the embrace of a world fully experienced.

This is an account of a trajectory beyond the shallow tidal pools and narrow ledges of outpost colonial British Columbia. Here is autobiography and cultural history as a record of non-transcendental hard work. Impelled by a desire to never yield to the imperial given of Edwardian modernity asleep in its own narrow dreams Jack is propelled towards an aesthetic based in the aching darker self set towards and recreated by the new. Despite the baneful social and historical environment of his earlier years, his art tentatively creates evolving forms of structure and passion, mind and un-mindedness, growth and cancellation.

When Jack wanted some photos of the interior of the house he and Doris had built, the accomplished photographer of the Beat Generation, Harry Redl, desired to make the project a book and name it after the nursery

rhyme. Jack wanted an article, Harry a monument. Harry had the temerity to oppose Jack's view of what he wanted, for something larger. In this polite confrontation Harry shuddered as Jack, late in his 89th year, said to Harry, 'you just make pretty pictures.'

Later Jack relented and recognized Harry's pictorial and photographic authority and consented to the photo sessions. He recognized the importance of the world of artists and poets Harry caught and registered with his photos. Viewing Harry's work lead Jack and Doris to accept Harry to take, what turned out to be, their last portraits. Among Harry's subjects, 150 in total, the likes of Richard Diebenkorn, Robert Duncan and Jess, Robert Creely, Anais Nin, and Henry Miller, Charles Olson, William Carlos Williams, Ansel Adams, Imogene Cunningham, Allan Ginsberg and a many other artists, writers, and poets, some of whom Jack and Doris had known.

But in Jack's 'pretty picture' comment a painful truth. The photographer with his courtly yet deeply humane elegant naturalism could never come close to the painter swept into the heroically conceived task of marking surfaces deepened with perspective, or depth questioned, obliterated, liberated. Jack spent a life within the almost ancient generational task of re-forming the image. He brought out of his acutely historically conscious and labyrinthine self an important idiosyncratic version.

From his multiple panels of butterflies, now in the Audain Collection, to his dark forests of haunting depression, or in his journals and books, his eyes' I, Jack soldiered on. From the *Hornby Suite*, and backwards in time to the blue of the Edmonton airport murals, a blue of expansion delaying limit, but caught. Or his 70 foot *Chilkoot* mural, endless in its relish of colour, staging a pure abstract randomness without pause, he sought simultaneously to embrace, defeat and transform the hegemonies of the concrete. A struggle he identified with when he viewed and ingested the possibilities arising from Thomas Hart Benton's great murals of the history of the Hoosier state, Indiana, which he had seen at the Chicago world's fair in 1935.

No civility without the noise of violence his works and words whisper. No art without an acknowledgement of the class and social agents of illusion and necessary charismatic con men adrift in a theology of avoidance. *No art without dangerous footsteps,* as Robin Blaser assures all his readers, students and philistines. But slowly Jack Shadbolt rose towards the shamanic in his magisterial creative struggles. As George Woodcock notes Shadbolt takes his place "in the shamanic tradition, though ultimately he does not derive from the shamans; he becomes one himself, disintegrating and reassembling the fragments of his meaningless world into meaningful systems." [Watson 125]

Here is Jack in an older and wiser version than the Jack Emily Carr recorded privately in her journal when she jabs at him, "Mr Know it all." She writes, "that of course Jack was very opinionated", and "is swaddled in Art history and Art appreciation, these boys have big talk, little do so often, he was quite caustic and a little patronizing over my feeble efforts---maybe right."' (Walker 104)

Yes, she thinks he might be right, his wounding of her the externalization of his own erratic confidence and social democratic modesty. With a demotic sometimes arrogant sounding impulse he is always mindful of the pain in face of the previous centuries of masters and masterworks. Here the artist reaches beyond self and colony, beyond facility and 'pretty image'. And it is the story we must hear.

Basic begins it all, home, neighbourhood,

the reality of the enveloping, the marks and intrusions, the virility and the limits of the ordinary, eviscerated, redoubled, estranged, and re-founded. This was his life's task, mysteriousness without the paralysis of fakery. This account spells out the crucial demand for intelligence accelerated by the breaches and healings of experience. Here is Jack without the authority of theory. This is an almost pre-theoretical world, where opinion was saturated by the 'ideas' of the Thirties, such as a nationalist call for a robust, Nordic-like masculine northern-ness in order to reinvent Canadian art.

Ralph Maud after hearing it delivered that Saturday afternoon at the Vancouver Art Gallery began the process which brings this transcription to us. He carefully secured the tapes of the talk after hearing it delivered at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Ralph came to see in Jack creative activity which reminded him of the poet Charles Olson whom Ralph had come to admire. He recognized Shadbolt's art with its visual power, plainspoken-ness and restless searching. For many years the transcription sat dormant. Then it emerged as an object deserving attention and publication. Once read it insinuated itself as a fascinating brand of auto-biography and cultural history. A few friends read it and agreed. When Doris Shadbolt read it she said it felt like Jack was talking to her. She wanted it as a small book which would contain the talk, the Redl portraits and an essay on the history of the city of Burnaby's great cultural venue, the Shadbolt Centre. With the naming of its prime art and cultural center in honor of the Shadbolts, the city of Burnaby sought to heal some of the estrangement which grew out of a fight over purpose and funding, and the disposition of the collection of the Burnaby Art Gallery. But due to a fumble at city hall, Doris' hope for the publication proposal slipped away.

The Burnaby City Council over years thought it carefully requested broad public access to the art and art programs at the Burnaby Art Gallery. The board and curators at the Burnaby Art Gallery felt they were performing as they should. After long negotiations and conversations failed the city re-appropriated the art collection, withdrew funding, set up another committee and provided new staff for the gallery. This created uproar in the press. Opponents cried out 'expropriation and legalized theft.' In the midst of the hubbub, with duelling galleries seeking and competing for public support, Jack and Doris took cause with the alarmed citizens who protested the city's act as arbitrary, punitive and illegal.

The city placed an ad requesting volunteers for new governance, the City of Burnaby's Visual Arts Advisory Board. Some of us applied and spent the next three years in the midst of an attempt to legitimize what the city had done. We sided with the city of Burnaby's cultural and political staff who felt they had spent over many years an awful lot of money only to see the Burnaby Art Gallery garner extremely low attendance figures. They felt the gallery lacked an effective educational outreach program for the city's school system, produced shows and catalogues that did nothing to address the problem, and sat on a collection that was not being expanded, shown or nurtured.

As a committee the Visual Arts Advisory Board endured a soap-opera of well-intentioned planning, constant failures to implement, and a revolving door of curators. We watched the rise and fall of four or five. Then the Visual Arts Advisory Board was demoted to a minor committee with fewer resources and its very small power to advise lost in the bureaucracy of the city's Parks and Recreation Commission.

The mayor of the day sought some peace and hoped to mend his relations with Jack and Doris who were deeply offended. They found this encroachment on the intellectual and artistic

norms of gallery operation intolerable. Slowly over time tempers cooled. The city-sponsored gallery came to be the survivor in the battle of who owned what. It was a mess no one desired. In a phone call from the legislature, a response to a deeply naive wish to explain to her some of the legitimacy of the city's claims, the then deputy premier, premier now, stridently branded the city's actions as nationalization and theft of a community resource. That response taught us how politicized the situation had become.

Noel Hodnett and I from the Visual Arts Advisory Board were dispatched to have a conversation and as a result were able to meet and enjoy that and many subsequent conversations with Jack and Doris, and following Jack's death to have the privilege of Doris's friendship. That day, a Sunday afternoon we drove up Capitol Hill to the Shadbolt's house. We engaged in a conversation with Doris, who was seated outside eating peanut butter on toast and reading a large pile of papers, adjudicating Canada Council applications. Our conversation was rich and for us rewarding. Contact was re-established. In the smoothing out and resolution of the problems the Shadbolts finally got used to their name being used for the Shadbolt Centre, and they resumed their conversation and friendship with the mayor and the city council. Here we are finally able to accomplish Doris' wish.

* **Doris Shadbolt** (née Meisel) Art critic, curator, educator was born in Preston, Ontario in 1918. She received an honors Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts from the University of Toronto, graduating Magna Cum Laude. She worked as a research assistant at the Art Gallery of Toronto (now the Art Gallery of Ontario) (1942-1943) and the National Gallery of Canada (1943-1945), before marrying painter Jack Shadbolt and relocating to Vancouver in 1945. She passed away in 2003. [Art in the Sixties website]

WORKS CITED

Halpin, Marjorie: *Jack Shadbolt and the Coast Indian Image*, Vancouver, UBC Press and UBC Museum of Anthropology, 1986.

Lowndes, Joan: *Metamorphosis and Metaphor, Jack Shadbolt*. In Vanguard, March, 1981.

Moxey, Keith, '*Impossible Distance: Past and Present in the Study of Durer and Grunewald*', Art Bulletin, December 2004, [v.86/#4].

Shadbolt, Jack: *Mind's Eye*, Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1973.

Vanguard, March 1975

Walker, Doreen: *Letters of Emily Carr*, Nan Cheney and H. Toms, Vancouver, UBC Press, 1990.

Watson, Scott: *Jack Shadbolt,* Douglas and McIntyre, Vancouver, 1995.

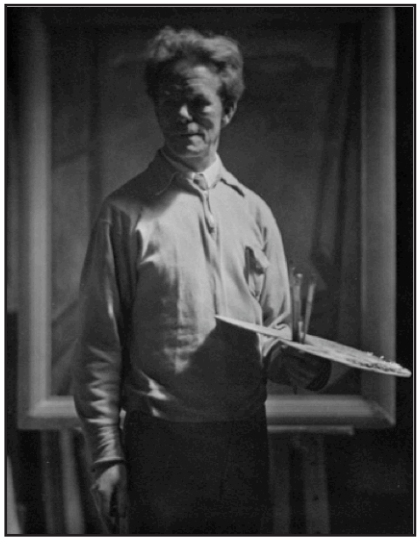
BETWEEN THE WARS: LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS, INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

>> JACK SHADBOLT

THE VIEW OF A YOUNG PAINTER IN THE THIRTIES

LECTURE BY JACK SHADBOLT, SATURDAY, APRIL 12TH, 1975

This period I think is of special interest to Canadians in general at this stage of our development, and I think it is probably of great interest locally to a very great number of people, because it's a chance to see some of the origins and attitudes to things that have conditioned what we were. And by contrast it shows up the kind of ambience that the artists are moving in, in the present. And that's what I want to try to put back together for you is what it felt like to be a young artist, green and you know generally ambitious, to understand and to come to grips with things that were happening both locally and internationally at that particular time. Inevitably in the course of what I'm going to talk about today I have to discuss other artists who are known locally, people who come out of this period like Macdonald,[1] Varley and the rest of them, and I just want to say in preface that anything I say in discussing these people is done with good spirit, not in the spirit of criticism, except in the sense that I want to point out where certain attitudes were held that seemed strange to me at the time I was involved in the process; and that its only natural that an approach to certain kinds of things, and that therefore there was an apparent difference in attitude involved. But this is not a criticism of them or of myself or anyone else. It's simply a discussion of the kind of values that were floating in the air and what they meant. And inevitably when we are going back over the tracks in this way,



Fred Varley, by John Vanderpant.

Varley, a founding member of the Group of Seven was one of Shadbolt's idols. However his experience with Varley was somewhat traumatic. The older artist refused to comment on his work, although they spoke outside of class. While other students received lengthy critiques of their work, Varley passed over Shadbolt's easel in silence until the last day of class, when he took Jack's drawing and ripped it in half and dropped it on the floor. It was a humbling and humiliating experience. Whether induced to do so by this experience or not, Shadbolt destroyed most of his work to date. [Watson 8]

JS… were the ones who had influence in the early stages because they set the pattern for the school—but Charles Scott was definitely the man who influenced its course. Up to that time that Varley emerged on the scene I don't think you could say there was any profound artistic influence. It was merely a question of generalized training and the presence of an art school itself… But once Varley appeared on the scene, then what you'd call influence began to happen because Varley was a strong personality, and he really did inspire students. So there was a coterie of students who were very profoundly under his influence. I mean philosophically speaking. He started to open out and broaden things up and get them passionate about something. Jock Macdonald was an influence in one way but not as powerful as Varley because he himself was under Varley's influence very much at the time. I think Varley set the tone, I mean, he also changed the nature of the art school in relation to the community because it became a sort of—I won't say 'rebel' institution—but at least it started to feel its sense of asserting itself as opposed to being merely a service institution in the community. Jock, I think, had the kind of influence he always has had. It was sort of beneficent encouragement influence. He believed in the people he believed in. He was critical of the institution as such and he always had a tendency to have disciples which made him somewhat of a guru in a small way for certain people… [Lindsay-Shadbolt Interview]

with personalities it's always difficult to avoid the kind of controversial opinions as to the differences between what was happening at the time and what people were saying, and what we see in hindsight thirty-five years later. In other words, the works that an artist produced in a sense, are a commentary on what he was at the time when he was developing. And I think it's interesting that some of the artist themselves are not recognizable for what they were at the particular time we're discussing. So in any case, I simply want to put some of the pieces back together again…and if I seem to have a sheaf of notes here, the notes are merely for the fact that this is a labyrinth we're walking through of a thousand and one different influences, and one could simply ramble off indefinitely without much coherence unless you take some rough chronological reference of certain things that happened here, to keep myself on the track, for your sake as much as for mine. It's not something I don't know like the back of my hand but I find that chronologies, you know, whether it was this year or that year or the next year and so on, get tangled up.

I want to make one other big point: I'm not a historian, and make no pretence that what I'm talking about here is literal chronological history. What I'm dealing with is mental concepts that were held by people, which constituted our total atmosphere here in the West, and how that contrasted with Canadian attitudes, and how that contrasted with the world attitudes at that particular time in terms of major influences. Because I was on scene—I suppose I'm one of the living survivors in a sense who was on scene at five of the major breakthrough periods when these different attitudes were manifest. I went through the Canadian

"Group of Seven" kind of influence and knew practically all the Group of Seven[2] painters personally. I was in New York at the period of the breaking of the great agrarian movement there, when the WPA[3] was born and art was getting itself linked closely into the social system under the influence of the Mexican muralists, Diego Rivera[4] and Siqueiros.

Then later I was in England at the time of the sort of Bloomsbury

He had turned from the ideals of the Group of Seven which were based on a nationalist notion of a northern race identified with the northern landscape to a more socially responsive art. To say that the influence of the group of Seven has become detrimental academism for those who have followed in its step, he wrote in 1936, is to state an obvious truth..." [Watson 12]

efflorescence, the growth of modern English painting. And I was in Paris as a student at the end of the big Paris movement. I lived in Montmartre or in Montparnasse rather, and I knew some of the great personalities at the time, sort of got a firsthand sense of these things that were going on. And then later I was in New York[5] at the breaking of the abstract expressionist movement and took part in a lot of the discussions that were going on there, when Pollock first showed and when Motherwell and all the rest of them were discussing—Barnett Newman and so on. And then later

In 1948, New York was itself just awakening to a new phenomenon in its midst. The painters who would become the Abstract Expressionist or New York school and 'steal' modern art from Paris were just beginning to dominate the New York art scene. Just before the Shadbolts arrived, Arshile Gorky, whose biomorphic abstractions provided example and inspiration for Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, Willem de Kooning and many others, had died by his own hand. His death shocked and grieved the New York art world, as the new movement suffered what was to be the first of its many casualties. Followers of Picasso and Miro like Karl Knaths and Felix Ruvolo, and industrial surrealists like Arthur Osver and Peter Blume, were more visible and influential than artists like Jackson Pollock or Barnett Newman, who with others would become major figures in the New York School of the fifties. [Watson 53]

still I was back here when a new kind of thing was born, and Intermedia[6] and things of that kind came into being in Vancouver. I was helping to get that on its legs. And so I've had plenty of chance to see these things

Intermedia: 'As a result of his thinking about the school and how it might meet a new challenge, he chaired a series of 'think tank' meetings that eventually led to the establishment of Intermedia, the experimental artist's collective, in 1967. [Watson 118]

in a kind of rolling perspective, to see how movements originate, gain momentum. And then of course, myself, I was going through all this as an active artist, and my own particular development was very intimately

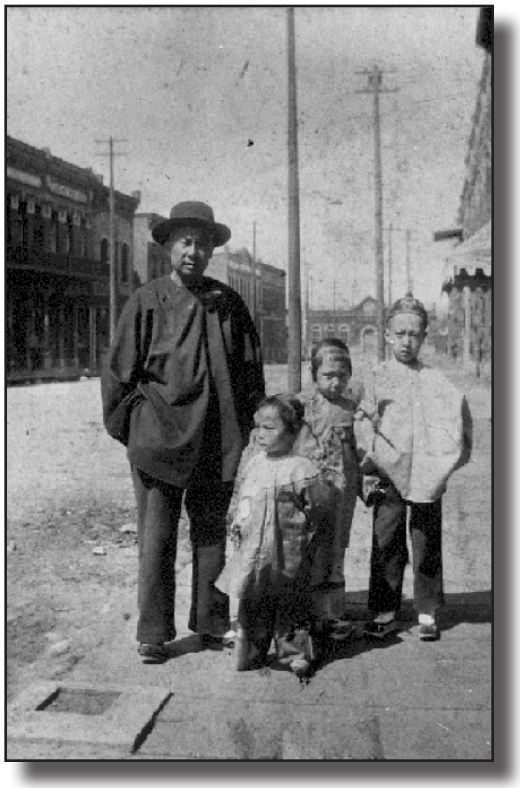
locked in with these influences at one time or another. It's inevitable for a student or a younger artist to be very forcibly influenced at certain times. You have to come to grips with major intellectual currents in order to understand where you are yourself: that is, if you are serious and are not merely concerned to be a little picturesque Sunday painter, and let it go at that. That's perfectly good too, for those whose lives are built that way. But for people who are committed full time to the operation, night and day and all their mental processes, then you know there's a larger obligation you undertake to know what is happening right across the scene, and find your philosophic resolution where you are but at the same time in the context of where history has left the world at the period you happen to grow up in. So these are the kind of things I find interesting.

First of all I have to tell you a lot of this is local because it gives the picture of a typical community in Canada at the time. In Victoria when I grew up there was practically nothing in the way of art except the Sunday painters, the British settlers who had a kind of "Romantic" attitude to it all, and who considered art a kind of sacred pastime. They talked about it in hushed terms. It somehow never permeated into the everyday experience very much. It was kept for very special occasions and talked about with a capital A. And there were no consecrated artists, in the city itself in the sense of full-time practitioners except Emily Carr[7], who was a maverick, quite out of key with what was going on.

You know, the population of Victoria[8] was largely remittance people from England, those who had most influence. Then there were whole imports like the Chinese community, which was brought in at the building of the railway for cheap labour; and the Hindu community that was also brought in for cheap labour, and of course the Indians. Now, all these were looked on as picturesque groups; the Chinese were thought of as, you know, being exotic, oriental, and strange. We had talk about the Yellow Peril; and the Tong wars were still going on in Chinatown, and we'd hear strange menacing stories, and in fact, no self-respecting citizen would go down to Chinatown for fear of his life. The edge of Cormorant Street was a kind of dark and mysterious jungle down there somewhere. Most of the people who were prominent in business were, or many of them rather, were old Hong Kong traders, who had made their living in the import-export trade on

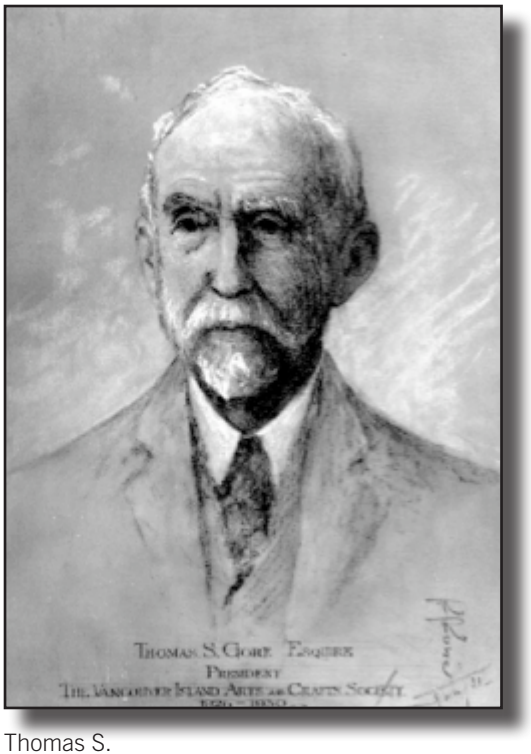
Emily Carr

the West Coast here, and the same applies to Vancouver. Many of the wealthy families were families who made their money that way, and they were part of the scene and had a great dominance in the culture. And of course in their houses—and we had the tradition of retired people both in Victoria and here who build these great houses in the old Tudor and English styles, in general, and who had a magnificent tradition of gardening and built themselves estates, brought their trees like the Garry Oak and brought their birds with them and brought everything else, the wild flowers which they strewed around the country, so that you know they created a paradise. And they didn't want to be disturbed. And in a marvelous setting like this, where everything grew and the climate was benign, it was understandable that they wanted a certain romance. They didn't want anything that was going to actively bring them into the contemporary deluge head-on. So they resisted everything except that kind of art which preserved that tradition of colonialism. One had the Chinoiserie, which was in all these great old homes in Victoria, and they had magnificent things they brought from the Orient with them, Chinese screens, and lacquered tables and chests and cabinets and all the richness they could command, and they had oriental rugs and—well, they lived in kind of minor splendor! If they had other kinds of art, it was British watercolour painting, almost exclusively. No modern art that I ever saw was in any one of these houses.



Victoria
'Chinatown'

Well a certain tradition grew out of all this. They kept the crafts in a kind of benevolent state; crafts were things that people of leisure could do in their spare time: embroidery, petit point, making antimacassars, for the choirs and generally speaking a certain amount of home sewing, home decorated clothes. Dressmaking was a kind of high art, and all that kind of thing. I knew that because my mother was a dressmaker sewing for these wealthy people, and my father was a paperhanger and decorator,



Thomas S. Gore, Esquire, President, The Vancouver Island Arts Council.

and he was doing their houses. And he was a great friend of the architect Rattenbury[9] and Sam Maclure, and people like this, who were great figures. And these traditional great figures were what were imported too. That is to say, the two or three great architects who came out here were looked upon as gigantic and great: Rattenbury, who built the Parliament Buildings and the Empress Hotel, you know, was brought out to build in the colonies magnificent monuments of what the homeland was like at its best. This was the colonial attitude, to build impressive things, just as the Catholic Church went to Mexico and built impressive cathedrals to impress the natives, and so on. So we got the Empress Hotel, the Parliament Buildings and things like that, which are still world famous. And we had the old Vancouver Hotel here. Frank Lloyd Wright of all people was brought in to build a great monument. It disappeared in the turnover. Well all I'm trying to say is that there was a colonialism that went right through. And with it went a whole system of patronage. The hostess, for example: a tradition that was kept up all the way through, that art was largely in the hands of fashionable and should I say well-established women, who almost decided what the art world was. They were the handmaidens. They had great entertainments for the celebrities. Their houses were the open meeting places of the arts. They were the ones who fostered the symphony societies and the theatre in its early stages, and decided who among the artists was worthy to be included as a fashionable figure. And this tradition has gone right on up to recent years, and societies like the symphony society still go through this kind of structuring, where there are a few wealthy hostesses who throw parties for their visiting celebrities. And the circle tends to cluster in these areas.

Well, Victoria was full of that. It was also a natural sucker material for so-called celebrities. And we had a whole succession of these 'celebrities' who would appear out of nowhere, announcing themselves as very important people, and show how they were taken up and feted

and moved around. We had a character I remember in Victoria, he called himself the Reincarnation of The Laughing Cavalier and he had all the panache, the grace, and the manners, and everything else. And he was a great success for quite a time, until he finally announced he was going to buy a great yacht from one of the important people in town, and wanted to take it out on trial. He took it out and threw a bottle party where everyone else brought the refreshments and everything. And they had a marvelous week long safari on the yacht, and then he just disappeared, you know. He had the use of all this material—but this is a typical kind of exploitation pattern and it even happened later on.

Another character by the name of Ludwick von Bosch appeared in Victoria. He was related to some Victoria family. He was a magnificent, cultured, you know elegant European specimen, dressed to the nines, and made tremendous gestures. One of his biggest that was still talked about when I was young: he was at a tea-party at the home of the Island Arts and Crafts Society, which was the dominant organization at the time. A water colour by the president was hanging over the mantelpiece and in the course of the tea-party he kept looking at this thing; then he'd go on again; then he'd look at it again, until everybody knew he was concentrating on the thing. Then at one point he took the picture, turned it over, back to the wall, and went and sat down again, and went on the with tea-party. At another time, one of the local hostesses I remember who was very elegant had allowed him to take her to the grand ball, which was held in the Empress Hotel every year—and this was a big event socially—and he led her out to the middle of the ballroom floor with magnificent dancing, and then he stopped dead and said in a loud voice: "Do you dance?" and walked off the floor and left her. I mean, silly gestures. But I'm just saying how open and vulnerable the atmosphere was to exploitation by these grand-mannered people who came in. We had them, and we had them here in Vancouver as well. We had the emergence of people like Harry Tauber[10] at one time with his tremendous panache and the European theatrical training and all the rest of it, he made a great splash socially and was entertained by everyone, and, well, that was all right, but it was elevated to the level of the coming of the Messiah, and you know it took on an ambience that was far greater than its real worth in terms of any serious contribution to local life. However, I just want to indicate some of these things: that the hostess system was the system on which the whole thing worked. You can imagine how somebody like Emily Carr fitted into this kind of atmosphere. She herself scorned the whole thing and was only genuinely interested in art.

Well at this time, the Little Theatre Movement[11] was just gaining

ground, and the kinds of things they were producing at that time were Priestley's "Good Companions", Noel Coward was the especial favorite, and "Outward Bound", plays like that kind, which were sentimental or light and elegant. There was no connection with the hard-bitten theatre that was poking at social values. Up till 1929, and the last I can remember, due to one serious theatre person there, there was one production of Elmer Rice's "The Adding Machine"[12] which was an attempt to come to grips with something, the robotization of the human being in general, a European play adapted. But that's the sole recognition I had up to 1930 when I came to Vancouver that there was anything going on in the social world. Yet in Canada the stock market had crashed in 1929, there had been a long desperate period leading up to that. I can remember as a child, we were so poor I had a cent candy once a week on a Saturday morning—that's the kind of conditions we were living in. There was desperate unemployment all around—and yet, as far as the art world was concerned, it took absolutely no cognizance of this. No sign of it in conversation. It was only concerning itself with the more romantic aspects of creating a certain image of protection for certain kinds of values.

Well, let's come to over to Vancouver at that time, and you begin to see a little bit of what was happening here. I can remember the time-lag factor was one of the chief important things—because around this time and during this period, a poem like T. S. Eliot's Waste Land[13], which turned out to have the most impact of any of the literary works

Shadbolt met T. S. Eliot and showed the Faber and Faber editor some of his poems, which Eliot tactfully rejected. [Watson 6]

of the period, came on the university curriculum in 1936 but it had been written in 1916. Now there was a time lag of twenty years acknowledged between what went on in Europe in the way of significant ideas and what percolated through to the West Coast of BC. That time lag got successively shorter as the communication system got more alive, and nowadays there is very little lag between what happens in New York and what happens here in Vancouver, maybe two or three years. But even a year for a young painter is very little. He knows what's going on right there and he's doing it here in the same style before it's almost out of currency. But at that time the time lag was notorious. It took five years for New York to catch up with Europe, with what was current, to have the same plays appearing on Broadway that had been done in London and so on, and being talked about, percolating the system. And it took another fifteen years before

what was happening in New York would be taught on the West Coast. Things would then be in production a whole generation behind, because of the communications gap that was happening. And this was a condition of whatever was understood.

Kitsilano High School

The art in the schools when I came over here—I came to teach in Kitsilano High School—and I must give you some idea what was going on in the school system because this is significant. All our art in the schools was the product of English instructors who were brought out here as "art masters"—they were called that—and put into the school system to build a system of instruction. And we had people like W. B. Weston[14], S. B. Judge, Charles Scott and many others. And they built the system, as we knew it. It was a very academic system. It went into the public schools, based on drawing primarily; plant forms, lettering, and ornamentation: these are the subjects that were considered appropriate to that particular time. Drawing the cube, the cone, and the cylinder as exercises in pure form. Now, when I went to teach in John Oliver High School, I can remember the old instructor there gave me my instructions

Kitsilano High School Art Class

to replace him, first of all he handed me a list of names and he said if there's ever any discipline problem—this has nothing to do with art, but just the first thing he gave me—he said "just shout out one of those names loudly and they're sure to be guilty, you know," some one of those people is a mischief maker, so you know they'll pull up to attention. This is the whole attitude. Then he gave me a system of instruction for giving out equipment in the art room. He had it numbered. They had pencils and crayons, and trays—and they were all provided—and on number one the monitors would come to the front and place the boxes, and on two they would give out pencils and on three give out erasers, and then they gave out 6 by 9 white cartridge paper, each student got a sheet of 6 by 9 cartridge paper. And if it happened to be January—what were you doing in January? You were probably doing the Roman alphabet. In February, you were doing the pussy willow; in March you were doing the tulip; and

in July you were doing the cone. We all did the same thing at the same time. And he handed me a set of drawings that I've kept—someday I must look them up in my stuff. Year after year—there were twelve years of files in the cupboard there, stacks of them. These things were collected from the students and never given back. And I put them out at a teacher's convention—I remember getting a light box—January 19 or whatever it was ten years ago, and I went through ten years and I could place January on January, and they fitted exactly because he'd always start out by giving the measurements—how far from the top to place the first point, how far from the bottom, and to lay the things out on the page. Now, this is happening here in Vancouver. It had to be broken this deadlock system of training—and it was called "training" "Art training" you know. They used these words. There was nothing, as we now know it—the free kind of thing. When Eric Newton[15], the British art critic, came through and he came to my class at Kitsilano High School and he found Picasso and Matisse on the wall, he was so astonished that he told me he'd been all across Canada and never seen a modern reproduction in an art class at that time. This is 1930-1931 you know. He was staggered. But this was the way it was going. We were just beginning to get some cognizance of what it was. The whole thing was timid, hidebound and tight-locked into the system. At that time there were progressive notions coming around. Professor Franz Cižek[16] in Vienna, who as an experimenter in child art—and some of us who were interested got together and started understanding Cižek. Then Marian Richardson from the London County Council art system, who had instituted a famous art system there, came out as an art visitor in 1932. She visited me in Kitsilano High School again on Eric Newton's recommendation, and I went back to England to study with her. But I can tell you almost the single person—I'm not making this personal—but there were very few classes or stimulations of any kind for art teachers whereby they could come to grips with, you know, newer attitudes toward things. Geometric design, done with a compass and filled in pieces was a standard kind of pattern-making process that was in all the schools at that particular time.

Well I don't want to get too far away, except to say that while this was happening, the coal miners in Estevan,[17] Saskatchewan were being attacked by the Mounted Police with machine guns and so on; we were in the face of a social crisis that was getting tenser and tenser; yet none of this that I could see pervaded the art world in any way at all. There was no awareness of it. Artists weren't talking about the social system as they do now and become involved.The same thing was true in Vancouver.

Murdered coal miners memorial in Estevan Sask.

The architects exerted tremendous influence, and they were looked on as the great personality people. And the man who built the Marine Building, Townsend,[18] who built City Hall, and so on, these architects, had great power. The school board architect I can remember had such power that, when I had done a mural with the students on the wall of the school—at that time it was the first one in the country—we had broken a pattern—and because I didn't get adequate permission and go through all the different things, the school board ordered it painted over in the summer holidays. He said it was defacing his building. This was the attitude. There was no sense of understanding our problem of wanting students to participate in another kind of way. The Vancouver School Board had just been founded, and was the dominant institution here of art training. The student body consisted primarily of the daughters of wealthy families. The first graduating class was all women, I think, except one. And it was only because the boys couldn't afford to go. They were too busy trying to scrounge a living. Times were tough. But the daughters of the more well to do families had nowhere to go.

BREAK IN TAPE

... were done in Scotland and were brought here as the thing you do in an art school and it wasn't enough to do a sample of the pattern, and say "this repeats" but, because the work ethic was so important, you had

to do miles of it by hand, a great big—it would take you months just to enlarge this thing, And the justification was: it teaches you the value of work. You know, it isn't enough if you're going to be serious you've got to work. And there was the old Scotch ethic, you know: "we can no prevent you from sinning, but we can sure prevent you from enjoying it." This is the kind of attitude that was going very powerfully. And then there were other things like what used to be referred to as flannel-pane appliqués of cutout flannel, and made into things. They had "illumination". Now illuminated addresses were still given to people who retired from firms after 25 years. You got a gold watch and an illuminated address, which said what a nice fellow you were, and the company was proud of you. This was a standard parting gift at that particular time. Then the university had hand-lettered scrolls, sheep-skins—so there was a little use for this illuminated address, but actually not very much.

In any case this was the accepted pattern. I can remember one of the exams at that time in the art school, in the design department, was to do St. George and the Dragon in flannel-pattern, that is, that technique in the Coast Indian manner. That is to say you had to translate from the St. George legend into the Coast Indian manner doing it through appliqué. You know, there were these fantastic assumptions made that by going through these processes you could somehow learn what art was about. The curriculum was divided neatly into "antique drawing" which was the first year: you drew from plaster casts. And then you went into life drawing a little later. And it wasn't until Varley arrived that life drawing became the major study almost for the free side of the school, and it usually ended up in portrait painting, which was the major goal of almost everyone in the art school—to paint portraits. At that time commercial art was kept strictly on the commercial side of the line.

Well, I don't want to belabour these things, but I want to show you how it worked. The institutions of art here were run by well-meaning citizens, who put them together, like the foundation of the Vancouver Art Gallery[19] here—it was donated as you know by a wealthy British importer Mr. Stone, and built under his supervision. He gave $100,000 to get a collection for it. And what was the collection: it was British painting. They were going to bring the whole thing here and set it down as in the Colony. So they sent Charles Scott off to Europe to buy a British collection and set it down here. And that was the Collection for many years; there was nothing else but that. And Mr. Stone contributed a stained glass window, which went at the end of the building here as a monument to one of his children who had died and so on. This concept went all through the American galleries and museums, where wealthy businessmen were the

One of the first concepts of the Gallery here was not so much to have exhibitions of artists in a current sense, as it was to bring a load of culture ready-made to the wilderness. You know, it was certainly a colonial atmosphere when they started. H. A. Stone, who gave the money for the building of the Gallery himself, decided that the collection should be British painting to start with and he sent Charles Scott on a tour of England and hired Sir Charles Holmes to be his consultant and they brought back the British collection that the Gallery now has almost intact. And that was the idea, it was a colonial gallery. Stone's notions of art were that kind. He had a big stained glass window in the end of the Gallery which took years to have covered over because it was built in as part of the Beatrice Stone Memorial to their son. There was a certain sentimentalism about it. This was the way a lot of things were built out in this end of the empire. And it is easy to laugh at it now but at the same time these were generous people who were doing things but their motives were sentimental. They wanted memorials to a kind of life that seemed to them valuable. But they were empire values, Commonwealth values and all that. It took a long while until the Gallery was effective. The program and dictatorship that went into the Gallery was entrusted to the Board and the board was primarily business men. And the Board in those days had infinitely more direct power of control in the gallery affairs than now when you have an appointed Director. So they had a secretary and a Board, no director. It was only later they got a Director. And as a token he carried out orders from the Board. The Board consisted of prominent people like ex-mayor Malkin and the BC Electric men and heads of banking and then one or two token artists like Dr Garnet Sedgewick, from the university... and a token artist and it was Lawren Harris. Lawren was the virtual dictator of gallery taste for a long time and his tastes were very exalted and pure. He wanted uniform framing on everything. The Gallery was a temple, all the walls were white. [Susan Metcalf: Jack Shadbolt Interview]

donors and would build monuments to themselves in the public galleries. This was a kind of standard attitude toward it. A Board of businessmen ran the Gallery with one or two university professors for good measure. And it was directed by a secretary, who knew nothing about art but was given instructions how to run the business. And then businessmen sat on the board. And up until Lawren Harris[20] arrived on the scene and had sufficient prestige as an artist to take over the role from the leading businessmen, formerly the Mayor of Vancouver, Mayor Malkin[21] had sat as chairman of the Board for many years. Then Lawren Harris replaced him as the leading figure. And they completely dictated the process of running the Gallery. Just to give you some idea—I'm moving back and forward a little here because you have to get this ambience established.

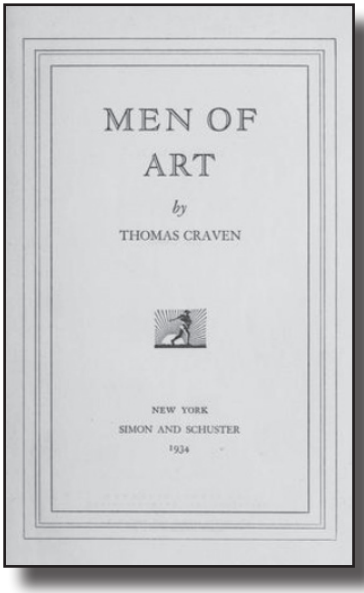
When the first Vancouver Art Gallery opened its doors, 200 invited guests were on hand to witness what the *Vancouver Sun* called a "milestone in the cultural development" of the city. Built at a cost of $40,000 and designed by architects Sharp and Thompson, the art deco building at 1145 West Georgia was located several blocks west of the current gallery. The 1931 founders of the Vancouver Art Gallery were: H.A. Stone, William Southam and Sons, Lily Alice Lefevre, wife of John Matthew, Jessie Maude Farrell, wife of William, and family, Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Rogers, William Harold Malkin, F. L. Beecher, Mary Isabella Rogers, wife of Benjamin Tingley, Christopher Spencer, the B.C. Electric Railway Co. and the Gault Brothers Co. Ltd. In the opening exhibit, the star attraction for Vancouverites was a Rembrandt called "A Lady With A Handkerchief". On loan from the T. Eaton Co. in Toronto, it was considered so valuable that it was protected 24 hours a day by three guards. The gallery had 112,000 visitors in its first six months, an amazing number when the city's population was just over 300,000. [I/www.]

Vancouver Art Gallery

Lawren Harris had very firm dictation. When he came in, the whole Board could hardly refrain from getting on their feet and bowing. And then he sat down and the meeting began. And he would simply tell us all what to do. And one of his theories was that all framing should be white, that the Gallery must be a "temple of art"—this is one of his quotations, as I took it down at the time. Quite different from how this is now, here where a hundred and one activities are going on every day. It's an art center; then it was a temple. And it was built that way. In fact, when this Gallery was built—in spite of my protest, and I was one of those who hollered loud and long: I wanted a coffee shop on the front street to help pay for the building and get people in there and also to bring people in, and I wanted a wide entrance at the back to get stuff carted in and out. The entrance way, if you ever knew it, was designed for pictures that were no more than three feet high. I mean, you came off the street and turned a sharp corner upstairs and around: how could you possibly bring paintings through that way? It was only some years later that this door was knocked in the back in the centre of the gallery at that time. It was a crazy concept to build, but that was the way it was thought about: an inner sanctum. You came into it like a pyramid, through a winding

passage. And everything was in white, regardless of the fact that each picture needs a different kind of frame to make it work. And the other thing was that they were all hung according to Lawren Harris's dictum: you put a line across the wall and you put the bottoms of every picture on the line. Well, of course, some picture were tall and some narrow—so you went along the wall looking this way—instead of hanging them at the centre of your eye level, which is the logical way. The other thing: that they were evenly spaced. Well, of course, a big picture then completely swamped a small one. I mean, ridiculous notions: yet coming from a highly intelligent man. It's hard to understand, but they were all under this hypnosis. The other was that you took the large central picture and you put it in the centre then you took two similar and opposite kinds, like still lifes of a certain size. You took these and put them either side of that, and then you took two more and put them either side of that, and you "centered" a wall. Now by that logic the very things that should go together, the still lifes, because they have a feeling for one another when they're hanging, were separated, and in contrast with another thing, you know. It was so foolish that it was almost impossible to get around. But I can remember being spanked down very forcibly by the whole board on this particular kind of thing, and I wasn't the only one. There were two or three of us, younger ones, trying to voice a difference, but there was no difference: it was a dictatorship of taste right up to fairly recent times.

Well, I just wanted to lay those things down because these are the interesting things against which you have to project, any serious student or anybody developing at this time. When I was at Art School, Varley would talk to me a great deal because I had well, what you'd call exposure to the training of art, in the sense of the discussion of it. I had a lot of friends at the university and was talking art a great deal. I was more versed in it than most of the students, and he would discuss art in that way. And we discussed Turner[22] at great length—he was very passionate about Turner at the time, I remember. But when I showed him in my excitement, Thomas Craven's book *Men of Art*, which was a great monument which came out at that time, talking about the whole business of art and social involvement, the growth of the American indigenous school and so on, he scorned that completely. He would have nothing to do with that. That was getting art into the wrong territory altogether.

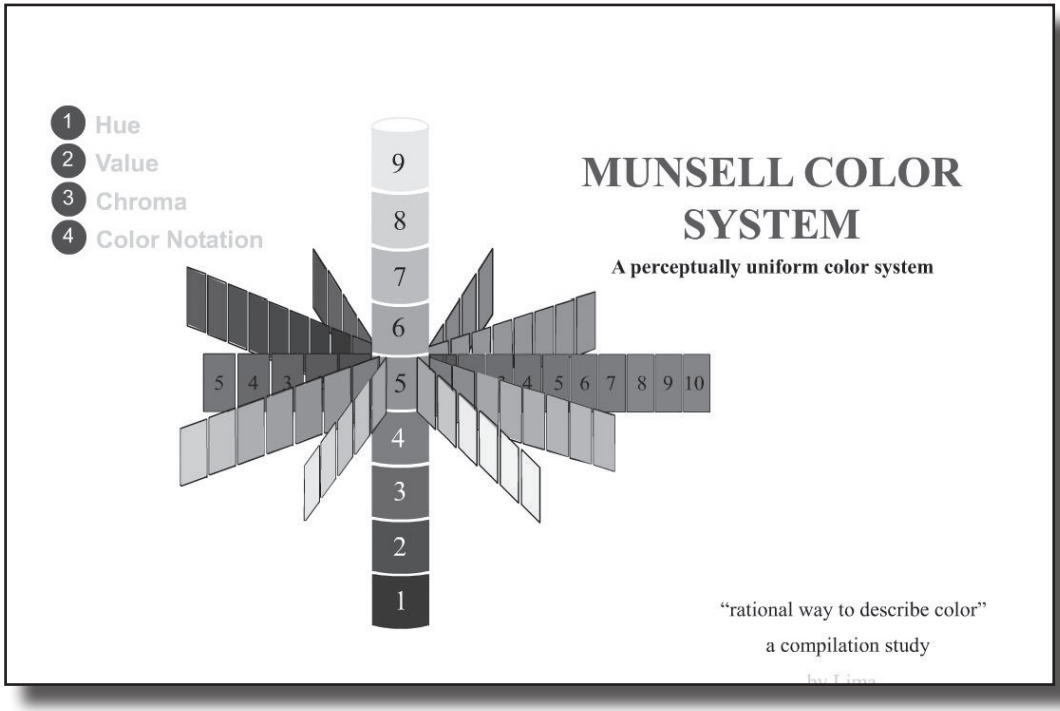


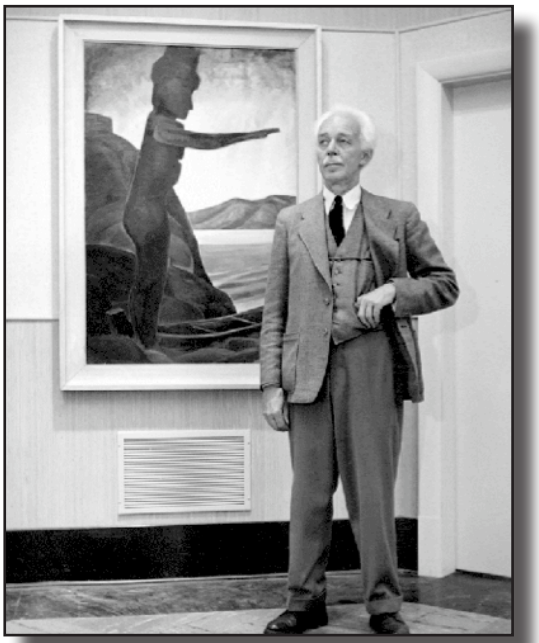
Men of Art
Thomas
Craven

Craven's book, Men of Art, which presented a trajectory of art history that began with Giotto and climaxed with Thomas Hart Benton, provided the historical pedigree and justification for social realism in North America. He attacked abstraction and art for art's sake as un-American and unmasculine. European modernism will not thrive on American soil he wrote, castigating and caricaturing cubism, expressionism, Constructivism and all the rest. Craven's new artist would be a noble citizen, yet would have little to do with the decadent rich who sponsored European modernism in the New World, Craven's thesis that 'plastic relationships are determined by human relationships meant that even the purely formal qualities of art were emblematic of the historical struggles of human society. The view that artistic form was not autonomous but rooted in human conflict was a view Shadbolt would hold all his life. [Watson 10]

[Answers a question on Craven's book]

Well, I just wanted to indicate that this was the kind of things that was happening. There was a system about it all. Varley's teaching was primarily concerned with color gradation, built on the Munsell[23] colour theory about colour pervading space; and it was rigidly organized according to an exterior contour along the figure and the shadow contour of the inside definition of the figure—and all these students painted in the same manner. They all came out with the same interior/exterior contour at that time. If you look back through the records, you'll see them one by one, and the point is they didn't develop their individualities; they



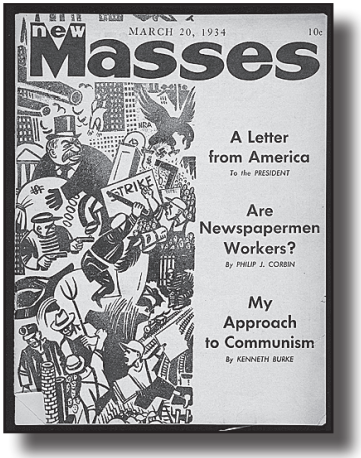


Lawren Harris

couldn't, under those conditions. So that when Varley moved, the system collapsed, because there were no followers, not a reflection on anybody, it's simply a fact of how thinking processes went. And the argument would have been: "Well, if these people—they need discipline, they have to go through what is training, and if they don't do that and they don't survive, well, O.K. they're just not built for art" and that was the justification. Lawren Harris believed that right up to fairly late. I used to get into long arguments just before we parted company when he came to live in Point Grey. My studio was just above his. I had high hopes of discussing these things with him. They used to worry me. But he would lay it on the line: every student should have antique drawing to begin with, he should learn the discipline, he should do this, and he should do that. So we parted.

Now, I just wanted you to see that there was a great discrepancy between the things which governed the art world and what seemed to be the real social event of the world: because there were one and a half million unemployed Canadians at that time, the country was desperately poor, the Young Communist League was the newest and most fierce atmosphere and ambience for any serious student. That is to say, the labour union movement was going powerfully and strong, and there were battles and tug-o-wars going on all over the place in the country and all across the States, trying to redefine anew the social areas of reform; and anyone who—it would be hard for a young person not to be seriously and powerfully influenced by that kind of thinking. I know that when I was there at that time all my friends were working on me to become an artist for the workers. The magazine you read was the *New Masses*[24], and the influence was to take part in the struggle. If you hadn't taken part in getting your head clouted in a street riot or you hadn't

New Masses



marched for a cause carrying a banner, then you weren't really living: the propaganda was very strong and powerful. Yet here in Vancouver there was no sign of this among the art group that I could think of at the time,

Then there appeared on the scene Harry Tauber, a Viennese—I don't know what you'd call him—a mystic. I wouldn't call him that, but he had that aura about him. He was somehow a galvanic figure. Part of his mesmerism, I discovered later, was he had one glass eye, which I never realized, and he'd keep that pinned on you while the other was roaming around, and it had a way of giving you a very impressive look. He also was one of the first real life-stylists who appeared here, an unorthodox dresser. First of all, he had balding towards the top; then he had great black hair and he'd come out with an enormous black beard at one time and he'd be running around with very abbreviated shorts and sandals. The next time you saw him he'd have gumboots on and dungarees and his head shaved bald. He either went from the top to the bottom and you never could tell which way he was going to appear next month. He was constantly shifting his personal visual image and he looked mysterious and very exciting and he brought the word from the State Theatre in Vienna; he'd been a disciple of Hoffmann, the designer, and he instituted classes in puppetry and all sorts of things, and he did some very good

Tauber had provided a certain ethos of, a whiff of something, the oriental mystery, the mystique, the purification ritual... and then it switched over to the new college. When the college opened, my god, that was something. At the opening, they staged it, in this garage-studio opposite the old CBC building, just beyond the art school. They had everyone sitting around on cushions on the floor and they had Oriental music playing... snake-charming music in general and incense was burning and Tauber was giving the opening talk, which was about what really turned out to be the Goethe doctrine, the Goetheanam doctrine. It was about the lost continent of Mu. He had about 190 slides of all varying things from the enchanted caves upward through the origins of art. It was to do with the lost continent of Atlantis. I had just come back from overseas... and I was a little skeptical. I had seen something of the world by this time, and had seen some of the good people of Europe, so I wasn't impressed, but everybody was swooning around. There was a cross flashing in lights on the wall... they had a big pulpit...and then the Messiah came in and that was Tauber and he mounted the pulpit and they had a spotlight fixed on him and the spotlight would catch this glass eye, and he held that still and other one he could revolve around. It was a hypnotic performance. He started out in this semi-broken voice which he had, it wasn't quite a pure English accent, he said "VE all agree that the virld began at the lost continent of Murea...you know, we all agree like this... it was fascinating in its way, but it was full of a lot of eyewash .... her son Leslie really who became the disciple of Tauber and it was the first known homosexual scandal that we had in Vancouver. I think Tauber sort of wooed off Leslie Plant and took him away. He and Leslie and Jock Macdonald went over to Nootka on the island in order to, at Tauber's instigation, start into the wilderness and purify themselves. Jock nearly died of starvation. Tauber got arrested for running around nude on the beach and he finally got deported because of his relationship with Leslie Plant. Well this was all a scandal which has been hushed up, so I wouldn't want that to be anything official, it was all an interesting part of the underground movement. When you saw Tauber on the street he was always in some dramatically outlandish kind of relationship because he'd either have a huge beard and hair, and wearing very brief shorts and sandals, and bare legs. Next time you'd see him he'd have gumboots on and a heavy duffle coat and his head entirely shaved and no beard. From one end to the other he kept changing. He was always dramatic, soft-spoken. [Lindsay-Shadbolt Interview]

things. He had a whole series called "Ketisismus" or "Vorticismus" and "Urhythmus" and all the rest of it. I used to say he had everything but the Isthmus of Panama included in this, which wasn't a very popular remark in the class. But he—the only thing is he made it into a cult. He also brought with him the Steinerite cult, and there was a great following of Rudolph Steiner[25] in these days. It seemed to be the answer, strangely enough, as I say, contrasted with the realities of what was going on the social system, the art world was getting more rarified. Tauber held classes in purple robes, throwing medicine balls and generally speaking "in eurythmus" as he called it, the rhythms of the body and so on, all of which is close to what is going on now in the Yoga kind of things. And a great many people on the loose in the art world from the women's auxiliary and so on joined into these classes, and it became quite a fashionable vogue for the time being. But the artists were also very much involved in this. And there was great talk too of the influence of the occult, of Gurdjieff and Madame Blavatsky, Ouspensky and people like this. And this was the influence which Varley was very much under the spell of, and oriental religion; he started to name his pictures "Dharma", "Karma" and various other things like this: states of being and states of consciousness. And Jock MacDonald was very much swayed and moved by this whole thing. And when the new school was formed, Varley and Tauber and Jock MacDonald started the BC. College of Art down the road

So Varley and Macdonald left the school and with Tauber founded the BC. College of Arts in the fall of 1933. Modelled on the teachings of the German anthroposophist Rudolf Steiner, the college had holistic ambitions. Shadbolt went to but one lecture, a long talk on the lost continent of Mu given by Tauber. The college, which folded two years later in 1935, was the crystallization of West coast mysticism in the arts at the time. High society, the neurotic and the hypersensitive commingled under the leadership of Varley, Tauber and Macdonald in an emphatic rejection of the real. It was a 'movement' Shadbolt reacted against. He was struck by the contrast between the remote realm of the spiritual in art and a need for an urgent response to the effects of the Depression. [Watson 10]

here a block, for two years the opening lecture was given by Tauber, and I can remember this because it was staged with such éclat. It was to be the new message and it was in this old garage cleaned out in the middle they had a great space and a pulpit built almost up to the ceiling out here and for a while we had oriental music playing while the audience was waiting around in the semi-gloom. And then at a certain time, a great light came out from behind this pulpit and a cross appeared up on top, and Tauber's head appeared over the top with the light focused on his glass eye that was scintillating away like this. And he opened his mouth and gave the

... that was chiefly Varley's discontent. I think Tauber's presence helped it because he gave the promise of a new art school. The situation with him is he appeared on the scene back in 1933 or somewhere around there. Was it that early? Well, he set up a class at Mrs. Plant's and I was one of the original members of that class. It was mostly school teachers, in the system, Jessie Faunt, myself, Lillias Farely. Lillias Farley was the white hope, as they say, best designer around. And Lillias Farley organized a puppet group under Harry Tauber. Harry Tauber taught puppetry for one thing. He was a Viennese stage designer who had studied under or worked with Hoffman in Vienna. Not Hans Hoffman, but Edward Hoffman I think it was, something, who was a Designer for the Vienna State Theater and influenced by all the new trends in theatre design at that time. He brought out this sense of theatre and drama and new designing, an new dynamism. [Lindsay-Shadbolt Interview]

word and the first words he said were "We all believe thatman came from the lost continent of Mu,[26] Lemuria"—and he went on—you know this was the legend of the lost continent of Atlantis and so on, that was very powerful in all the current mythology of the time. And it was simply hypnotizing. And he went on with 190 slides on this thing, tracing it from a moo being the sound of the cow, the earth mother, the source of milk and regeneration and so on and so on and so on. And you know it became almost bathos in one kind of a way. And it ended up with Goethe and the Goetheanum[27], and Steinerism, salvation of mankind if we could all get together and use the whole body and so on. Now, nobody disagreed with the general principle of it, but the theatricality of it he couldn't resist. He was a stage designer and the thing was done with great system. But this set the tone for that school and they were all attempting to grapple with these concepts at this particular time. So it was very interesting for Vancouver.

Well, now, at this stage, after getting this kind of general ambience, as a student, trying to find my way in it, and teaching art and being very drawn to this thing, I went to New York, first to the Chicago World's Fair. And it was my first time away from home. And there, something very tremendous was happening, because they had probably the greatest art exhibition that any world's fair has ever assembled. They had first of all—this is at the Chicago Art Institute[28]—they had a huge room of Italian primitive altarpieces, which were magnificent. And then they had twelve rooms given to the post-impressionists, each room was a

The Chicago World's Fair had mounted several spectacular exhibitons of art, among the most ambitious of any world exposition. There was an enormous exhibitions devoted to postimpressionism, which gave over separate galleries to comprehensive gatherings of work by Edgar Degas, Paul Gauguin, Camille Pissaro, Georges Roualt, and most importantly for Shadbolt, Paul Cezanne... Shadbolt would later come to consider himself a French painter. The encounter with the postimpressionist masters must be considered crucial and formative. [Watson 10]

room about the size of this one. There were fifty Cézannes in one, you know. There were Degas, there was Gauguin, there was Pissarro, anybody you'd like to name, the whole group were there. And each had his own particular impact. Rouault, for example, there was a single room of forty big Rouault paintings[29]. Things like that. These were impacts that were tremendous. Well, for me, I had been privately coming at Cezanne, and becoming more and more interested. When I hit the Cezanne room, it just knocked me for a solid block. And also the early Italian, the splendor of the icons and altar pieces with their gold ground, and all the studdings and embellishments and the clear beautiful clarion-like colour, the sort of morning of the world freshness, this was the thing that got me. And all this other painting coming at the same time. Then also there was the Chicago World's Fair—apart from seeing the whole world at your feet—it was a tremendous world fair. The biggest impact was the large mural by Thomas Hart Benton[30], which was done for the history of Indiana state, the Hoosier Mural, as it was called, and this was a kind of Renaissance,

> It was the work of Thomas Hart Benton that Shadbolt was most sympathetic to at the time... Benton's engagement made even the Group of Seven, who had been earlier models of something like a virile world of action in art, seem irrelevantly aesthetic. [Watson 11]

block-busting, solid dimensional form, like Masaccio must have been, or had the same effect, in Florence when he first gave the three-dimensional volume to shadow and so on. It had a very powerful effect. It was involved with the social scene directly, and Benton was looked on as a new man of the Renaissance who was going to lead the United States out of the morass of estheticism and efetism and cultism of art, into the world of reality. And don't forget just at that period too the WPA was born. This was due to the influence of the big agrarian movement in Mexico, where art had taken part in the peasant revolution and was setting forth on the walls, in these enormous great statements of great power, things about the social system, criticism of the Catholic Church and government and all the rest of these things. And don't forget there was a powerful critical atmosphere running all through; there were Negro riots breaking out all across the country; the trade unions were fomenting agitation at every point; the communists were working hard to keep these things in a state of fomentation. There was a tremendous social atmosphere running. Also remember some of the impacts I had. On the way down, I came into these things in sort of the way of shock. There were three of us in a car, going down to the Word's Fair; we got down into Wenatchee here in Washington, and we wanted some food—I went to the side of the road—

there were foods stands all along the road of every kind—I wanted some grape fruit. So I said, how much? Just like that. The woman said, fifteen cents. I put down 15 cents and she gave me a bushel basket. There were twenty-three or so grapefruit in this bushel basket, I was astonished, you know. And then a little while later we saw tomatoes—you could buy them for a nickel a bushel basket, then I went to get some oranges at another point and I put down what I thought was right, for a few oranges, fifteen cents again. I came away with a bushel basket, well, a tremendous number of oranges, seventy or eighty oranges. And then buying watermelons—we put down a nickel and took four or five big watermelons away. We just lived on this stuff. And it was shocking because in Vancouver a big banana boat—there was a famous incident about a boat with a cargo of bananas here—was unloading, and they dumped the excess load of bananas into the harbor here because they couldn't give them to anybody—that is, they weren't allowed to by the process of ships carrying permissions and all that kind of thing, and because of undercutting the markets; so they were dumped. There were bananas floating all around the inner basin of the harbor and people were starving in the streets. And in the Okanagan you couldn't get rid of tomatoes. They were piled up there by the side of the road in the same way. There was no exchange system going on at all. Well, all I'm saying is that this was the kind of atmosphere.

Also we had been reading people like Thomas Wolfe's *Look Homeward Angel*, Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer*, Upton Sinclair about social riots and revolution, Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street*, you know, all these novels, Theodore Dreiser's *American Tragedy*.[31] These were the books that were coming to grips with the whole of the new reality of what was going on. So it was a very strong forceful thing that was running that carried murals like Thomas Benton's right to the foreground of public consciousness and made the WPA movement seem like the end of a great heroic gesture to bring art alive, to take part with the social system in some way.

So that was the atmosphere that was running when I hit New York right at the end of the worst year of the Depression in 1933, and we were living right down in it in the Lower East Side. Men were literally scavenging garbage cans from end to end of the street and living on them. We ourselves were living on—you did get a meal at that time for—I wouldn't call it exactly a well-balanced meal but pork and beans and scrag-end of some tough meat for fifteen cents and that's the kind of thing—if you wanted a big dinner, you put down 25 cents and you ate regally. You had a piece of pie thrown in on top of that. But we were fortunate—we knew a fellow called Mike the Banana King who was just around the corner, and we'd go there at six o'clock at night when he came

back with his barrow, and anything—the bananas that he felt were a little too ripe to last in the hot weather for the next day he would sell them to us. So we got forty-five bananas for fifteen cents in semi-ripe condition. So we ate them and stewed them, and carried them around with us—we lived on them. Then we knew another fellow who was a Canadian there who was a butcher, and he gave us ten cent steaks at the end of the day that were a little too ripe to last out—so we lived on steaks and bananas for six months and got fat on it, believe it or not, in the middle of the Depression. It's a wonder we didn't come down with beriberi and a few other symptoms. However, we managed to survive. Students survived by putting what you'd call food extender, MFE, multiple food extender, the stuff that has been invented in the Army for soldiers' rations—it was sort of a dextrose compound and you just stirred a little of this into everything. And this was a great thing—all the art students there were using MFE just as much as they use LSD nowadays. They were living on these food extenders left over and they'd sell it off cheap. So that was the way art students got by.

MFE, food extender:"I personally survived with my teeth intact and a few other things which a lot of people didn't, because they were living on whatever they could get plus multiple food extender which they developed by the army called MFE. It was sort of a dextrose compound which had a lot of stuff mixed into it and you just bought this stuff stirred it into your porridge or on your scrambled eggs or ate it whenever you could, like wheat germ is now. As a matter of fact it was a salvation for a lot of art students because they bought up a lot of old army K rations when the war was over which were selling very cheap. Each art student had his hoard of K rations tucked away and his MFE bag and beans and we managed to survive but it was pretty hard on the health of a lot of them. [Susan Metcalf: Jack Shadbolt Interview]

Well, at this stage we hit New York. You can imagine what was running. First of all, for me, having been trained on T. S. Eliot and the Georgian poems,[32] and so on, most of my friends were literary and I was passionately interested in all this. Suddenly Ezra Pound's Cantos[33] were published, and if you think there was a revolution going on in poetry, those of you who are interested in that, you have no idea what impact this made in freeing up poetry, the whole business of open form poetry was born around this time and the Cantos gave it the kind of impact that was needed to make it alive. Then the WPA was going strong. I got a job on that. Then I got a job manufacturing antiques—that was another of my little side issues. I was pretty good at it, using a worm-holer and rubbing burnt umber into the cracks and crevices—I did a mirror for Mrs. Eberhard Faber of the Faber millions; she used to come down and order these antique things, and I was good at it: I wrote a little legend to go

along with it and all the rest of it. The man had me groomed for big things! I was going to paint a series of nudes on bars at one time—but somehow I never quite got going on that. I got a job in a summer camp instead, as an art master. But anything was possible in those days—you scrambled

'... they advertised for someone to paint toll and I didn't know what toll was so I went to see about the job and it turned out to be painting on tin flower boxes... and I became expert at painting on tin. Then he decided I was so good that he got me a commission to do something on the side. He used to fake antiques for wealthy people, mirror frames and things like that. So I learned how to use a worm-holing machine and fill up the cracks with burnt umber, and knock them around... I did a beautiful old antique frame for Mrs. Eberhard Faber of the Faber millions, I wrote a little phony legend to go with that kind of thing. It was all part of the picture.' [Susan Metcalf: Jack Shadbolt Interview}

around and got what you could...
[BREAK IN TAPE]

... so we became habitués. Steiglitz[34] took a liking to us and talked to us about things, and I came very much under the spell of the painter John Marin[35], who was the best watercolor painter of the particular time. As I was primarily a watercolour painter at that time, this was powerful medicine for me. But it sort of set the tone, and it also got me interested in experimental photography at the time. Although I was never a photographer, I was concerned with it and interested in it and I followed it from then on because of Steiglitz. But on another occasion we were roaming around in the Julian Levy Gallery, and Julian Levy[36] had seen us there, and he was unpacking crates and he knew we were always interested, and came in, and he said, "if you boys really want to see something, come inside here." And he had just taken out of the crate the first Salvador Dali to arrive in America, a things called "The Invisible Man"—there's a sort of stairway goes up into space and there's a brazier burning somewhere at the top of the stairs, and if you get way back on it, you suddenly see the figure of a man emerging the way Dali does it, out of

Then we used to go into the Julian Levy Gallery a lot. I remember one day Levy saw us poking around and he had just unpacked the first Slavador Dali that hit America. He took it out of the crate and he showed it to us and I must say it was a phenomenal picture. The one called "The Invisible Man." It was a brazier burning out in a space with a stairway running up to nowhere and when you got back from it you saw a man's figure coming out of this strange concoction of things. It was one of Dali's ways of creating a hallucinatory feeling. Now this was very exciting---surrealism was a new name at that time, it had just come into America. [Susan Metcalf: Jack Shadbolt Interview]

space; and then you go up to it and you couldn't find it again.

You come back to it and look—well, in any case, this was a very powerful painting, and Surrealism suddenly broke like wild fury all over the United States. Andre Breton's Manifesto[37] was published. The surrealist poets like the Comte de Lautréamont[38]—the Dali[39] drawings for Lautréamont came out at that particular time. And painters were very much influenced, and the one that was most influenced, and was most influential on me, was Peter Blume[40], who was a very beautiful painter. He did a painting called "Above Scranton" of an old coalmine pit, and so on, which I found very moving and haunting and Peter Blume is, you

South of Scranton, 1931. Peter Blume (American, born Russia, 1906–1992) Oil on canvas, 56 x 66 in. (142.2 x 167 cm), George A. Hearn Fund, 1942 (42.155)
Although the subjects of Blume's pictures were frequently mystifying and tended toward Surrealism, his technique possessed a sharp clarity that associated him with the Precisionist school of painting. South of Scranton gathers various scenes that the artist encountered during an extended road trip in spring 1930. In an account of the painting's origins, the artist stated, "As I tried to weld my impressions into the picture, they lost all their logical connections. I moved Scranton into Charleston, and Bethlehem into Scranton, as people do in a dream. The German sailors appeared to lose the purpose of exercising and became, in a sense, like birds soaring through space" (Carnegie Magazine, October 1934).

know, still one of the great painters of that generation.

But these are only some of the kinds of impacts that were happening to any student who was serious at that particular moment in history. You could hardly avoid the sense of consequence and importance and vitality and enormous thrust that was coming on behind it. Well, I got all these things. And chiefly, the biggest residue of all, I guess were the paintings of Burchfield[41] and Hopper[42], for me, the two simple American country realists if you like. And along with it, the writing that went with it, Sherwood Anderson, O Henry and you know the American realistic literary scene that was happening at that time. So I came back here to Vancouver, right after that, in 1935—36, back to my old job at Kitsilano High School.

You can imagine going back again suddenly into this thing. But somehow I picked up with a whole new group, and my group then became more directed towards the university. I couldn't find the stimulation in the Art School, the mental stimulation. There didn't seem to be anybody coming to grips with things; but I found a lot, at least in the theory of what went on, in the university, starting through poetry. And I became personal friends with Hunter Lewis,[43] who was one of the major art forces in Vancouver, who is very little written about as yet, but will be more and

It was through his contact with Lewis and the university's intellectual life that he began to write poetry. His 1930's poetry, which he published in 1973, speaks in the voice of the rejected, dejected and unrequited lover. [Watson 13]

more. It was Hunter who chiefly organized the UBC Art Gallery and got it into existence and brought about most of the serious thinking connected to contemporary art. He gave courses in contemporary literature and poetry, and I sat in on those things as an auditor, and came very much under the spell of the newest things, e.e. cummings and the open kind of poetry and the new novelists and all the rest of the things that were happening. But this university system, I should explain, at that time was built on the star system just as much as any theatrical production was. There were the great professors, and some of our local ones, whose names are legend to you probably—Garnet Sedgwick,[44] who was a magnificent orator and a magnificent professor of English and who read Hamlet to his classes and acted out all the parts, a gnome of a man, with white hair and a stentorian voice, a great ribald earthshaking humour about him, tremendous personality: it was he who first read Emily Carr's stories over the radio and drew them to wide public attention in a series of broadcasts. Ira Dilworth[45] was taken from the University at that time to become talks director of the CBC, which has just been founded. And the CBC started in this new talks program, which was including poetry, and Dilworth ran a thing called "the Sanctuary Hour" based on T S Eliot's poem or a term of Eliot's. All these new poets and everything began to be read on the air for the first time in Canada. Then there were other professors like A. F. B. Clarke, the world authority on Pushkin, a marvelous man. And F. B. Larson, who was a great lecturer in aesthetics—world-renowned—gave the purest most concise, streamlined, chiseled, honed and pure lectures that you could imagine. There was style in these people; they set the tone for the university. This kind of star system has disappeared now and I think it's probably much healthier that it doesn't exist anymore. But nevertheless it was quite a difference in ambience, and universities sought to get these people. So I became friends with all of them: Sedgewick, Larson, and A.F.B. Clarke, because they were people who were asked to sign onto the Board of the Art Gallery and also they were connected with this new thinking that was going on. They were the leaders in thought and some were part of that group that permeated in and over and discussed all these ideas that were running. So we came to a kind of new concept of things. Also Hunter Lewis was the organizer or one of the prime movers of the Civil Liberties Union[46], which was happening here at that time, because the Japanese were being worked on, if you remember,

to be driven out of this area because what had been so quaint and so cute for a long time, the fact that everybody had a Chinese cook or a Japanese houseboy and servant they suddenly began to think that all these were spies, and that for years their cooks had been keeping tabs on them, spying on them. This was the legend. Panic set in. Everybody started to see spies under every blanket. And the old colonels in the Gulf Islands were giving their wives cyanide capsules to hide in case the Japanese invaded the Gulf Islands and they were to meet a fate worse than death. I mean the old thing was still hanging on. There were secret patrols formed to patrol the hills up here and all over the place. It was real. The panic was on. It's hard to believe but it's the truth. The atmosphere here began to get electric. The social system began to percolate.

Well look, this story can go on and on. I'm not trying to push it at you too hard; I'm just trying to build up some something of the ambience that went on. I can stop now or at any moment. Perhaps I'd just better take another five minutes and wind it up. Because there's so much detail connected with it as you can well imagine.

At this time too the big march to Ottawa had happened; the post office sit-down strike had happened in Vancouver; Section 98 had been invoked, the War Measures Act,[47] under which anybody could be held and so on and so on. All this had happened. Then in 1937 I think it was I went to England and got right in the middle of a totally new kind of—oh first I tried to get to Mexico to become a student-assistant with Diego Rivera. This will give you some other idea of the kind of climate that was operating. At Kitsilano High School I had a student in my class who was a cousin of a Lord Hastings, who was one of Diego Rivera's assistants, an English Artist, and she put me in touch with Lord Hastings, I got in touch with him, hence in touch with Rivera and was writing letters to get a student assistantship. At that time several things began to happen. First of all, I was told that if I did go to Rivera I would have to look after his current wife because he was having an affair with Paulette Goddard[48], the film star, and that part of my job would be looking after the wife. Also I would have to pay $400, which I didn't have. It seemed like a lot of money to me. Then at that time Trotsky[49] came to Mexico, if you remember, and he was murdered in Rivera's studio, and this didn't help matters. My letters suddenly got diverted to the Mayor of Mexico City because they suspected me of being a communist, and I got a long letter from Juan O'Gorman,[50] who was Rivera's assistant, one of the Irish Spaniards who went to Mexico, telling me, if you're wise don't come to Mexico right now, the political cauldron is too hot, you'll get yourself into Dutch. So in a long thoughtful launch trip around the Gulf Islands with some friends for

a couple of weeks here—we went up every channel and sound—and I was thinking all over this thing: what to do. Finally I decided, in any case this isn't what I wanted to do. My roots are in Europe. Picasso means more to me than Rivera in the ultimate sense. Cezanne[51] is my great passion. I'm going to the source of European painting and find out what it was about. So, Erick Newton had made a contact for me in Marian Richardson in England with the school in Euston Road that was organized by Roger Fry's widow. Roger Fry[52] was the great British art critic, as you remember. And I had met his daughter Pamela out here. She came out to stay with the Mortimer Lambs[53]—at least I'd taken her there and she'd never left. They took a liking to her and that was that. But what happened: this school started out and it got to be an immense—what they thought was going to be an English renaissance at that time. Its patron saints were Duncan Grant[54] and Vanessa Bell and Virginia Woolf and H.G. Wells and Sir Kenneth Clark. You can image what a battery of names they had, and they had collected all sorts of people there: the people in my class were Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, Auden and Isherwood were around the periphery, coming in and out everyday looking on. Adrian Stokes, who is the best art and ballet critic, and Laurence Gowing—all these people were very scholarly. And I was plunged right into the middle of this here with teachers, Coldstream, who was teaching this raindrop technique, very minute: Claude Rogers and Victor Pasmore, of whom I became a good friend. This was my kind of exposure to a different world altogether. I felt like a country boy way off from the sticks. I just couldn't come to grips—I was overwhelmed by this circle of intellectuals—they really were intellectuals. They assumed education to begin with. I had nothing. I hadn't read a book; it was all first hand exposure. But for them, book learning was part of their natural thing, and they spoke with authority, and after all were established poets like Spender and the rest of them. So I was a bit cowed by all this, and though I learned a lot in a kind of literary way, listening in, I finally found I had to move to Paris, and there I hit André Lhote's[55] school, and suddenly I knew I was in my right territory. Lhote was a tremendous

Auden, Isherwood and Spender

But the whole atmosphere was a little too refined for my kind of taste which was more centered, I think, on American realism at the time—Burchfield, Hopper and experiences of that kind which I had already encountered. And also the residue for me of my early and passionate concern with Emily Carr and the Canadian Group of Seven and the barns and images of the urban edge, the old houses against the bush and things like that, that has remained my permanent image. [Susan Metcalf: Jack Shadbolt Interview]

teacher. He's not a great artist in himself because he's too analytical; I believe that the place of the intellect in art is a very important one. An artist is no bigger than the size of his mind, ultimately. He had to know what he's doing, like anybody else of any serious consequence. That doesn't preclude the flow of intuition, it enhances it, and it makes it even bigger if you know how to develop the things your subconscious can throw forward. And so in my case I came back to Vancouver after this exposure again, and had to go through it all once more, with feeling, you know. And this time I came back and became a member of the Art School staff, and this was getting—in 1938—when the big impact was over and I was sent with Jock MacDonald, Charles Scott and Watson

Kingston conference: In June of 1942 Shadbolt attended the Kingston Conference, which resulted in the formation of the Federation of Canadian Artists. On the trip across Canada he had a dispute with Jock Macdonald: Shadbolt argued for the historical necessity of communism, Macdonald that communism was evil. The discussion ended with Macdonald accusing Shadbolt of atheism, and the two never spoke again. The conference "called for a more central position for the artist in Canadian life...One of the Federation's first priorities was to press for a war art program—a project that was not put into effect until January 1943. [Watson 28]

to the Kingston Conference,[56] which was the first major awakening of identity, I guess, of Canadian artists. A hundred and forty-one artists from all over Canada were gathered together at Kingston for this mass conference. It was staged by Andre Bieler[57] of Queens University—and to give you an idea—this was right at 1940-41—give you an idea where Canada had come around to at that particular time and who should be asked to be the major speaker but Thomas Hart Benton and Ed Rowan,[58] who was the organizer of the WPA movement in the United States. After this movement was now long since over in the States we were getting the benefit of it in Canada, and Andre Bieler thought that this would be the new force in Canadian painting, and he brought in two technicians from Harvard University, Stirner and Gettings, who wrote great books on the techniques of art—so that the artists would have the fresco techniques at their fingertips for public monumental painting. Well, as it turned

out, I became chairman of the resolutions committee of this conference. We brought down high-sounding definitions of the rebirth of important social values in art and this kind of thing. And we really believed seriously at the time that something good could come.

I was one of the founding members of the Federation of Canadian Artists,[59] and for a time was very active. Nancy Bakewell here for years was secretary of this bouncing organization and knows all about it, and you know, it served its real purpose in bringing a kind of identity to art. Later it petered out and became a sort of mediocre institution simply because a lot of the things which had already started were now done, it had transcended itself by helping to start things going which then it outgrew and lost its function.

Well, all I'm saying is, that was the end of the Thirties in Canada. It ended on that wild hope that art was going to get into the social scene in some very significant and important way. And it would be interesting some time to get a talk on the art of the Forties—what happened in relation to this private dream. At any rate what was going on in the picture in Canada you can see from this show[60]: it's fairly tame, technically tame, there's nothing big or bold or daring about it; conservative; its good solid painting of an era; it's a hangover from the Group of Seven romanticism gradually working itself through into the social pattern but not yet gaining enough force to declare itself with absolute conviction, so it ends up as a kind of half lyrical, half realist statement, between things.

Well, that's the pattern as I see it for that particular ten years, as I was involved in the middle of it. For what its worth—I have no idea—I can't tell whether it makes sense to you or not. I've left out at least two-thirds of all the incidents and accidents and ideas which were floating and were current, but I think maybe I've given you a few things to piece together a picture with. For what it's worth, thanks.

ENDNOTES.

Abbreviations:
AG: Patricia Ainslie, Correspondences, Jack Shadbolt. Glenbow, 1991.
BG: Bloomsbury Group.
I/www: internet.
SLI: Shadbolt-Linberg interview, August 1980, Vancouver Art Gallery library.
SMI: Shadbolt-Metcalf interview, 25 April 1975, Vancouver Art Gallery Library.
SW/JS: Scott Watson, Jack Shadbolt, Douglas & McIntyre, Vancouver, 1990.

1] **Jock Macdonald:** [1897-1960], painter, contemporary of the Group of 7, watercolourist, teacher, print maker, illustrator, commercial artist, close friend of Emily Carr. **Fred Varley**: 1881-1969, landscape and portrait painter, teacher, member of the Group of 7.

2] **Group of Seven:** The Group of Seven was founded in 1920 as an organization of self-proclaimed modern artists. The original members – Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A. Y. Jackson, Franz Johnston, Arthur Lismer, J.E.H. Macdonald and F.H. Varley befriended each other in Toronto between 1911 and 1913. All except Harris made their living as commercial artists. Tom Thomson, included in this circle of friends, died in 1917 hence never became a member of the Group. [Canadian Encyclopedia]

3] **WPA:** The **Works Progress Administration** was the largest American New Deal project employing millions of workers to carry out public works projects, including the construction of public buildings and roads, and operated large arts, drama, media, and literacy projects. It fed children and redistributed food, clothing, and housing.

4] **Diego Rivera:** [1886–1957], an important Mexican painter born in Guanajuato and husband of Frida Kahlo. His large wall works in fresco established the Mexican Mural Movement. Between 1922 and 1953, Rivera painted murals in Mexico City, Cuernevaca, San Francisco, Detroit, and New York City. **David Alfaro Siqueiros** [1896-1974] a Mexican social realist painter, known for his large murals in fresco. He, Diego Rivera, and Jose Orozco established Mexican muralism. He participated in an unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Leon Trotsky in May 1940.

5] **Robert Motherwell:** [1915–1991] American painter, printmaker, and editor, member of the New York School (a name he invented), which included Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, and Philip Guston. **Jackson Pollock** [1912 – 1956], a major figure in the abstract expressionist movement known for his uniquely defined style of drip painting. **Barnett Newman** [1905 – 1970], one of the major figures in abstract expressionism and one of the foremost of the colour field painters. **Mark Rothko** [1903–1970] is classified as an abstract expressionist, although he himself rejected this label, and even resisted classification as an "abstract painter". **Abstract expressionism,** an American post-World War II school, was the first American movement to achieve international influence. Alfred Barr was the first to use this term in 1929 in relation to works by Wassily Kandinsky, abstract impressionism combines influences and schools such as Futurism, the Bauhaus and Synthetic Cubism, with a penchant for being rebellious, anarchic, and highly idiosyncratic.

6] **Intermedia:** Intermedia opened its doors in the spring of 1967. The idea of creating a society and a public workshop dedicated to the collaborative exploration of new technologies by artists had been the brainchild of a local alliance of artists, poets, musicians, dancers and academics. This group originally assembled to discuss Marshall McLuhan's theories on how electronic media, particularly television, was transforming our world into a "global village"—Victor Doray and Joe Kyle on CBC radio in 1967, [Ruins in Process, Vancouver Art in the 60's website [I/www.]

7] **Emily Carr: [**1871–1945], Canadian artist and writer deeply inspired by the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest Coast. One of the earliest painters in Canada to adopt a modernist and post-impressionist painting style, Carr did not receive widespread recognition for her work until later in her life. As she matured, the subject matter of her painting shifted from aboriginal themes to landscapes, and in

particular, forest scenes. As a writer, Carr was one of the earliest chroniclers of life in British Columbia. The Canadian Encyclopedia describes her as a "Canadian icon".

8] **Victoria, colonial context:** for some recent writings about various colonial aspects see: **Patrick A. Dunae** *"Geographies of sexual commerce and the production of prostitutional space: Victoria, British Columbia 1860-1914*," ["This essay considers the geography and economic significance of the sex trade in Victoria B.C., a city that has historically associated itself with notions of gentility and images of English country gardens."] [Journal of the CHA, new series, 19, no.1]. **Cole Harris***: How did colonialism dispossess? Comments from the Edge of an Empire.* [Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 94,1] "I explore these propositions by considering the powers underlying the reserve (reservation) system in British Columbia, a system that, by allocating a tiny fraction of the land to native people and opening the rest for development, facilitated the geographical reorganization of the province. My conclusions are these: the initial ability to dispossess rested primarily on physical power and the supporting infrastructure of the state; the momentum to dispossess derived from the interest of capital in profit and of settlers in forging new livelihoods; the legitimating of and moral justification for dispossession lay in a cultural discourse that located civilization and savagery and identified the land uses associated with each; and the management of dispossession rested with a set of disciplinary technologies of which maps, numbers, law, and the geography of resettlement itself were the most important. Although no one body of theory explains colonial power, several theoretical perspectives yield crucial insights. **Bruce Braun** *"Colonialism's afterlife: vision and visuality on the Northwest Coast"* [Cultural Geographies, 2002, 9, 202-247] "Explores the relationships between landscape and power, colonialism and its aftermaths, and state territoriality and its contestation, in the work of two popular Northwest Coast landscape painters: Emily Carr and Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun. The work of both artists is explored in terms of their representation of relations between indigenous peoples, physical landscapes, state power, and modernity, and in the context of ongoing political struggles over land, resources and the environment between First Nations and the Canadian government, it also calls attention to the multiple and fractured nature of postcolonial visualities, to the discursive, social, technological and institutional relations that shape how landscapes are experienced and represented, and, ultimately, to the trace of colonial pasts in the environmental and political imaginaries of a postcolonial present." **Leslie Dawn**, *National Visions, National Blindness, Canadian Art and Identities in the 1920's. [UBC Press, 2006, 446p.]* "In the early decades of the twentieth century, Canada sought to define itself as an independent dominion with allegiance to the British Empire. The visual arts were considered central to the formation of a distinct national identity, and the Group of Seven's landscapes became part of a larger program to unify the nation and assert its uniqueness. *National Visions, National Blindness* traces the development of this program and illuminates its conflicted history. Using newly discovered archival evidence, Leslie Dawn revises common interpretations of several well-known events and rescues others from obscurity. He problematizes conventional perceptions of the Group as a national school and underscores the contradictions inherent in international exhibitions showing unpeopled landscapes alongside Northwest Coast Native arts and the "Indian" paintings of Langdon Kihn and Emily Carr. Dawn examines how this dichotomy forced a re-evaluation of the place of First Nations in both Canadian art and nationalism.

9] **Francis Mawson Rattenbury:** [1867–1935] architect, born in England, most of his career spent in British Columbia where he designed many notable buildings such as the BC parliament buildings, the current Vancouver Art gallery building which was a courthouse, the Empress hotel in Victoria and the Hotel Vancouver, and buildings as far afield as Nelson, B. C. He was murdered in England at the age of 68 by his second wife's lover. **Samuel Maclure** [1860-1929], BC born, completely self-taught architect, produced a multitude of brilliant examples of west coast inspired Tudor Revival and Arts and Crafts homes throughout southwest British Columbia, most of which are now municipally designated heritage buildings.

10] Harry Tauber, B. C. College of Arts: Tauber, whose calling card read 'Harry Tauber, Exponent of Modern Art,' had studied with Josef Hoffman in Vienna and worked for the Viennese Expressionist Imperial 'Burg Theatre.' An unusual and magnetic personality, he brought his enthusiasm for expressionism, metaphysics, constructivism, and spiritualism to his classes in architecture, costume, eurhythmics, film, and theatre arts. At the **BC. College of Arts** all departments intermingled. Painting, dance, music, design, yoga, and meditation were blended with discussions on P. D. Ouspensky, anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner, theosophy, and expanding consciousness to the fourth dimension. Students did eurhythmics in the evenings, dressed in black silk, with Harry Tauber in a blue jumpsuit. Tauber, interested in the philosophical and religious aspects of puppetry, brought together a group of marionette players who presented productions of *The Witch Doctor* and *Petrouchka* at the Vancouver Art Gallery. A modern production of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, with masks, drew three hundred spectators each evening it played. The College generated such enthusiasm among its students that it is tempting to consider what might have resulted had it not succumbed to financial difficulties. In June, 1935, amid an economic depression, the doors were closed. Lorna Farrell Ward, 'Tradition, transition, the keys to Change', [Vancouver Art and Artists, 1931-1983.' Website.] [I/www.]

11**] Little Theatre Movement:** the amateur or nonprofessional "community" theatre in Canada. Originally, however, it referred to an international reform movement protesting the crass, mass-produced, professional fare seen around the turn of the century. From France and Ireland the movement spread to North America prior to WWI. With the rising popularity of films and radio that followed in the 1920s, commercial touring declined and literally hundreds of grassroots community theatres blossomed across Canada to fill the vacuum. [I/www.]

12] **Elmer Rice:** [1892–1967] an American playwright who received the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. ***The Adding Machine***, 1923, has been called "... a landmark of American Expressionism, reflecting the growing interest in this highly subjective and non-realistic form of modern drama."

13] **Thomas Stearns Eliot:** [1888–1965) publisher, playwright, literary and social critic and "arguably the most important English-language poet of the 20th century."

14]: **W. P. Weston:** [1879-1967], Trained in London, came to Vancouver in 1909 to become art teacher at King Edward High School. He soon became involved in what little artistic life there was in Vancouver, exhibiting with the B.C. Society of Fine Arts which he joined in 1910. In 1914 Weston moved to the new Provincial Normal School where he taught until his retirement in 1946. **Charles Scott** [1886-1964], graduated from the Glasgow School of Art in 1909 and worked in Scotland and Belgium prior to emigrating to Canada in 1912, finally settling in Vancouver in 1914. In 1931 Scott travelled overseas with one of the founders of the new Vancouver Art Gallery, **Henry A. Stone**, to purchase the 113 works of art which would become the foundation of the Gallery's permanent collection. Later that year the Vancouver Art Gallery opened to the public. To Scott this was "an important step in the cultural history of the city" as well as "a dream come true." [I/www.]

16] **Franz Cižek:** [1865–1946] Austrian genre and portrait painter, best known as a teacher and reformer of art education. He began the Child Art Movement in Vienna, opening the Juvenile Art Class in 1897. Initially he was a genre and portrait painter, but he soon involved himself with the reform of art education. **Marion Richardson** [1892–1946], British artist, educator, and author, published workbooks on penmanship and handwriting. She toured Canada in 1934 and in 1935 published *Writing and Writing Patterns*, a set of hinged cards and booklets for teaching handwriting. In 1938 she organized a large and successful exhibition of children's art at Country Hall Museum. [I/www.]

17] **Estevan Massacre:** On September 28, the strikers decided to hold a parade through Saskatchewan coal country from Bienfait to Estevan to dramatize the miners' plight and encourage public support. In the early afternoon of September 29, the motorcade set off with miners, their wives and children all packed into old cars and on the backs of trucks. As the cavalcade entered Estevan, they unfurled Union Jack flags and banners reading "We will not work for starvation wages," "We want houses, not piano boxes,"

and "Down with the company store." The police, bolstered now by RCMP officers, began firing their guns in the air or into the ground in front of the demonstrators. A group of strikers climbed on the fire truck, and one was shot dead by the police. Two other miners were killed by police bullets. Eight more unarmed strikers, four bystanders, and one RCMP officer were wounded by police gunfire. Those fatally wounded were Peter Markunas, Nick Nargan and Julian Gryshko. [I/www.]

18) **Townsend: [sic] [Fred Townley,]** architect, Vancouver City Hall, was designed by architect Fred Townley who designed many buildings in Vancouver, including the Great Northern Railway station (destroyed), the Capitol Theatre, Vancouver General Hospital, the Vancouver Stock Exchange Building, and the CNIB Building.

19] **Vancouver Art Gallery, Mr. Henry A. Stone:** The founding members of the Vancouver Art Gallery began raising funds for a civic art collection in 1925 with a starting gift of $50,000 from the group's chairman, Henry A. Stone. The first painting acquired for the collection was a 19th century British landscape titled *Canterbury Meadows*, 1877 by T.S. Cooper [1803-1902].

20] **Lawren Harris:** Born in Brantford, Ontario, into a wealthy, conservative and religious family, co-founders of Massey-Harris, Lawren Harris enjoyed much privilege in his youth. This enabled him to concentrate on his painting. Harris's art reflected his interest in Theosophy and Biology and his search for deeper spiritual meaning. [I/www.]

21] **Mayor Malkin:** [1868-1959], mayor of Greater Vancouver, 1929-1930. Ran on the slogan 'When you vote for Malkin you vote for law and order, civic morality and fairness to labor.' He donated funds for the construction of Malkin Bowl in Stanley Park.

22] **J.M.W. Turner**: [1775-1851], Romantic landscape painter, printmaker, water colourist, the 'painter of light, regarded as a Romantic introduction to the Impressionists.

23) **Munsell colour theory:** while attending the Boston Normal Art School in the late 19th century, Albert Munsell was keenly aware that a practical theory of color did not exist. From his own work and experiments, he developed the Munsell Color System. Using his system made it possible to discuss color scientifically. He defined color in terms of Hue, Value and Chroma. Hue was defined as the actual color, red, blue, green, etc. Value was defined as how light or dark a color is. Chroma was defined as how strong or weak a color is. He published a standard color atlas defining the Munsell Color Standard which, before his work, had been an impossible task. [I/www.]

24] ***The New Masses*:** [1926–1948], American Marxist publication edited by Walt Carmon, briefly by Whittaker Chambers, became a highly influential publication and, "the principal organ of the American cultural left from 1926 onwards."

25] **Peter Ouspensky**: [1878-1947], Moscow born journalist who continued the work of Gurdjief, became a novelist and the prime theoretician of the Fourth Dimension**. Rudolf Steiner** [1861–1925] best known for the Waldorf schools: the philosophy underlying those schools encompassed fields as diverse as traditional philosophy, spiritualism, color theory, art, agriculture, medicine, music, and architecture. Steiner believed that spiritual insights could be gained through systematic thought. Steiner remains an imperfectly understood and often controversial figure. **Madam Helena Blavatsky** [1837-1891], adventuress, author, mystic, guru, occultist, and charlatan, along with others founded the Theosophical Society in New York in 1875. [I/www.]

26] **Mu:** hypothetical continent that allegedly existed in one of Earth's oceans, but disappeared.

27] **Goetheanam:** a global network of spiritually dedicated people. As the home of the School of Spiritual Science and the General Anthroposophical Society, it serves the Exchange on spiritual issues and training in artistic and scientific field. The events range from lectures on specialist colloquia to large international congresses. [I/www.]

28] **Chicago Art institute**: The **Art Institute of Chicago** (**AIC**) encyclopedic art museum located in Chicago's Grant Park, has one of the world's most notable collections of Impressionist and Post-impressionist art. Holdings also include significant American Art, Old Masters, European and American

decorative art, Asian, modern, and contemporary art. The museum is associated with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

29] **Edgar Degas**: [1834-1937], painter, one of the founders of Impressionism, over half his works depict dancers, also racecourse subjects and female nudes. **Paul Gauguin**: [1848-1903], French post-impressionist, important importer of non-European images into the art world of the late 19th century. **Camille Pissarro**: [1830-1903], the 'dean of impressionist painters', Cezanne said of him 'he was a father to me', Pissarro insisted on painting individuals in natural settings, 'without artifice or grandeur.' **George Rouault**: [1871-1951], French Fauvist and Expressionist painter, seen as the most passionate of 'Christian artists of the 20th century.'

30] **Thomas Hart Benton, Hoosier Mural:** [1889-1975], one of the foremost painters and muralists associated with the American Regionalists of the 1930s. [I/www.]

31] **Thomas Wolfe**, [1900-1938], a writer, *Look Homeward Angel*, *Of time and The River*, *The Lost Boy*, and *You Can't Go Home Again* are his four most important works. **John Dos Passos** [1896-1970], moved from social revolutionary to conservative libertarian, his major work *USA Trilogy,* written between 1930 and 1938, *42nd Parallell*, *1919* and *Big Money*. **Sinclair Lewis** [1885-1951], American writer who won the 1930 Nobel Prize for literature for 'his vigorous and graphic art of description and his ability to create with wit and humour critical views of American society and capitalist values.' **Theodore Dreiser** [1871-1945], American writer and journalist, author of such novels as *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy*. He was a campaigner against social injustice, a socialist, creating a prose with layers of different sources. All these writers created a radical fiction with innovations in textual and narrative technique.

32] **Georgian poems:** The Georgian poets were those whose works appeared in a series of five anthologies named *Georgian Poetry*, published by Harold Monro and edited by Edward Marsh. The poets included Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, D. H. Lawrence, Walter de la Mare and Siegfried Sassoon. The common features of the poems in these publications were romanticism, sentimentality and hedonism.

33] **The Cantos**: by Ezra Pound, a long poem in 120 sections, each of which is a canto, written between 1915 and 1962, and is considered one of the most significant works of modernist poetry in the 20th century.

34] **Alfred Steiglitz**: [1864–1946], American photographer instrumental in making photography an accepted art form. In addition Stieglitz is known for the New York art galleries that he ran in the early part of the 20th century, where he introduced many avant-garde European artists to the U.S. He was married to painter Georgia O'Keefe.

35] **John Marin:** [1870-1953] early American modernist artist who was known for abstract landscapes and watercolors. [I/www.]

36] **Julien Levy:** [1906-1981] art dealer and owner of **Julien Levy Gallery** in New York City, which became important as a venue for Surrealists, avant-garde artists and American photographers in the 1930s and 1940s. [I/www]

37] **Andre Breton's manifesto**: [1924], forms, norms, methods, instructions for the practise of Surrealism in art, defined as the juxtaposition of two distant realities brought together to form a new one.

38] **Comte de Lautréamont:** pseudonym of **Isidore-Lucien Ducasse** [1846–1870], an Uruguayan-born French poet, his only works, Les Chants de Maldoror and *Poésies*, had a major influence on modern literature, particularly on the Surrealists and the Situationalists. He died at the age of 24.

39] **Salvador Dali, The Invisible Man:** [1929], 'It was the first painting in which Dali used double images. In this case a new image is formed from other objects, like what was done by Giuseppe Arcimboldo [1527-1593]. Dali however uses shades to form the image. The generation of multiple images will be one of the characteristics of his critical-paranoiac method.' [Dali Paintings website] [I/www.]

40) **Peter Blume**: [1906-1992]. a Russian immigrant whose dreamlike, obsessively detailed images made

him one of the US' best-known painters in the1930's and 40's. His artistic style was a curious hybrid of American and European traditions that combined such disparate influences as folk art and Precisionism with aspects of Parisian Purism and Cubism and, later, Surrealism. [I/www.]

41] **Charles Burchfield:** [1893-1967], American painter, visionary artist, known for his passionate watercolors of nature and townscapes.

42] **Edward Hopper:** [1882-1967], a painter mainly active in New York City created visions of a mysterious yet strangely desperate and lonely modernity**. Sherwood Anderson [**1876-1941], American novelist whose 23 interrelated stories make up his book Winesburg, Ohio. **O. Henry** [1862-1910], wrote witty short stores with clever twist endings, an American Guy de Maupassant. While in New York, from 1902 onwards he wrote 381 short stories. His two main collections are *Cabbages and Kings* and *The Four Million*.

43] **Hunter Lewis:** graduated from UBC, in English, joined the Department of English in 1929 as an assistant professor and remained on staff until his retirement in 1962.

44] **Garnet Sedgwick:** [1882-1949], Sedgewick received his PhD from Harvard in 1913. He was instructor and assistant professor at Washington University. In 1918, he was made a professor and first head of the department. He served on the University Senate and was involved with the Vancouver Art Gallery, Symphony and Little Theatre, as well as the Civil Liberties Union. [I/www.]

45] **Ira Dilworth:**, [1894-1962], grew up in the Okanagan and Victoria where he taught school from 1915 to 1926, completing his M.A. at Harvard in the process. As a high school principal in Victoria from 1926 to 1934, he became a trusted sponsor of Emily Carr's work, later serving as her literary trustee. When he moved to Vancouver to teach English at UBC from 1934 to 1938, he was able to further promote Carr's career, gaining influence as director of CBC Radio's B.C. broadcasting from 1938 to 1946. [I/www.]

46] **Civil Liberties Union:** The first civil liberties union was the Montreal branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union, founded in 1937 in opposition to the authoritarian policies of Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis. At about the same time, some Torontonians formed their own branch of the CLU, and in 1938 a group of Vancouver citizens created a third affiliated organization. [I/www.]

47] **War Measures Act:** Sect 98 of the Criminal Code of Canada was a law enacted after the Winnipeg General Strike banning "unlawful associations." It was used in the 1930s against the Communist Party of Canada. After the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919, Arthur Meighen, minister of justice in Robert Borden's 's government introduced an amendment to the Criminal Code of Canada that was passed by parliament, which read: Any association…whose professed purpose…is to bring about any governmental, industrial or economic change within Canada by use of force, violence or physical injury to person or property, or by threats of such injury, or which teaches, advocates, advises or defends the use of force, violence, terrorism, or physical injury to person or property…in order to accomplish such change, or for any other such purpose…, or which shall by any means prosecute or pursue such purpose…or shall so teach, advocate, advise or defend, shall be an unlawful association. [I/www.]

48] **Paulette Goddard:** [1910–1990], an American film actress, and a performer in several Broadway productions as a Ziegfeld Girl, she became a major star in the 1940's.

49] **Leon Trotsky:** Russian revolutionary leader, and writer and theoretician of local and world revolution, took up exile in Mexico after many attempts on his life, he was a close friend of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo, and was assassinated not in Rivera's home but his own residence in Coyoacan, near Mexico City.

50] **Juan O'Gorman:** [1905–1982] a Mexican painter, muralist and architect.

51] **Paul Cezanne:** French painter, one of the greatest of the Postimpressionists, whose works and ideas were influential in the aesthetic development of many 20th-century artists and art movements, especially Cubism. Cézanne's art, misunderstood and discredited by the public during most of his life, grew out of Impressionism and eventually challenged all the conventional values of painting in the 19th century through its insistence on personal expression and on the integrity of the painting itself. He has been called the father of modern painting. [I/www.]

52] **R Fry:** [1866–1934], English artist and art critic, and a member of the Bloomsbury Group. Establishing his reputation as a scholar of the Old Masters, he became an advocate of more recent developments in French painting, to which he gave the name Post-impressionism. He was described by Kenneth Clark as "incomparably the greatest influence on taste since Ruskin… In so far as taste can be changed by one man, it was changed by Roger Fry". [L/www.]

53] **Mortimer Lamb:** Harold Mortimer Lamb [1872-1970], was born in Surrey, England. He came to Canada and settled first in Montreal, and later he moved to Vancouver, B.C., and contributed articles to the Bureau of Information for the B.C. Government. As an art critic he wrote in defence of the Group of Seven when many other critics attacked their work. Harold Mortimer Lamb married Vera Weatherbie [1909-1977], and is also the father of prominent Canadian artist: Molly Lamb Bobak. [L/www.]

54] **Duncan Grant:** [1885-1978], member of the Bloomsbury Group (BG), painter, influenced by Picasso and Matisse, one of the most advanced of British painters in responding to modern French painting and one of the first British artists to produce completely abstract paintings. **Vanessa Bell**, painter, sister of Virginia Woolf, wife of art critic Clive Bell, a member of the BG, interior designer who made important contributions to British portrait drawing and landscape art. **HG Wells**, [1886-1946], (BG), English author, futurist, historian, one of the fathers of science fiction, produced more than a hundred books, including *The War of the Worlds*, *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The Island of Dr. Moreau*. **Sir K Clarke** [1903-1983], art historian, author of the classic text *The Nude*, director of England's National Gallery, patron of Henry Moore and Graham Sutherland. **Sir Stephen Spender**, OBE: [1909-1995], sometimes socialist and pacifist, poet and essayist, translator and teacher. **W. H. Auden** [1907-1973], Anglo-American poet, librettist, all around major cultural figure, fathered not only a school but a generation of poets, won the Pulitzer prize in 1948 for his *The Age of Anxiety* and in 1956 won a National Book award for his *The Shield of Achilles*. **Christopher Isherwood** [1904-1986], Anglo-American novelist, resident of Hollywood and famous for his memoirs and travels, friend of Auden and resident of the Berlin sexual underworld**. Adrian Stokes** [1902-1972], painter, poet and Freudian art critic, author of the *Stones of Rimini*, writer of psychoanalytic essays on Cezanne, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Monet. **Sir Lawrence Gowing** [1918-1991], artist, curator, historian of medieval art, conscientious objector, and a scholar of Vermeer. **William Coldstream** [1908-1987], British realist painter and art teacher, principal of the Slade School, member of the School of London, disciple of measurement. **Claude Rogers** [1907-1979], one of the founders of the Euston Road School, painter who worked at portraits and landscapes, figurative painter who gradually allowed underlying structural features to become more abstract. **Victor Pasmore [**1908-1998], artist, architect, trustee of the Tate, pioneered abstract art in Britain during the 1940's and 1950's; of his style Herbert Read commented it was the most revolutionary event in post-war British art.

55] **André Lhote:** [1885-1962] a French sculptor and painter of figure subjects, portraits, landscapes and still life. He was also very active and influential as a teacher and writer on art.

56] **Kingston conference**: In late June 1941, over 140 artists, educators, critics, gallery officials and civil servants converged on Kingston, Ontario, for the first national Canadian artists conference. Expectations among conference organizers ran high. "I have no doubt in my mind," Queen's Artist-in-Residence André Bieler wrote National Gallery director H.O. McCurry, "that this Conference, if successful, will be the sign post of importance on the long road of Canadian art." In Bieler's view, the conference needed to address two pressing issues: recent technical developments in artistic production, and the role and place of the artist is society. As the Kingston Conference unfolded, the second of these issues took precedence as artists voiced their disaffection with the current state of Canadian culture and, in particular, what they viewed as the problematic relationship between the artist and society. This disaffection led the assembled artists to follow Bieler's lead and establish the Federation of Canadian Artists (FCA), Canada's first national artists' organization that brought artists together as artists. The 1941 Kingston Conference occupies a prominent position in Canadian cultural historiography. [Dr. Andrew Purse, from: 'Art, Society and Activists; The Federation of Canadian Artists', Southern Journal of Canadian Studies, vol. 4, 1, June 2011]

57] **Andre Bieler:** [1896-1989], painter, arts activist, organizer of important Canadian artist's conference, artist-in-residence at Queen's University, Kingston till 1963, regional modernist, Order of Canada 1987.

58] **Ed Rowan**: The Public Works Art Project [PWAP], discouraged art that was abstract, controversial, or swayed by foreign influences. Edward Rowan, who was an Assistant Director of the project, argued that while government artists should be given "the utmost freedom of expression," the PWAP should "check up very carefully on the subject matter of each project. . . Any artist who paints a nude for the Public Works of Art Project should have his head examined." [PWAP website.] [I/www.]

59] **Federation of Canadian Artists**: The Federation of Canadian Artists [FCA], established in the wake of the 1941 Kingston Conference, became a central institution through which Canadian artists attempted to re-organize their relationship to society. In particular, members of the FCA built on a series of more longstanding concerns about the problematic relationship between art and society under conditions of modernity. The FCA's goal was to bridge the gap between the arts and life and, as such, it served as a focal point through which the artists debated the character this new relationship should take. Looking first to contribute to Canada's war effort and then postwar reconstruction, the FCA ultimately instituted a series of policies that lead it away from its original objectives even while it maintained a discourse critical of the fractured and alienating nature of modern life and culture. [I/www.]

60] **Canadian Painting in the Thirties:** [1975] travelling exhibition, the show that Shadbolt refers to, the backdrop to his lecture, over a hundred paintings by 33 artists, including Borduas, Jackson, Roberts, Bieler, Surrey, Milne, Carr, Lismer, Harris, Holgate, curated by Charles C. Hill.

JACK SHADBOLT
FROM AN INTERVIEW
WITH IAN THOM,
SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH, 1980.
AND
A LETTER

I am not a proselytizer. They tried all that out on me, everyone was working on me to become an artist for the Party and so on. But I found I just couldn't take it, I didn't want to make any partisan statements about things. What I am interested in is people's issues, states of tension, states of wonder, states of awareness, things that suddenly happen, moments of revelation, epiphanies. You are walking down the street, you're feeling wonderful and all of a sudden you see somebody with a face here and something over there and they seem to connect. And all of a sudden it clicks. You are not quite sure what it is. The real thing is what I would call an event. You know, an internal event, an experience that is memorable, the collision of so many things. The moment, the colours, the sights, the sounds, the smells, you being there, feeling the way you feel, because of something that happened to you. Your state, its' state, coincide. The nearest equivalent I can think of, is the poem of Manley Hopkins, 'here am I on this path of fields, there is that lovely sky of milk-sack clouds floating'. He describes the two events happening, the man and the landscape and ends up saying: these two are here and 'but to behold and wonder which two when they once meet the heart heals... and oh half hurls the earth.'

You know you and the event are suddenly in consonance and the epiphany is happening. You are hurled off your feet by just feeling, God, this is a great moment. It is that kind of moment. The kind of industrial landscape that I am interested in is the kind that Peter Blume would have painted. He did some marvelous early paintings around Pennsylvania, cement barges on the Allegheny. 'Above Scranton' [sic], coal pits, etc. Absolutely marvelous paintings, well I find these as exciting as anything I know. The early Hubert van Eyck landscapes which are so beautiful, they just slay you with the quality of clean vision, the de Hooch paintings of Holland with the courtyards, faithful to the smallest detail. Well all that early spirit, Piero della Francesca, it seems to me was there. Those are obviously real landscapes, they take a lot of liberties but the authenticity is so clear. That is the stuff that feeds it, makes you want to do it, makes you want to talk obliquely about moods that are generated by that, but literally it is not a question of making a documentary statement. Not doctrinaire, there is a little difference between doctrinaire statement and documentation. The documentation of a moment is not a theme. I try to bring it to a state of still poise to see the possible.

Hurrahing in the Harvest.

SUMMER ends now; now, barbarous in beauty, the stooks arise
Around; up above, what wind-walks! what lovely behaviour
Of silk-sack clouds! has wilder, wilful-wavier
Meal-drift moulded ever and melted across skies?

I walk, I lift up, I lift up heart, eyes,

Down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour;
And, éyes, heárt, what looks, what lips yet gave you a
Rapturous love's greeting of realer, of rounder replies?

And the azurous hung hills are his world-wielding shoulder
Majestic—as a stallion stalwart, very-violet-sweet!—
These things, these things were here and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once meet,
The heart rears wings bold and bolder
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth for him off under his feet.

Gerard Manley Hopkins.

I hit this magnificent exhibition at the Chicago Institute, of early Renaissance icon painting and this knocked me for a great loop. It was the splendor of gold ground and these pure-blazing colours and these people.

Oh they were just tremendous and all the people concerned especially the artists such as Lorenzetti, and some of Fra Angelico and Fabriano and Pisanello and people like this. But they were great colourists and produced rustic images I found very, very exciting, the stunning richness of it. As you can see, the first thing I put up here was Uccello's San Romano—a great challenge, a lovely painting. A big extended painting of three big panels and I have never got over my marvel at that thing. It is just a great still life really, treated with the greatest clarity and care and purity of colour. And then I got interested in Piero della Francesca and I became passionate to get that clear, rather withheld colour with the sort of tawny haze over everything, but it is clean. You know I always think of that line of Browning's: 'where there Florence lay clean'... what is it? 'There on the mountainside washed by the water, Florence lay white... like the morning tide'; something like that. This is the kind of clarity that I found tremendous and more and more I began to be interested in this sharp clean definition of things and it even took me toward the surrealists whom I found getting this sharp clean sort of atmosphere you get a pale, for clean blue sky...

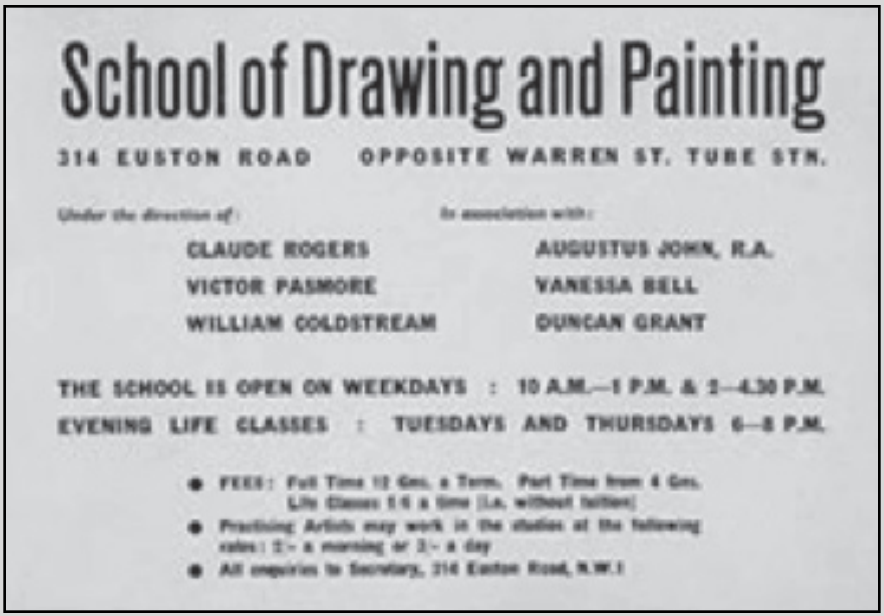
Paul Nash was certainly a passion for me for a time because he had this kind of sharp clarity in tawny, in tan, in biscuit colour. In fact just recently you can see this painting sitting right here is pure Nash colouring again. Back to that same colouring, I found it in Cezanne, the same tawniness and then just the washed-through sky. These things began to sort of move together—on the one hand the romantic interest in the country and all, the other, the city side of it and the commentary, by documentation. When I got back from New York about that time, 1934, I started my first real watercolour painting from then to 1937 and I also started my first real inquiry into Cezanne and sort Cezannesque painting in oil on paper. They were very sharp and austere and Cezannesque in character.

Pictures In Florence

The morn when first it thunders in March,
The eel in the pond gives a leap, they say:
As I leaned and looked over the aloed arch
Of the villa-gate this warm March day,
No flash snapped, no dumb thunder rolled
In the valley beneath where, white and wide
And washed by the morning water-gold,
Florence lay out on the mountain-side.

Robert Browning

I grew up in Victoria in Oak Bay when there were few houses around and all my early impressions could hardly failed to have been romantic at that stage because of this idyllic landscape of flowered fields that were rolling, flowing by the door. We were down around Peeble Street, Island Road area, back in and beyond the Oak Bay Golf links. This was a wild area and there were fields running up to the rocks, the Oak Bay rocks and it was groves of trees and daisied meadows, and an old time stone house stuck way up at the top there, and a few other houses scattered in, with people who stayed there on homesteads—a lovely place and of course one or two shacks as well, people who homesteaded in a different way. I used to roam these fields as soon as I could toddle and it was just part of a natural interest in the urban or the suburban rather. And I still find that the most pounding image for me and then when I came to the sort of cognizant period, and it's that period right up until I was sixteen, seventeen years old, that is when I first met Max Maynard. When I was sixteen and just going to Victoria College and we became good friends and sketching friends and we started out with our notebooks and that's when I started seriously to draw. Up to that point I was only doing copies or smaller paintings, drawings, things of that kind. I had never really thought about the whole problem of composing, in fact I didn't even know that I was going to be an artist in the serious sense. I'd set myself perhaps to be a commercial artist. I'd used to do sign boards at school. I was good at lettering and thought I might be a sign writer....I met Emily Carr and got this notion of the woods. The woods were my other theme because as you know, all the way around Victoria, are these suburban scenes. I used to roam a lot around the Uplands, Oak Bay and I got used to this, so that Emily Carr was again picking up on something for me which was very close to an image that I seemed to need. Trees have always figured in my paintings no matter where I was. With Max, we went out to the Sooke hills and I got introduced to that territory. These great rolling, rhythmic landscapes, it was magnificent because these great forest landscapes which had been burned over and the huge shags of these stumps, sometimes six, eight, ten feet in diameter, with all these great roots exposed, so that they made about a thirty foot circle of tangled black roots, all charred and glistening and sometimes these stumps would be, ten, twelve, eighteen feet high, just left there. And we would roam over this black landscape with the wild fireweed growing through it and dusty plants. My, it was really something. We'd get so excited and well I really started drawing at that time and with the combination of being slightly under the rhythmic style of Emily Carr because of the rhythms of these hills and the remembrance of trees, or the implication of trees that were in these stumps, and the occasional shack that would appear. That was before I got on my own, but at the same time I started then becoming a little more intellectually aware of things. In the first place I got used to the public library. Max and I went down and he introduced me to the library. Strangely enough all through school no one had ever shown me the public library. You know, I didn't even know that the damn thing existed, that's how rudimentary education was. Nobody had bothered much to encourage me except that I was good at drawing maps and doing things like that and colouring in things and everyone used to comment on it and I'd get some satisfaction. And all around the kitchen table on winter evenings we made our own Christmas cards and fretwork book ends... And there was a great deal of the romance interest because my dad being an amateur watercolour painter, a copyist primarily, but he always gave things their own sort of romantic feeling, his favorite subjects were calendars which were sent from—I had relatives in England—and they were always a Cornish fishing village or a thatched cottage with rose or a boxy wood with for the



School of Drawing and Painting

314 EUSTON ROAD OPPOSITE WARREN ST. TUBE STN.

Under the direction of: In association with:

CLAUDE ROGERS — AUGUSTUS JOHN, R.A.
VICTOR PASMORE — VANESSA BELL
WILLIAM COLDSTREAM — DUNCAN GRANT

THE SCHOOL IS OPEN ON WEEKDAYS : 10 A.M.—1 P.M. & 2—4.30 P.M.
EVENING LIFE CLASSES : TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 6—8 P.M.

- FEES: Full Time 12 Gns. a Term. Part Time from 4 Gns.
  Life Classes 5/6 a time [i.e. without tuition]
- Practising Artists may work in the studios at the following rates: 2/- a morning or 3/- a day
- All enquiries to Secretary, 314 Euston Road, N.W.1

thin sun setting behind it. His watercolours of those things were lovely little things. I still have some around, and they are good. I used to paint alongside of him, and we both had a watercolour box and I was doing odd things... It took me thirty-five years later to get to the Mediterranean and work out all this romance image stuff that I got when I was a kid... I started drawing, I think the first real drawing I did on my own, after the Sooke hills with Max Maynard... and in the style of Emily Carr and possibly under the spell of Max too, who was under the spell of Emily Carr, so it was a sort of two-way thing. I began to sort of work out my own form which is much more angular and I remember going drawing with Max in succeeding years. There we began to part company a little, not in any direct sense. But he was a little critical of some of the forms that I was finding which no longer seemed to have the rhythmic coherence because I was trying out all sorts of angularities and relationships.

Well then in 1931 I went to England to study, I didn't find it too inspiring. I found the presence of the group more in a literary way inspiring because I was in this Euston Road Group and the people who inhabited that group or hung on the fringes of it apart from the painting part of it were: Auden, Spender, Isherwood, Louis McLeish, people like this. Adrian Stokes, Laurence

Musee des Beaux Artes

In Breughel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

W. H. Auden.

Gowing, who were the two best English critics. This I found tremendous, it was building up my education, I was a rube, really from the country, but somehow they found me interesting enough to talk to a little bit. Although I didn't know what the hell the talking was all about—they were too sophisticated and too inbred. They were the remains of the Bloomsbury Group and Vanessa Bell was one of our critics, Duncan Grant gave criticisms, H. G. Wells was in and out talking to people, Auden was standing around talking. You know quite a lot was going on. I was with Victor Pasmore and Claude Rogers at Coldstream. Claude Rogers was the one who helped me most. Victor Pasmore became very friendly and encouraged me. So that was the way it worked. I couldn't take it very much, there wasn't very much there. The nearest they could get was Degas and that kind of precision. Well, I love Degas but it wasn't quite my dish. I went over to France to Andre Lhote's school and there suddenly I began to find things began to clarify themselves. He was a good teacher. What he taught was largely the lessons of Cezanne, the picture plane, passage, passage on from. Instead of just running by contour passaging across the contour... volume and depth. I learned the art of passage very thoroughly and the other was the... sort of squared rhythm of parallels or square rhythms running through the painting. These things were great influences and I think all my life since has been given to that. I really found that I got a sense for what Lhote once commented, knowing it was my painting, and I have written about this before—that "this person has a sense for the mobility of form." That just really set me up for life, that was precisely what I was aiming for. It was just so clear, defined form, that I got from Piero della Francesca. There were so many parts mixed, it was very hard, I have never been a single track painter. I seem to be moving through three sides of my nature and forward at the same time, rather than choosing between them. Well the watercolour medium gave me a chance—I suppose what was really in the back of my head more was not literal documentation, that's not my interest. I would say more a documentary tendency, that is what I meant. Partly an anxiety for authenticity which I have always had, I felt responsible for the thing which I was working from and I still do to some extent, although I am much freer from it now. Since I create out of nothing, I am only for the final image; I am not responsible to the thing. But when I am in the face of nature, I feel that I want to get an authentic response to this thing. Since my interest was the urban landscape, I felt that I didn't want to give just generalized equivalents, I wanted specific experiences. So in that sense, there are specific elements which I had to deal with. I took liberties if I wanted to, and wasn't interested in recognizing this corner or that corner except that it came out that way. I did once or twice, that way, when I was doing the "Demolition of the old art school", the "Art's School Entrance" or things like that. The Marpole Bridge one is in there.

Gen. Delivery, Hornby Island, BC, VOR 1Z0, July 7, '87.
Dear Joan,

Here, [alone for the time being] on Hornby Island, after an intense winter of deadlines, etc., I have been suffering one of those ghastly periods of emptiness where one's sense of self-worth suffers a severe bruising. One tells oneself it won't last but it goes on and on as the days pass in futility. And a sense of valuable life being lost and that maybe one has lost the edge, etc. --- which brings me to the gist of this letter.

Feeling very low yesterday, before going to bed I was pulling out anything around that might awake a spark or offer me a reassurance about my work [for without it—the work, I mean, I am lost] and I happened on the earlier copy of Vanguard which contained the section of your aborted book which dealt with me. I was so impressed with it [all over again, in fact--I must have told you at the time] that I felt I must drop you a note to convey once more my thanks.

That statement is so damned well done. It is written from inside my approach rather than from the critic's external evaluative approach which one gets subjected to so often. It is lucid, clear, and to the point and it reads amazingly well; and furthermore it has the quality of summarizing so much of my progression of preoccupation that it is probably the best thing done on me so far. And I am more than grateful for it.

Perhaps part of my state is conditioned by having had to go through my entire back work during last year to help Gary sort it all out and decide on the reproductions for the book he is doing but which has been delayed for a year because his manuscript was not ready. So much exhaustive self-examination as this has forced me into, is, at first a little exhilarating and flattering but gradually grows into a prolonged self-questioning and the inevitable staleness which leads to doubts. Where does one really belong? What has one accomplished? – all that sort of thing one should never be thinking about. The process is what matters and whatever will get you into it.

And therein lies the rub. Since the "subject" has disappeared out [of] the painter's focus and he tries to go directly, but abstractly, to the "content", where does he start? And can he get to the "content" without the sense of "subject" which is his immediate attachment to life. I sit here in front of blank canvas and can't, for the life of me, begin. Common sense tells me I should be out drawing, making notes, as in the long-departed good old days: but one tends not to draw that way anymore. It gets harder to work instead of easier. One feels so empty of connection.

And the confused state of things "out there" is no help. Everything is unsettled and seething. And I refuse to feel "old" if I can help it. But not for the sake of "being with it" but for my own artistic survival. I want to go on painting.

Well, enough of this caterwauling. I meant merely to thank you and wish you well. Your burden and Harry's put me to shame. Mine is simply emotional indulgence. Yours is real. But perhaps, occasionally, you too are not immune to being told you have done a good job. With best wishes to you both, as ever,

Jack

[J L Shadbolt, 5121 Harbourview Road, N. Burnaby, BC V5B 1C9.]

[to Joan Lowndes, regarding her article METAMORPHOSIS AND METAPHOR, Vanguard, March 1981]

Jack Shadbolt, self portrait

HARRY REDL, PHOTOGRAPHER.
“IN ALL THEIR STERN ROMANTIC CLARITY,”

>> TOM MCGAULEY

Harry Redl was simply a great photographer. Trained by the dictates of his own eyes and intuitions, he deployed his great charm and not a little flattery to have people believe in him and give him the best of themselves. He lured them out, caught them, plainly dressed, in natural available light and ordinary life-settings. All the resonance of their lives he brought over into visibility, in rich tones defining presences with revealing portraits. Michael McClure wrote of Harry "we did not know yet we were the Beats or the San Francisco Renaissance but Harry Redl's photographs helped to delineate and define ourselves. Harry was the image shaper of a scene that stretched from outspoken poets to assemblage artists, thanks to Harry we have the black and grey and white scenes of it in all their stern romantic clarity."

With his bags of equipment and cameras he travelled to Vietnam, Indonesia, Taiwan, China, all over Europe, and of course the United States of America, a country he deeply loved until his dying day. His early photos in Japan's Gifu Prefecture of cormorant fisherman and his powerful photo of Gary Snyder's Zen master standing in the courtyard of his temple are *deeply carved*, a Haida term Florence Davidson used to indicate great craftsmanship. These black and white photos foretold the power of the work that Harry would later produce.

I always loved the Gifu photos, and looked at them often. We would examine the scrapbooks of his Life magazine photo essays. He brought

from China some of the first photos of the Cultural Revolution. His tale of crossing the border out of the People's Republic of China with all the negatives in his camera bag which he was openly carrying was masterful. He bought a translation of the collected works of Mao Tse Tung, and while the border guard was expatiating on the wonders of Mao, he was completely distracted from checking Harry's camera bag. And Life magazine carried the photos soon after in full force. Harry was also able to sell some of these images to one of the major American TV networks which also brought into a broader consciousness the massive sweeping cultural insurgency which was occurring all across China.

Living in Vienna at the time Harry managed to get into Prague during the Soviet incursion which strangled the Prague Spring in 1968. One of the images which remained for Harry his favorite was of a Soviet tank and a soldier involved in the putting down of the Prague resistance. Another of Harry's absolute favorite images was of Henry Miller in front of his home, staring at Harry's camera. Miller was the first of many subjects who would bring themselves to Harry for him to elevate them into portraits, all within the democratic aesthetic of a realistic naturalism. Harry used this image on his business card and the story of the meeting with Miller was often told to curators and journalists who came to interview Harry about his life's work and passion.

Harry was a member of the Black Star photography collective. He also sold his work to the New York Times, *Life* magazine, *Time*, *the Washington Post*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Paris Match*, *Stern*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. After two tours of duty as a photographer, and the birth of his son, Harry said he found Vietnam far too dangerous. But not before he photographed in the Buddhist monasteries which produced the demonstrations and the monks who set themselves on fire to protest the American military operations against the people of Vietnam. Henry Cabot Lodge, the then American ambassador, left his image with Harry, as did General Westmoreland, the commander of American forces there.

Some of Harry's first work occurred in the Philippines where he watched a young Ilocano senator and his wife become residents at Malacanang, the home of the presidents of the Philippines. He would come to know the deeply corrupt politician, who held a whole country to ransom, Ferdinand Marcos and his wife the infamous Imelda Marcos. On first meeting Harry and his deeply caring wife Violet, Harry told me he had gotten a cover of *Life* magazine, Asian edition, for Imelda. Knowing this I thought it important to talk to Harry again as I was soon off to Mountain Province in Northern Luzon.

Harry did not disappoint. He recounted many stories involving the Marcos duo, how he almost got Imelda to meet the Pope, via a visit to the mayor of Salzburg, and how he was in the room when a major American agricultural corporation presented a bribe of millions of dollars to Ferdinand for influence over the Philippines version of the Green Revolution. And that he counted General Fabian Ver, the alleged mastermind of the Benigno Aquino assassination, a personal friend from the early days of the Marcos regime. Harry's village photos of Java also haunted me, along with his photos of the soon to be deposed Sukarno, and his bloody and monumentally corrupt successor Suharto. I was struck at the intimacy of the photo essay of life at Malacanang palace in Manila, candid intimate shots of the Marcos children at breakfast, family life spread out all through the day in warm and kind photos.

It was, among others, Robert Duncan who directed Harry in the mid-Fifties to the important artists and poets that Harry would iconify, if that is a word. Harry came out of the deep trauma of the Hitler era. He intensely felt the internal exile of intellectuals and poets who, as he would say, took to their basements to survive. When he got to America

he discovered, in his telling, that all was outside, upstairs, on the main floor, filled with innovation and passion, sexuality and laughter, intelligence and dignity.

Dignity was very important to this master of the presentation of appearances. He wanted to uplift, to bring out, to demonstrate to the world that there was a warm upwelling of poetry and art making, a warm counter-culture that was of world-historic importance. He knew this in his heart. This was his liberation. He lived with these images all his adult life. They became his talismans. They reminded him that there was a life after Nazism. And that all the commercialism and bitter poetry of quotidian American civilization could be forgotten in a moment with this celebration of new art and new poetry. He caught the images of those who were such prominent critics of their own country and culture. He adored this dissenting intelligentsia of pen and paintbrush. His passion for them seemed, he thought, to make life worthwhile, to redeem his part as a foot soldier in the media world's reproduction of a spectacle of America alive only in image.

America deserved him. He had no patience for the empirical, the landscape, the care and brilliance of a Walker Evans. Harry's genius was for the portrait, the subjective, and the soul, to make visible the physiognomy of the intelligent mind speaking, writing, painting, and sculpting. Even his portrait of the linguist and grim administrator, Republican senator, and target of radical students, S.I. Hayakawa, in his tweed jacket, is a masterwork of concentration and interesting detail. Harry's work with novelists and poets, painters and composers was the externalization of his own deeply held sense of who possessed and produced value, of who lived at the edges of their creativity to create objects and poems which promoted some sense of a brave new world, an America of idealism and bounded rebellion. Harry remained deeply suspicious of any form of communist government, and knew the histories of what he referred to as the commonplace poisoning of ordinary life in these countries. He was deeply wary of ideological states which he was certain paralyzed the mind and promethean soul. His allegiances in the larger world were to an enlightened capitalism, however improbable, where the American experiment, still ongoing, in his hopeful opinion, would uplift the world.

Though Harry valued his work and recognized its power, he was always clear that much of the quality of getting the image was that he was there, he had the reality of being present, of getting to the person or place, that it offered itself to his camera, and that he made, with his beloved cameras, the image that would grant continuity and virtual life to his subject. He was always clear that having the luck of being there was over 75 percent of the production of the photo. He kept thousands of slides of his work, and of course a small library of his contact sheets. He existed in a generation of great working photographers. He was not theoretical about his work. He was driven chiefly by his eyes and his capacity to capture and then print and publish.

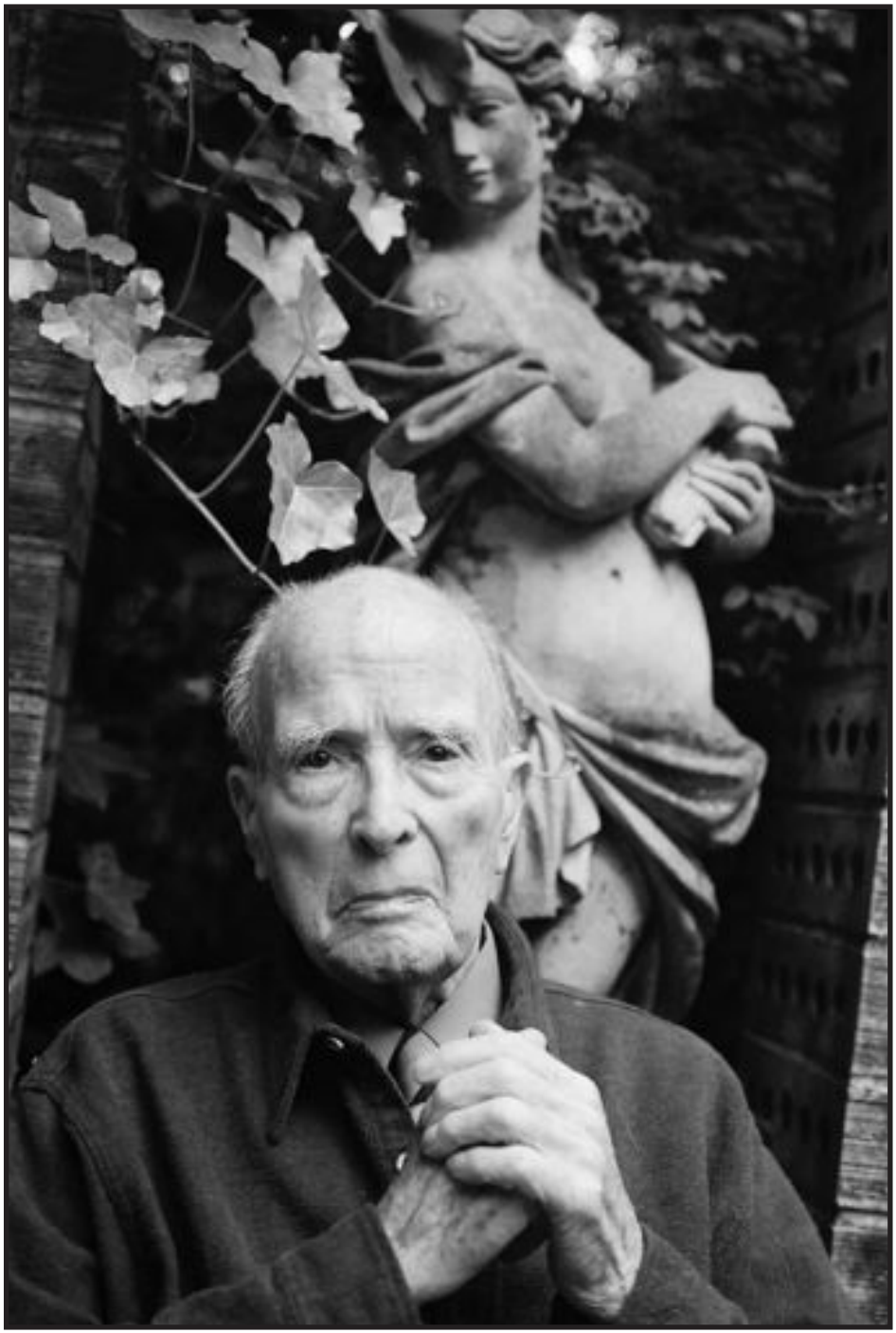
In looking at his slide archive, one follows him up a street in picture after picture, then the telltale photo, the picture which nails the essence. There it is. I remember following him with these slides, through the streets of China as he sought out what would exemplify this teeming reality, the defining moment when the image that would stand out of the 100's of others, was nailed.

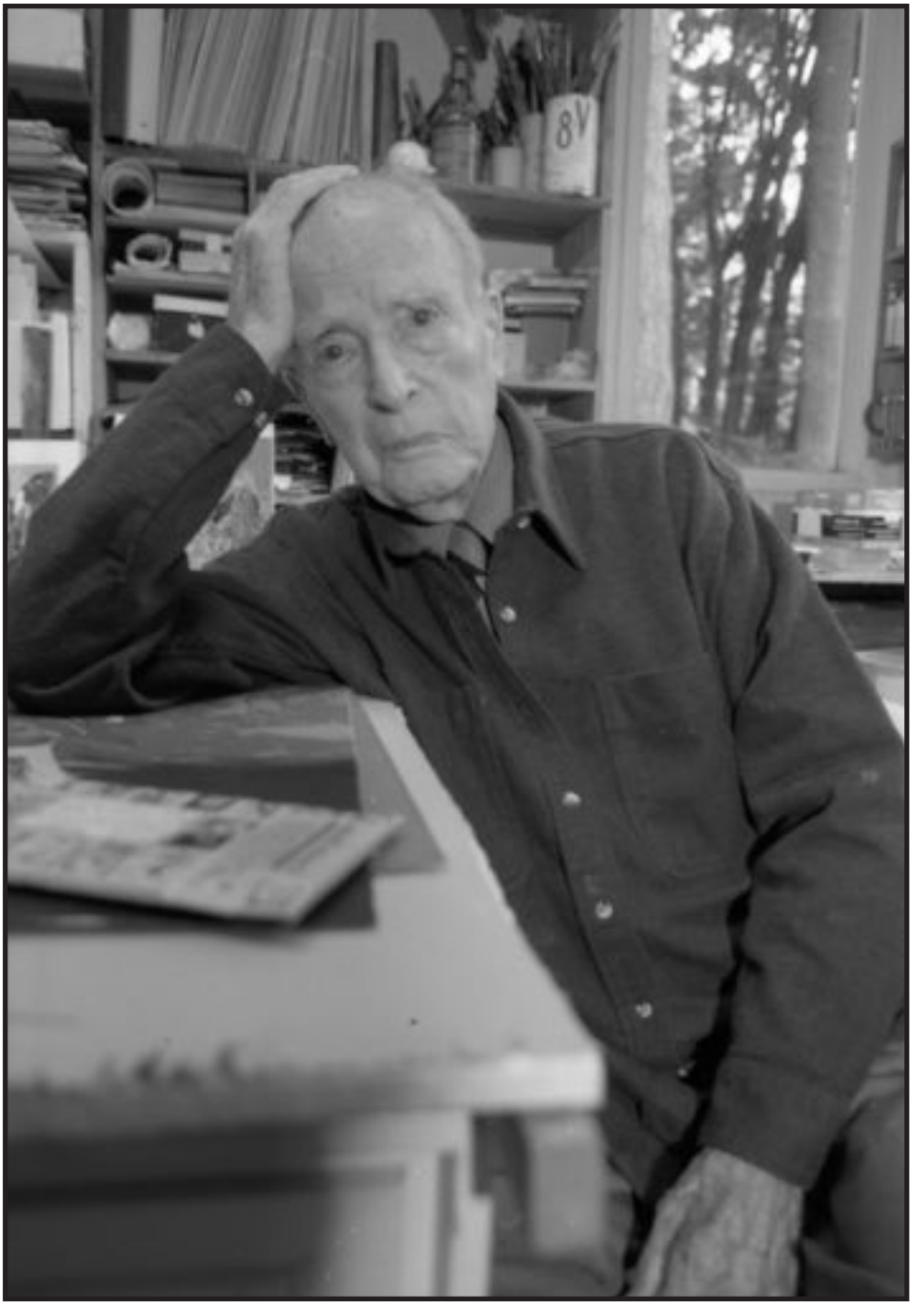
Harry had a passion for some of the work of his colleagues. A Japanese photographer of great brilliance and mastery, who was famous for his images of children, Harry kept three of his books of photos and remarked on the high regard with which he held this work. Richard Avedon horrified him. Harry was a nativist in the country of photography. At once cosmopolitan and open, he also saw himself aware of cultural pluralism, but he remained outside

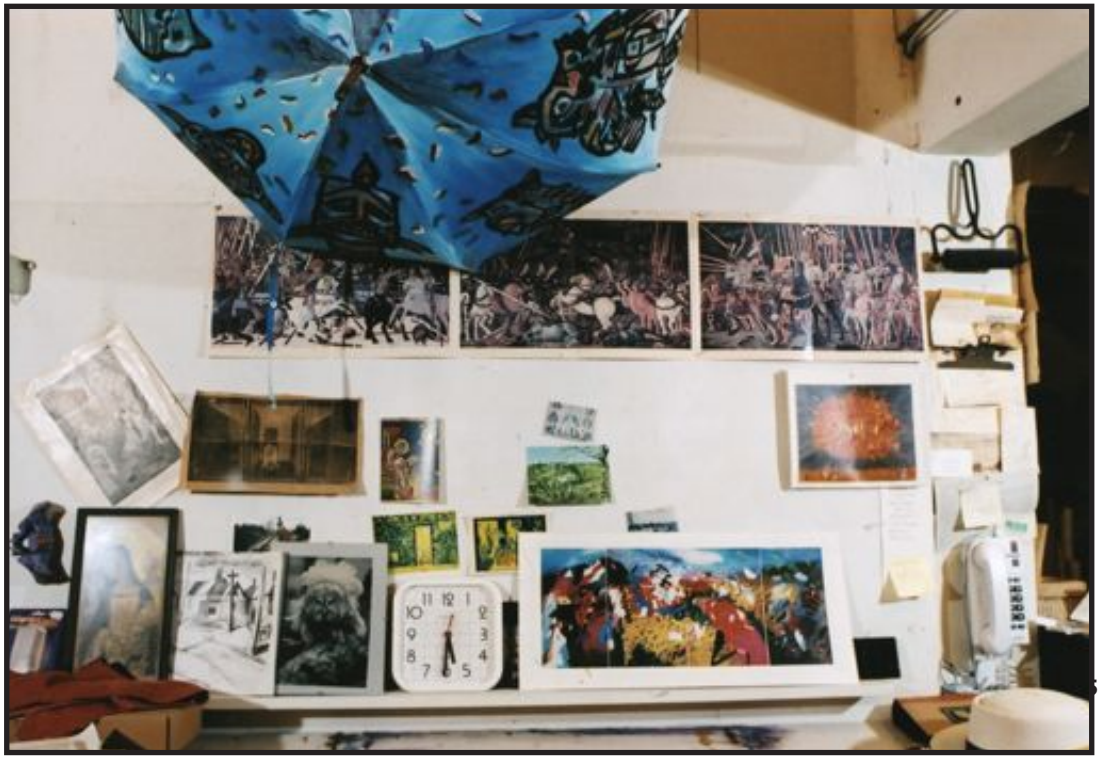
modernist and post-modernist art school hauteurs. He possessed, it seemed no belief in, or practise of, photography as a post-modern art machine. The Vancouver school of Photography also horrified him. He was not made for that, nor did he possess that great curiosity about the depths of photography as a subject, a world, a spectacle–catching inundation. This could have been a limit, and was probably typical of most non-academic photographers, and it lent a kind of courtly yet demotic mannerism to his work.

In the formal world of portraiture Harry saw through to the essentialist possibility inherent in his sitters, sitters he already was attracted to because of their genius, their reputation and he imagined from their art and writing, their lucid humanity. Hence one of the last projects he undertook, bringing his collection of various artists photographed to 150, comprising approximately 6,000 negatives, was to frame the Shadbolts, Jack and Doris, in their twilight time, still vital, still vibrant, still both crucial as major Canadian cultural forces. Doris identified for her broad soul, her inimitable warmth and extension, and her great reputation as a curator, administrator, and author of defining texts on Emily Carr and Bill Reid. And Jack for the vast treasury of paintings and drawings and prints that he produced over a long and rich lifetime. Harry wanted to do a book on the Shadbolt house with Jack and Doris as the residents of an important space in the city of Burnaby. Harry came to admire the mayor and the political administration of Burnaby because he thought they would care about matters creative and would respect and encourage his efforts to photograph some of its most creative of citizens. Harry wanted a small house here, a place to work in, and in exchange he fantasized he would leave his considerably valuable archive to the city. This was all one of Harry's dreams, and evaporated as soon as it was spoken, but it did linger on for a couple of months.

Harry was warm and generous in his affections, very well read, full of opinion and story and exuded a charismatic intensity that brought his subjects towards him into the magnetic images he created with a kind of romantic realism. He was lovely with humour and never told a joke badly. He spoke often of a deep and abiding love for his wife and children and grandchildren. His eyes were impeccable, his commitment to his craft deeply held. He had a capacity for friendship and impatience with the trivial. *Dulce far niente,* sweet luxurious idleness was what he craved in his last years, and what he hoped for everyone. My last conversation with Harry was about Yusuf Karsh. Harry was in the hospital and brightened at Karsh's name. Harry said he had forgotten almost everything but still could remember the name Karsh and his work.

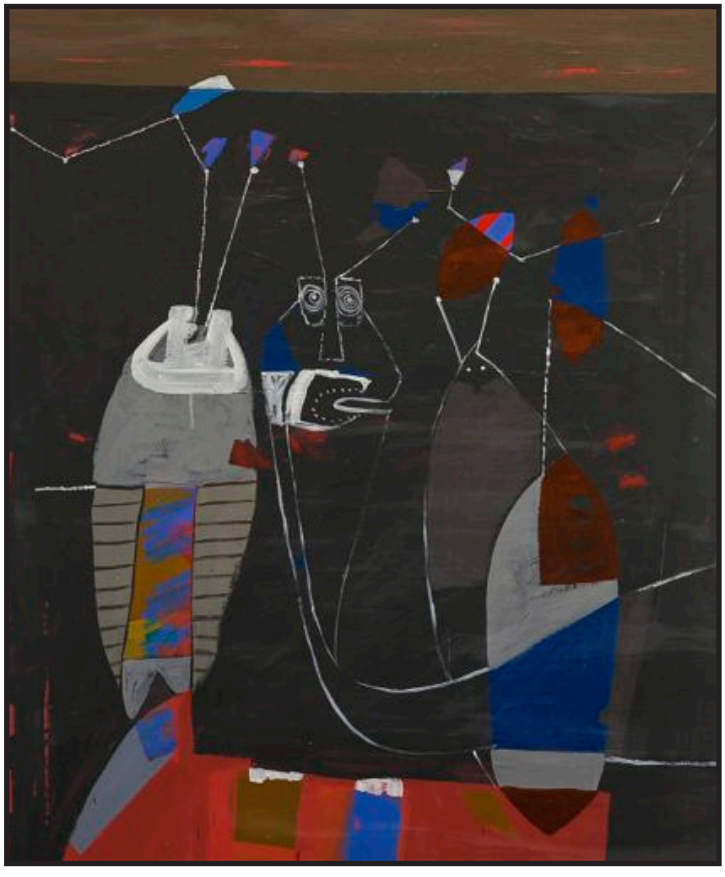



8V



Jack Shadbolt: works over time, 1949—1994

A selection, a rump end, by luck, an addition, a range over 45 years of painting, specimens, kindly lent by gallery, to end our audience with the painter speaking. Fish and form swim. Awkwardly tilt the insectivores, with echoes of seas and sailing. William Beebe in his bathysphere peers out at creatures of a bottomless interior ocean. Thence we move through colour's dissent and curvature with fixity's conundrum breached, desire flows and escape occurs. Thus the nature of multiple identities and locations subverts and in this imaginary defeats gravity, by illustration, for a moment. Barn experiences blue, as up-surge of contesting white inundation mixes with earth, dwellings, and storage, all thrown up against the empery of the sky. Then the flags of an imaginary Sienna, a festival horse race, pennons and pennants mixed, with the panoply of austere biscuit-brown plazas also pulled up into the air. And birds afterwards settle or end up posing on a frieze of brown. The dark garden says it all: seed pods within a drench of black mark the edge of growth, an angry dangerous aspect of fertility demonstrated. And playfulness catches jaggegdy squares, a breathing wall, animated stolid solidity deliberately teased and ever so gently or not so gently distorted. Pattern and design meander with only vaguely familiar faces. Storm warns crow, and flags fly again. Wind carries it all away. And then the return, bits and shards falling only to be reformed, re-tinctured, re-deployed. And finally there is the great fork of defiance, red-branded, erect, signalling, at once stemming and releasing a tension from the elder, almost in shamanic fantasy, journeying out to bring back in. These mauves, blues and oranges yet register a still preceding fluency. Fork or tree against horizon, day fading into memory, almost quiescent but still self-propelled, determined, of strong mastery and visible pulses, an enduring power, a call for revenge against reaching fingers and final endings. Brazen and melodic, this remonstrates, blended yet consonant with the knowing of pain, without resignation, preparing for the last long ship of silence. —TM



UNTITLED, oil on canvas, 44 x 36, 1949

WINTER BIRDS, mixed media on paper, 23 x 31, 1955

ITALIAN TERRACE, mixed media on board, 22.5 x 32. 1964

AT THE JASMINE GATE, Oil and enamel on Masonite, 60 x 48, 1964

BARN EXPERIENCE #2, SKETCH FOR EDMONTON AIRPORT MURAL,
mixed media, acrylic on paper, 22.5” x 31”, 1963 - 72

STORM WARNING, acrylic on paper board triptych, 60 x 120, 1984

RED FORK, acrylic on canvas, 48 1/4 x 48 3/4 in. 1990-1994