

Martin Blanchet

Reading the Landscape



« SUSSEX DRIVE », oil, 2007, 24 x 30 in.

Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté said, "I think an artist must paint the land of his birth." Those words can easily be applied to Martin Blanchet's work, considering his fondness for painting the landscape of his native Petite-Nation region of Québec, an area between Ottawa and Montréal

north of the Ottawa River and south of Mount Tremblant. He knows this region like the back of his hand and his love for it manifests itself in the intensity of his painting.

Blanchet regularly walks and hikes in the environment that is such a potent source of inspiration for him. "There are many paths, lakes and streams,

woods, ponds, marshes, and a variety of wildlife." On his walkabouts he invariably carries a sketchbook. He relies on drawings to provide the starting points for his painting. His sketches are done in pencil or ink.

When Blanchet returns to his studio after a drawing excursion he sets up his easel as soon as possible so he can



"MATINÉE", oil, 2007, 12 x 16 in.



"MASTERS OF THE SHORES/Maitres des rives", oil, 2007, 30 x 50 in.

transcribe the drawings onto canvases while the spontaneity of the creative moment still lives. He is able to transcribe up to three sketches in the same session. Later he refines the images by adjusting the lighting or adding details.

Though his forte remains landscape painting, he has recently painted some urban scenes. This exercise brought him to the realisation that for him the subject is only a pretext to the act of painting. Reproducing the effects of light and shadow, recreating the atmosphere of a setting, this is what ultimately gives Blanchet satisfaction and pleasure.

He always works in oils because he likes the richness and possible nuances the medium offers. But his palette and style are in constant evolution, a testament to his quest to maintain a fresh and vigorous approach.

He wants his paintings to have an interactive feel to them, fascinating



"LATE SEASON/L'arrière saison", oil, 2007, 8 x 5 in.



"THE COMING OF SPRING/Printemps en chemin", oil, 2007, 31 x 24 in.

viewers to the point of drawing them into the scene, immersing them in the spirit of the image. He believes achievement of this goal lies in the painting's evocation of the sense of a familiar place or a previously experienced feeling.

Blanchet's creative sensibility benefited from an early introduction to the practical side of art. At nine years of age he took courses in drawing, watercolour and oil painting from painter Louis Boekhout. While serving an internship under painter Louis Robichaud at age 17 he decided to commit himself solely to painting. It was from Robichaud that he learned the old painting techniques, as well as the use of time-honoured visual aids and media. To this day he expresses a profound interest for old techniques like those described by 20th century Breton painter Xavier de Langlais in *Techniques of Oil Painting*. Before he reached his 20th birthday he had already



"THE WAITING/L'attente", oil, 2007, 30 x 50 in.



"SOUTH OF FRANCE SCENE/Scène du midi", pencil and watercolour, 2007, 8 x 5 in.

participated in many exhibitions, several of them in France, and had won prizes and received honourable mentions.

Only 35 years old, Blanchet's many years of artistic activity and continued study under Louis Robichaud in combination with his own innate talent and characteristic perseverance and curiosity have brought to him the acclaim and mastery he presently enjoys.

At the time of this writing Martin Blanchet is preparing for two exhibitions: one in Long Island, New York, at the beginning of September and another at Le Balcon d'art in Saint-Lambert, Québec, on October 21st, 2007. At the latter he will show 40 paintings and drawings created over the past year. He will also take part this year in the Salon d'Automne in Paris. **I**

Michel Beauchamp

Martin Blanchet's works hang in the following galleries: Fine Canadian Art, Toronto, Ontario; Galerie Michel Bigué, Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts; Québec Galerie d'art Drummond, Drummondville, Québec; Gramercy 32 Fine Arts, New York, New York; Le Balcon d'art, Saint-Lambert, Québec; Westbrook Galleries, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California.

Martin Blanchet is represented by Imagin'Art.

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