



The Palette

The Journal of the Contemporary Art Society

May 2021

IN THIS ISSUE

- Page 2 - Note from Your Editor
- The Life of Pauline Manning
- Page 3 - Article Written by Julia Healey on first CAS Art Show
- Page 5 - CAS First Art Show Poster
- Page 6 - Article Written by Gretchen Pierce on CAS First Art Show
- Page 7 - Entries at First Show
- Page 8 - Art Tips

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, there is nothing planned at this time.

NOTE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

For this edition of The Palette, we are focusing on CAS's history, mainly through articles and information that Jill Field Alexander passed onto me when I interviewed her for an article I had written for the VANS Magazine for our 30th anniversary. We hope you enjoy this glimpse into the past through the newsletter and find it both informative and inspirational.

--Best regards, Kathy Richards

www.contemporaryart.ns.ca

NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

Well, members, it's been quite a year – not a good year for our association, since all activities had to be abandoned or cancelled, except for our Annual General Meeting, which was held in the fall amid strict Covid-19 protocols, and a virtual Paint-the-Same event in March. We will hope that come September, with most people vaccinated, we will be able resume our activities. So, let's keep our spirits up and hope for better times to come!!! 😊

This issue of The Palette gives some insight on the beginnings of our group.

--Your Palette Editor, Eleanor Surette-MacDonald

THE LIFE OF PAULINE MANNING

We start our story in England in the 1950's, where Pauline, her husband and three children lived in a remote 400-year-old lodge which had no road nor means of travel to and from, other than by horse and cart. Her husband was a student who was at university during the week and bicycled across England to be with them during the weekends. This left Pauline alone most of the time to raise the children on her own. In this isolated home, she found her creative talents were more free as she worked in her big attic studio. Here she had a stream and a pond on the property that provided her with clay with which she would be inspired to make her unusual and unique sculptures.

The family eventually moved to Wallasey, Merseyside, across from Liverpool. Pauline was miserable leaving her isolated farmhouse until she discovered there was an art school in Wallasey. There she was able to take life drawing and other lessons and become very active in the school, training in the basics and developing into a passionate modern artist. She took up drawing and painting and was motivated to paint and draw every day from there on, right up until her death. She averaged between 50 to 60 works per year and carried her sketch books with her everywhere she went, always finding various ideas and subjects to commit to their pages.

Her daughter Griselda remembered that Pauline imported chemicals that had skulls and crossbones on the labels from Germany and elsewhere. Pauline would use the chemicals by pouring them on boards and drawing textures to create her unique, abstract paintings. She knew what she was doing and would explain it all to Griselda. Her approach was extremely modern and she created very interesting and appealing work.

The Manning family then moved to Canada, a strange new country. Pauline missed her very active involvement in the Wallasey Art Society and the many art shows and events in which she had been a participant. Pauline and Griselda talked all the time about art, discussed their love for the subject and through these talks, the idea of starting an art society in Halifax was born.

Pauline then started on her project to begin an art society and joined with her friend, Jill Field Alexander, to put out an advertisement in the newspaper inviting artists interested in joining them to get in touch. Pauline's good friend Ernest Smith, Curator of the Dalhousie Art Gallery, had secured a room for them in the Gallery to serve as their first venue. The first meeting in 1973 had Pauline (first Chair), Jill (first Treasurer/Secretary), Tom Bauld (who drew up the first by-laws), Mona Fry, Beecher and Kathie Weld, Eileen Meagher, Pauline Hand, Royce Porter,

Margaret VanGurp, and Laura Wellard, among a few others. At the first meeting the artists were asked to bring in 3 of their paintings which were assessed. The artists had to be approved on the basis of whether their paintings fit the vision of the society, which was to foster modernism. In the first years, some artists who later became quite well known, were turned away from the society. All members were encouraged to be active and contributing members of the society and had to pay a yearly membership fee.

In the early days there were demonstrations on how to stretch canvas, on site paintings of different subjects. There were opportunities for members to give presentations of their work, discuss media and techniques, or to answer questions from the other members so they could share and learn from the demonstration. They would plan special projects to be done for the next meeting and would have critiques and talk about the work. From the beginning the artists would go into the hospitals and paint murals for patients and at Christmas take in boards on which to draw and paint in an effort to bring the spirit of Christmas to those who were there for the festive season. On occasion they would go on location for a day or two and paint outside, staying overnight at a motel if needed. They often had guest speakers come in to talk or have someone come to give a demonstration on some new technique. They always had fun and were quite an active group. The young art society thrived but its vibrant leader fell ill and passed away in 1975.

Pauline was a born leader, she had a different vision, and was very keen to paint in a totally modern style, hence the name Contemporary, which to her signified if not modern, then certainly not traditional, with an emphasis on contemporary issues in the art world.

Pauline was described as a beautiful person with large eyes, expressive face and very deep voice who loved to be mischievous, fun and full of energy. She would not be easily forgotten. Pauline is remembered through her legacy of the society, our shared love of art and in our presentation of the top Award, "The Pauline Manning Award", each year at our Annual Juried Show.

--"This article is in part taken from earlier interviews of Griselda Manning and Jill Field Alexander by past CAS members."

ARTICLE WRITTEN BY JULIA HEALY FOR THE 4TH ESTATE ON THE FIRST CONTEMPORARY ART SHOW, SEPT. 21 – 28, 1974

Group Show is uneven, but dynamic

Although it's been in existence for six months now, very little has been heard or written about the Contemporary Art Society, a local group of people interested in the visual arts. The membership consists of mainly practicing artists and currently numbers about fifty. Organized by Pauline Manning, the purpose of the society is to provide an outlet for discussions on art in general and their work in particular. (Each meeting usually includes bringing in recent paintings).

The society also has sketching outings, and evenings which feature a variety of programs from films to electronic music. One meeting planned for the future is a sketching session in a live dance rehearsal.

This dynamic group is definitely non-political and its major concern is its members' development artistically through exposure and lively discussion. (Another artist group, Canadian Artists' Representation, is a national organization with more emphasis placed on changing professional artists' lots by acting as a union of sorts.)

Looking at the recently opened exhibit of Contemporary Art Society member's work at the School of Architecture Building on Spring Garden Road, it is evident that the group ranges from borderline amateurs to professionals.

VIBRANT PAINTING

Tom Bauld shows two watercolours that were remarkable for their freshness. His "Poppies" are beautifully decorative poppies vibrantly painted. His other piece is a more traditional figure study called "Nude" which is handled in the best watercolour technique.

Helen Still shows an acrylic and watercolor painting titled "Revelry" which is interesting for its complex composition and varied colors. The combined use of watercolor and acrylics is quite effective.

Pauline Manning exhibits an arresting abstract piece labelled "Clinging to a Phantasy". It brought to mind some of the earlier work of Helen Frankenthaler although Manning paints in gessoed canvas board rather than staining on raw canvas. Her colors are muted and earthy with a few dark colored edges which add tension to the composition. The outside margins of the canvas are left white thus containing the brushstrokes in the center regions of her piece.

Not all artists shown here are new to Halifax's exhibition scene. Joyce Manning had a one-person show at the now demolished Inventions Gallery earlier this year. Here she shows an untitled work which has about eighteen layers of paint applied over an abstract composition. Somehow, she rubs or wears down the paint (perhaps by sanding or scrubbing but she won't tell), getting a very unusual texture as a result.

This piece is a competent work though I feel some of the stained canvases she has done are more unique.

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGE

Royce Porter, a member of the "Canning Group" of painters, shows two geometric abstracts. The work "#7311" is a response to a challenge given to him at a society meeting asking him to do a painting using the work "misplaced" as his starting point.

He responded with a triangular-shaped piece from which he cut off one corner. This tiny triangle was then glued to the center of its mother triangle. The colors of blues and orange make for an interesting visual space. (Warm colors come forward visually; cool colors recede. Thus, the small triangle, which is painted orange seems to "pop out" at the viewer while the blue spaces seem to go back into perspective).

(Royce Porter's " #7311" is featured in the center of the article.)

His other work consists of three panels with concentric circles coming out in opposite directions over solid black grounds. In both paintings the artist displays a sophistication and personal style that a few of the other painters lack.

To summarize, it is an uneven presentation, but what the heck. I applaud the group for getting together and can only see the local art scene becoming more vital by its presence.

Membership in the society is limited. If you are an artist and wish further details, phone 423-3446.

CAS FIRST ART SHOW POSTER

The Contemporary Art Society's poster announcing their very first annual art show which was held at the School of Architecture on Spring Garden Road:



ARTICLE WRITTEN BY GRETCHEN PIERCE FOR THE MAIL-STAR **REGARDING THE FIRST SHOW**

At the Galleries –

CONTEMPORARY ART'S SHOW BODES WELL FOR FUTURE

The Contemporary Art Society, a recently formed group of Halifax area amateur artists, is currently exhibiting a show at the Nova Scotia Technical College Gallery, Spring Garden Road.

A total of 29 works comprising traditional and modern paintings, watercolors, lithographs and oils on canvas and board are most attractively arranged in the gallery. The space is small but effectively used with a minimum of furniture, and one large potted tree on one wall.

The show has a diversified range of interests and talents and while most of the works on view are in the still life, landscape category, the most interesting are the imaginative free-form works.

Some suffer from overworking, and an unjudicious palette, for instance the colors in Sunrise East Coast City by Davy Jones could have been far more effective if the colors were less strident, but on the whole the show exudes a seriousness of purpose not usually seen in works by amateurs.

Outstanding among the floral works are African Daisies by Pauline Hand. Helen Still's Moonlight Picnic projects an eerie night scene in a forest. From a distance the colors are successful in producing an atmosphere, but the figures are indistinct and need sharper draughtsmanship. Margaret VanGurp's portrait of Rebecca is the only portrait on show. It is low-key and pleasing to the eye.

Rosemary MacCauley's silkscreens are commendable from a design point of view and Pauline Manning's two abstracts indicate a sense of style with color and form.

The cove scenes unfortunately seem to suffer from stereotyping.

The work Solitude by Tom Bauld, a female nude on the beach, is noteworthy in this show for its sensitive mood and delicate shading. Peggy Toole's drawing in Patterns and Sound is smooth and well defined.

Other painters exhibiting: Ann Brennan, Marion Bustin, Bev Gothreau, Mabel Seeley, Joyce Hanson, Betty Gray, June Bentley, Eugenie Perry, Royce Porter, Louize Meister, Carol Veinotte, Elizabeth Meyerhof, Jill Field.

The exhibition bodes well for the future of this group. It ends Sept. 28. Viewing hours, weekdays, 9 to 5 p.m. and weekends, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

ENTRIES AT FIRST SHOW

<u>Name</u>	-	<u>Entry Title</u>
Anne Brennan	-	“Eastern Shore Fishing Shack”
Helen Still	-	“Revelry”
Helen Still	-	“Moonlight Picnic” (Petite Riviere)
Marion Bustin	-	“Wild Flowers”
Bev Gothreau	-	“Water Street, Halifax”
Mabel Seeley	-	“Flower Study”
Joyce Hanson	-	“Untitled”
Betty Gray	-	“Maphisto Valse”
Peggy Toole	-	“Patterns and Sound”
June Bentley	-	“Red Monoprint”
Mary Jones	-	“Sunrise East Coast City”
Pauline Manning	-	“Clinging to a Phantasy”
Pauline Manning	-	“Suffocation”
Eugenie Perry	-	“Fish Stores East Berlin Queens”
June Bentley	-	“The Tree”
Royce Porter	-	“Untitled”
Royce Porter	-	“Out of Place”
Louize Meister	-	“The Tiger”
Carol Veinotte	-	“Atlantic Swell”
Pauline Hand	-	“African Daisies”
Rosemary MacCauley	-	“Silk Screen #1”
Rosemary MacCauley	-	“Silk Screen #2”
Mabel Seeley	-	“Afternoon Sun”
Tom Bauld	-	“Poppies”
Margaret VanGurp	-	“Rebecca”
Elizabeth Meyerhof	-	“West Dover”
Louize Meister	-	“Creatures #2”
Tom Bauld	-	“Solitude”
Jill Field	-	“Herring Cove”

WATERCOLOUR TIPS BY DENNIS

When “re-purposing” an old frame and matboard, measure the inside dimensions of the mat. Add ¼ inch to height and width, and draw a rectangle on your watercolour paper that size. Be certain to cover the paper to the lines with your artwork.

If your old frame is 11 x 14 and the inside of your mat is 7 x 10, draw your rectangle 7 ¼ x 10 ¼ inches. Painting outside the lines is good too.

Before applying masking fluid to your watercolour paper, moisten the brush in clean water, THEN roll it on a bar of soap. Dip into masking fluid and paint it where required. When you are finished use water and soap to remove masking from bristles. And it’s always a good idea, to select one of your “older” brushes.

While working on your painting, take time to prop it vertically against a chair and walk away. Leave the room and return to see your progress with “fresh eyes” from a distance as you approach. Places for “improvement” will jump out at you. Especially areas that require darker values.

--By Dennis Curran

ART TIP ON NEGATIVE SPACE

What is negative space?

Definition: the areas of an image not occupied by space or forms. Often neglected by beginners or filled with aimless scribbles. Negative space drawing involves concentrating on drawing the background, leaving the object white – an excellent exercise in observation.

Applying negative space

Seeing negative spaces correctly is a skill worth developing. Negative space is used a great deal when you want to avoid outlining and create true value drawing. It is needed when you have a texture like light-coloured hair or grass, when you need to focus on the dark shadows behind and underneath the strands. The ‘foreground’ - the positive shapes of light hair or grass – are ‘left behind’ as white paper while the shadows and darks are drawn with dark pencil.

Here’s a great reference for our Paint the Same:

“Every artist dips their brush in their own soul, and paints their own nature into their pictures.” - Henry Ward Beacher