

West of Jersey

April - June

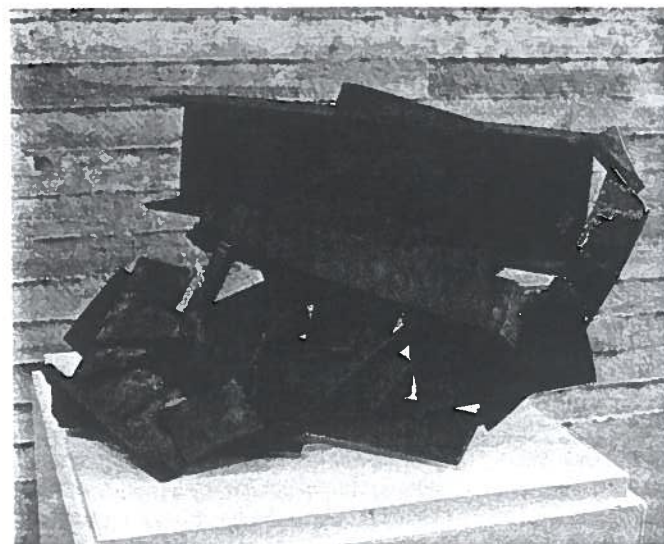


Hendrik Bres, **Jackknife's Grove**, 1985, acrylic on canvas, 16 x 188 cm.

Valentin Tatransky is a young critic and art historian from New York City. He has written extensively for Arts magazine; he was visiting critic at the Emma Lake Artists' Workshop in Northern Saskatchewan in 1984, at Triangle Workshop in upstate New York in 1985, and at Hardingham Workshop in Norfolk, England in 1986.

Local artists invited him to Edmonton earlier this year, and he selected works for The EAG's Studio Watch program.

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Catherine Sicotte, **Cluster Piece 3**, 1985, welded steel, 40 x 69 x 54 cm.

HENDRIK BRES
JACKKNIFE'S GROVE,
1985
acrylic on canvas
16 x 188 cm

I think Bres deserves to be ranked with the best Canadian landscape painters and with artists of note anywhere. Seeing that burning colour in some of his landscapes really impressed me. His best pictures actually define three-dimensional space — you feel the substance of the land, not just paint, or some pretty colours.

PETER HIDE
SCREEN
(PROVISIONAL),
1982 - 86
welded steel
170 x 110.5 x 62 cm

What struck me most forcibly was the individuality of each of Hide's sculptures. Previously, I thought of him largely as the maker of complex, three-dimensional towers. Only here did I see how profoundly and completely he had been influenced by the major sculptural currents of our time — Cubism, Smith, Caro, etc. I came away thinking how much more varied, more subtle, more complex was each of his pieces — each a world unto itself.

CATHERINE SICOTTE
CLUSTER PIECE 3, 1985
welded steel
40 x 69 x 54 cm

The coarseness of Catherine Sicotte's larger pieces was a good sign, especially in an artist as young as she. Of all the sculptors that I saw in Edmonton, her work is the least Apollonian in character — and it is this freer side that is for her, and for others here, the strong side.

ANDREW KLIMCZAK
CORINTHIAN GUARD,
1986
welded steel
124 x 83 x 50 cm

All major modernist sculptors, such as David Smith and Anthony Caro, were influenced by Cubism largely in terms of format — which is only natural, when abstract art was still in its infancy. What is new about young modernist sculptors, like Andrew Klimczak, is how they have been influenced by Cubism — more in terms of touch than format. Klimczak has brought Cubism's touch to bear on his art.

CLAY ELLIS
LES SUPPLICES DU
ST. VALENTIN
welded steel
101 x 70 168.5 cm

I had seen Clay Ellis' work before at workshops and I knew that he was good and ambitious. I didn't realize he was striving for such a synthesis between Apollonian clarity of form — evident in silhouettes, in the drama of changing views, and in the counterpoint between large part and small — and the searing touch evident in his handling of the metal as metal.

"Mitch Smith is one of those phenomena that only Western Canada could produce..."

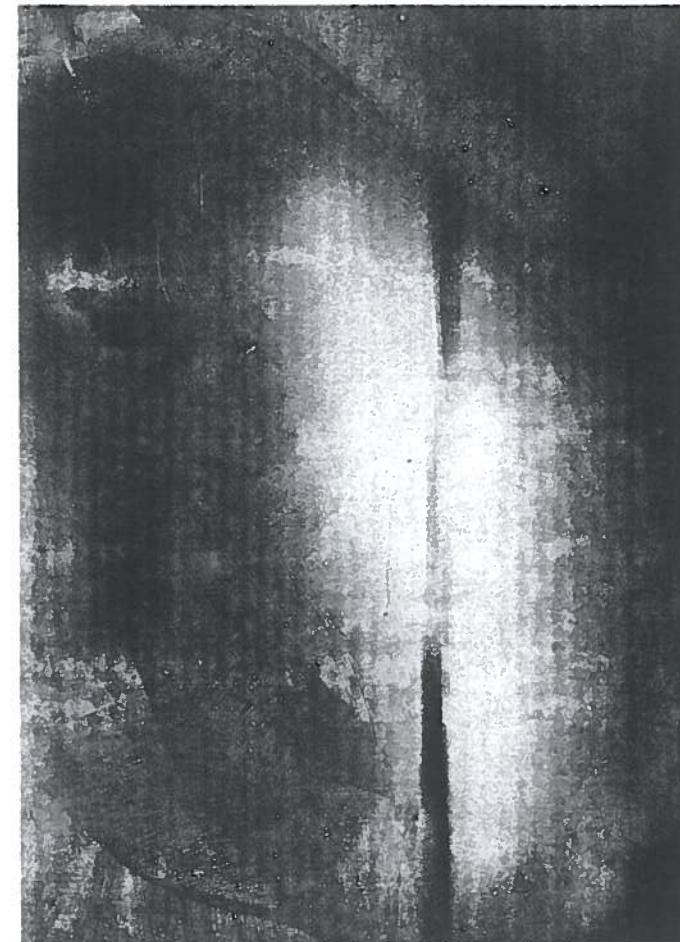
V.T.

MITCH SMITH
UNTITLED, 1986
acrylic on canvas
187 x 140 cm

The strongest of his pictures have this wonderful freedom of paint handling and a subtlety and purity of tone that is unusual in its combination. I wonder to what extent he sees it. To the uninitiated, his experimental work may seem stronger, but it's his smooth, bland pictures that are the real thing.

GARRY SPOTOWSKI
COMPOSITION, 1986
welded steel
79 x 171 x 252 cm

One of the things that you can enjoy seeing in modern sculpture is the way the artist makes his lines and planes travel — piling one part on another (seemingly without end) — and yet maintaining the unity of the whole. Garry Spotowski's new sculptures show that ability to fine effect.



Mitch Smith, **Untitled**, 1986, acrylic on canvas, 187 x 140 cm.

VIOLET OWEN
SUSAN, 1985
oil on canvas
127.2 x 127 cm

The art of Violet Owen was a real surprise. In all my years of studio- and gallery-going in New York City, I have never seen anyone like her. She has a rare gift: a vivid and sophisticated sense of colour, combined with a sense of line, which shows that she can feel her way about three-dimensional form. She's an exotic exception that proves the rule.

ISLA BURNS
UNTITLED
welded steel
170 x 100 x 130 cm

Isla Burns is the most enigmatic of the sculptors I encountered. Her pieces have a mystery to them, which lies, I suppose, in the fact that her work is the most architectonic of all the sculptors I saw, with the possible exception of Catherine Burgess (whom I haven't included because the work I saw in Edmonton was in a state of transition).

TERRENCE KELLER
MINGUS MOVES #8, 1980
acrylic on canvas
166.3 x 96.8 cm

The tension in his work is classic: his pictures look like nothing but paint on canvas — just paint smeared on. Nonetheless, his paintings are first and foremost pictures. When I think of what he has done with Abstract Expressionism, in particular in his pictures from around 1981 and 1982, I have to make a point of singling them out and pointing him out.

KEN MACKLIN
STRING OF PEARLS,
1986
welded steel
52.5 x 141 x 87.5 cm

Ken Macklin is another one of these very able Canadian sculptors who create works that are rugged, strong, free. However, they're not only that: these are informed works, works that are artistically ambitious.

LYLE LIS
OOZING COUNTRY,
1987
welded and painted steel
25.2 x 37.2 x 31 cm.

The work of some sculptors is conspicuous for its touch. Then there are others whose sculpture is more notable for its format — and while we can say all sculpture is a matter of dynamics (i.e., relating one part to another), rarely do we say, as I do here of Lyle Lis, that an artist's work is notable for a handling of dynamics alone.