



Lise Paradis

Passion and energy



WHEN NATURE MAKES HERSELF PRETTY/QUAND LA NATURE SE FAIT BELLE, oil 1998, 15.5 x 22 in.
Private Collection.

It would be lovely, were I a nimble frog, to dive into the lily pond that graces the walls of Lise Paradis' studio. The painting seems so real, and conjures thoughts of legends and fairy tales.

Surrounded by her beautiful paintings on the walls, the artist is also a fascinating storyteller. She has kept some of the works in the studio as her personal collection and they reflect her outlook and development. Her remarkable memory also comes into play as she describes in detail the circumstances of each painting.

It's surprising to see her great range of subjects and techniques. She explains that she's interested in everything: still life, landscape, and has a special weakness for flowers – for their colours, their sheen, how they blow in the wind. She works mostly in oils, but has also mastered acrylics and watercolour. While her oil landscapes display intense realism (and a madcap touch when they include children and animals), I was astonished to discover that Lise Paradis has a totally different style in watercolours. Can this be the same person drawing floral representations on Arches paper with a fresh romanticism, abounding in colours and precise details?

But such skill and versatility don't just happen. Besides talent, there's enormous effort and Lise Paradis combines the two. Her eyes shine as she recalls the day she received her first box of paints at age 14. Night courses at the Beaux-Arts ensued, and time was spent at the Studio Salette, along with the man who is now her husband. There were her "nocturnal" painting sessions at the kitchen table as her sons were sleeping, and then her professional debut in 1971. Throughout this time she gave draw-

time: "It was an important decision for me," he says, "but I have no regrets".

Still, there were a few bumps along the way. He was in virtual shock the day that René Richard of Baie-Saint-Paul, and a foremost figure in Québec painting, outrightly refused to teach him the basics because of his "advanced" age. He continued regardless, left to his own devices. Now in his late forties, Bouchard finds a great outlet in painting, expressing himself with his brush rather than with words. Each day he tries to go further, to create, to invent, to take on a bigger challenge.

"I must disregard what's around me, find the resources in myself to be able to paint what I am," he says. He succeeds in this, with a gentleness and simplicity in his paintings. The light of morning guides his works. "That's where everything happens," he says. We might wish to walk in his landscapes with their beautiful filtered light. "There are a lot of changes, unexpected and always impressive."

We are transported into the villages of Charlevoix and Saguenay: a small church in morning light, a field with sheep, children and farmhouses, country roads and people. Bouchard's paintings recount tales of those who know how to "sense" the earth, the river, the trees. They instill calm and serenity.

Travelling around Québec, Bouchard covers considerable ground in search of the perfect instant, the magic moment. Happiest in summer, he paints many summertime scenes. Not surprisingly, he loves warm colours. In his childhood, he spent summer months hunting and fishing in the Saint-Urbain mountains, a near-sacred area for him that continues to nourish his soul. Less enamoured with winter, he is like chlorophyll for leaves – needing light to blossom. In fact, he admits going into a form of hibernation from November to March, till spring arrives to inspire his paint anew.

When his young family has grown up and is on its own, Mario Bouchard looks ahead to spending most of his time painting. Enjoying his own maturity, he is certain to have much to offer. **I**

Mario Bernard Tremblay

The works of Mario Bouchard are on permanent exhibition at the Galerie d'art Au P'tit Bonheur in La Malbaie, the Galerie d'art La Corniche in Chicoutimi, and the Centre d'art in Baie Saint-Paul.



SEPTEMBRE AT PORT-AU-PERSIL, oil 30 x 36 in.

PORT-AU-PERSIL IN WINTER, oil, 20 x 24 in.



ing and painting courses, first to children, then to adults, sharing her ideal of beauty.

With anecdotes galore, she describes where she lives in Laval, near the Mille-Îles River frequently seen in her paintings. She tells of vacations as a teenager, and of getting to know the man in her life, of travels to Charlevoix, capturing the look of the ice melting in March, painting outdoors with cold fingers. She manages all aspects of her career, buying materials, transporting her works to galleries, organizing shows. She likes this contact with the gallery owners, the discussions and stimulation. She also gives painting courses at the Centre culturel de Cartierville, heads the Académie des peintres professionnels de Laval (APPL), and has launched L. Plus Graff, a small printing business that produces art cards.

For all her many activities, she is a perfectionist, which I interpret as her desire to give the best of herself to those who view her paintings. She finds it extraordinary that people like them enough to buy them. But her real wish is to truly master her art. She reflects on the great painters she admires, especially Rembrandt and Renoir, the first for his delicate touch, his realism, the way he plays with light and his ability to recreate the feeling of a scene using chiaroscuro, the second for the lightness and vivacity of the people in his works. Among contemporary painters, she likes Louise Kirouac for the splendour of her landscapes.

Lise Paradis lives with a generous passion, and lots of energy, for her painting, her family, for life. What a pleasure to meet her. █

Michel Beauchamp

The works of Lise Paradis are displayed in many public and private collections in North America and Europe. She is represented in the *Biennial Guide to Canadian Artists in Galleries*.

The following galleries show her works: Le Balcon d'art, Saint-Lambert; Galerie d'art Manseau, Joliette; Galerie Symbole Art, Montréal; Shayne Gallery, Montréal; Galerie Art et Style, Baie-Saint-Paul; Alcove Art Gallery, Sarnia, Ontario; Rendez-Vous Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.; N. Gibson Consultants Ltd., Calgary, Alberta.



FLOWERS ON WATER/FLEURS À FLEUR D'EAU, oil, 1994, 16 x 22 in.

ROSE ON ROSE, oil, 1997, 16 x 20 in.

