

Quebec artist's works on display

BY AMY SMART, TIMES COLONIST DECEMBER 8, 2011



Winchester Galleries Modern manager Peter Redpath with an untitled piece, left, and Mont Orange by famed Quebec artist Jean Paul Riopelle. (Dec. 2011)

Photograph by: Adrian Lam, timescolonist.com

EXHIBIT

What: Jean Paul Riopelle

Where: Winchester Galleries Modern, 758 Humboldt St.

When: Opening Saturday 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Runs through Jan. 10.

Works by famed Quebecois artist Jean Paul Riopelle will be on display at Winchester Galleries Modern beginning Saturday.

Winchester manager Peter Redpath calls Riopelle "arguably, the most famous artist Canada has ever produced." "I think he's the only one who, for many decades, has been selling at high-end auctions in every developed country in the world."

Riopelle's work *Il était une fois une ville*, which sold in 2006 for more than \$1.6 million, held the record for the highest price for a postwar work of art sold in Canada until last month. That record was broken Nov. 24 by a painting by Jean Paul Lemieux that sold for more than \$2 million.

The artist's daughter, Yseult Riopelle, will be in attendance at the opening Saturday, which runs from 2 to 4 p.m. Acclaimed pianist Tzenka Dianova will perform Daughters of the Lonesome Isle by John Cage.

Riopelle was born in Montreal in 1923 and studied under Paul-Emile Borduas in the 1940s. He was among Les Automatistes, a group of artistic dissidents who embraced intuitive painting and creation. He moved from surrealism through abstract lyricism, and, at the height of his career in the 1950s, rivalled American Jackson Pollack. Riopelle died in 2002.

The works at the Winchester, created in the late stage of his career, from 1967 into the 1980s, show the artist's wide variety of directions - from an energetic, colourful collage to a sculpture of a rooster.

"In 1970, lots of people said, 'Oh, Riopelle is finished,' but the '70s turned out to be a fantastic decade for him," said Redpath. "He found his stride."

Other works include two small paintings belonging to his "iceberg series," created following a trip to the Arctic, along with several charcoal drawings, and a large diptych painting created with his signature, vibrant palette-knife style.

Riopelle was named a Companion to the Order of Canada, a Grand Officer of the National Order of Quebec and a member of Canada's Walk of Fame.

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