



JEAN PAUL RIOPELLE

Life & Work

By François-Marc Gagnon



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BIOGRAPHY

Jean Paul Riopelle (1923–2002) is one of Canada's most significant artists of the twentieth century. Attracted to painting from a young age, in 1943 he enrolled in the art program at Montreal's École du meuble, where he met the painter Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960). The encounter was life changing for Riopelle, who went on to join the Automatistes, an influential group of Québécois artists, and to be a signatory of their landmark 1948 manifesto, *Refus global*.¹ He later settled in Paris, where he became the most famous Canadian painter in Europe and the rest of the world.

Stylistically linked to many of the most important art movements of his time, Riopelle's legacy is his large and diverse body of work, expressing both abstraction and figuration in imaginative and surprising ways.²

YOUTH AND FORMATIVE YEARS

Jean Paul Riopelle was born in Montreal on October 7, 1923, into a prosperous family. His father, Léopold, was a trained carpenter who became successful in real estate and construction.³ His trademark was the exterior staircases so typical of Montreal homes, especially in the working-class neighbourhood near de Lorimier Avenue where the Riopelles lived. Jean Paul's mother, Anna Riopelle (his parents were cousins), was the only daughter of a businessman, from whom she inherited several properties. Jean Paul's delight in nature was apparent from his earliest years, as can be seen in a photograph taken when he was about five, showing him triumphantly returning from a fishing trip.

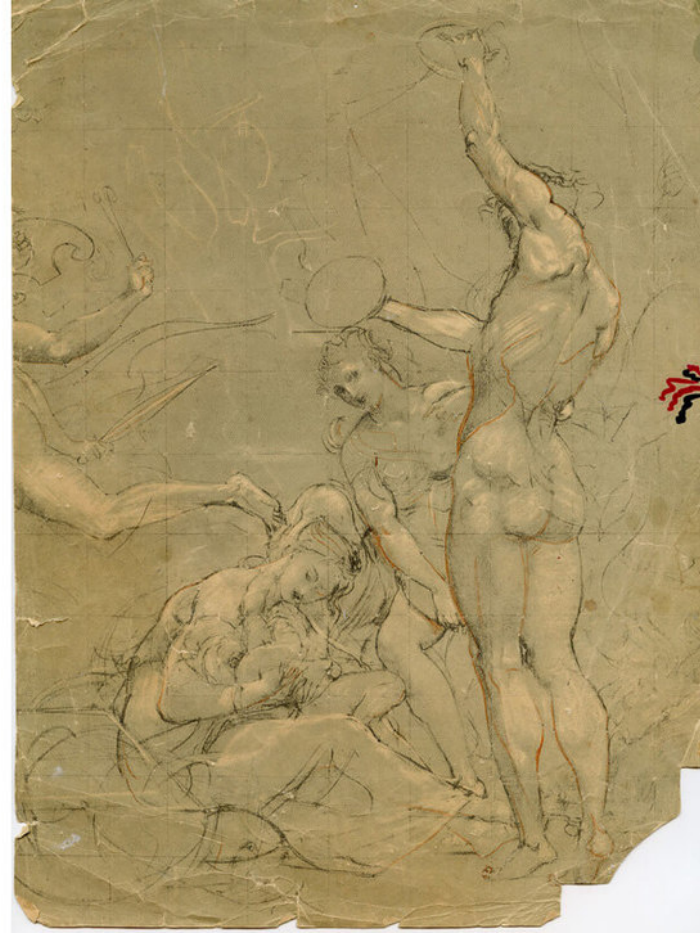


LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, c.1928, photographer unknown. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle. This photograph of Riopelle, then about five years old, shows his early love of fishing. RIGHT: Exterior staircases on de Lorimier Avenue, between Laurier Avenue and Rachel Street, June 27, 1967, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.



Jean Paul's sibling, Pierre, was three years his junior. On November 8, 1930, when Jean Paul was only seven, he and his family were faced with Pierre's tragic death. The Catholic burial rite for children required that the deceased's clothing, the church hangings, and the liturgical accessories all be white. According to Hélène de Billy, in her biography of Riopelle, for some time afterward "every reminder of snow meant abandonment, suffering, and death to Riopelle."⁴ Such an association with deep loss may also have contributed to the initial predominance of vivid colour in his work.

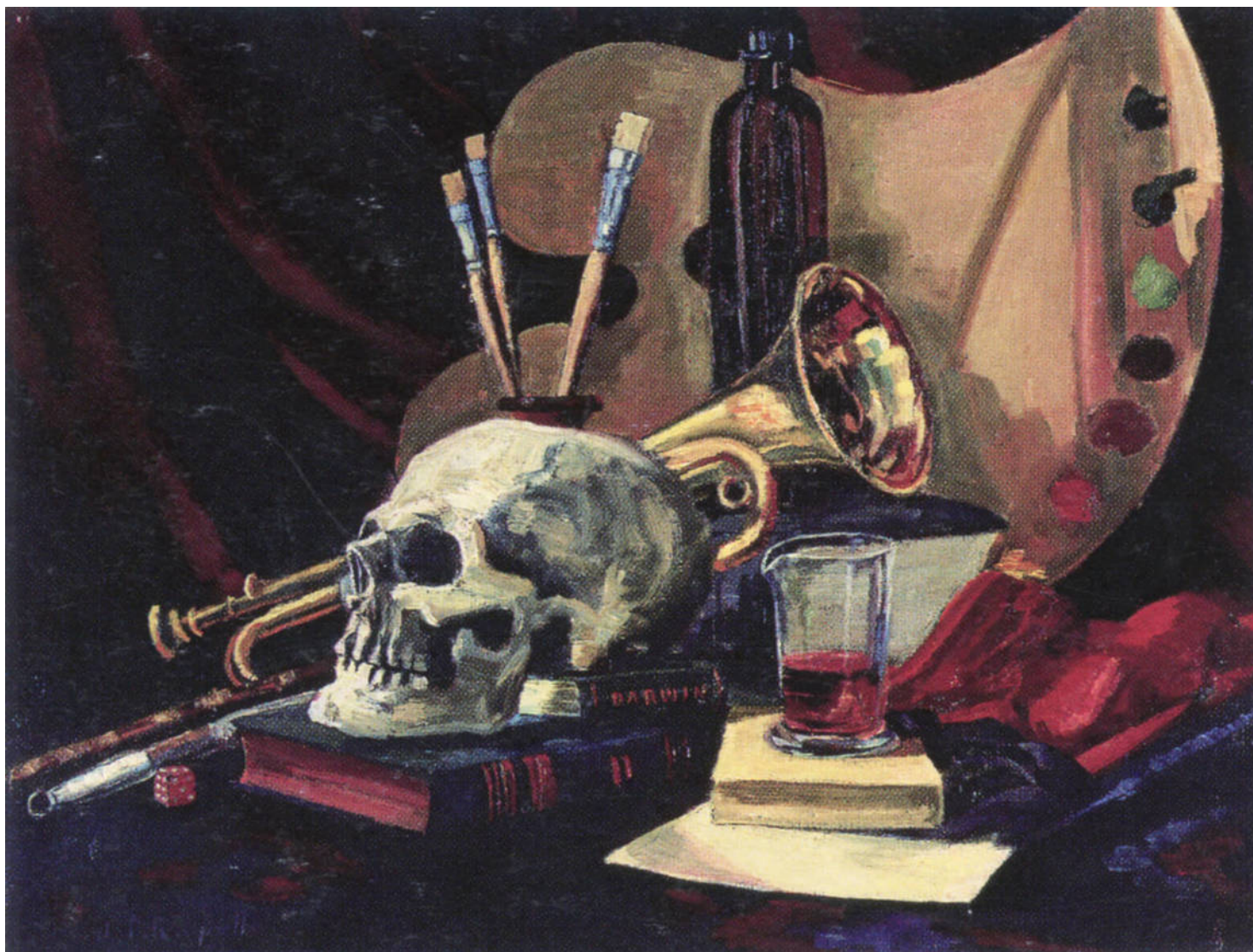
Riopelle began his education in his neighbourhood, at the Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague school. In 1936, when he was thirteen years old, his parents responded to their son's growing interest in art by encouraging him to take the drawing and painting classes that Henri Bisson (1900-1973) taught in his home on weekends. Bisson's practice was predominantly sculpture, based on drawing from life models, and some of his works were shown at the annual Salon du printemps in Montreal (1934-36, 1938, 1942-43). He was the principal artist of the *Monument to the Patriots* (*Monument à la gloire des Patriotes*), 1937, a centenary project memorializing the resistance fighters in the Lower Canada Rebellion of 1837 to 1838 (known in Quebec as the Patriots' War), as well as another monument recognizing Jean-Olivier Chénier, a Saint-Eustache patriot who died in that same conflict against British colonial rule.



LEFT: Henri Bisson, *Monument to the Patriots (Monument à la gloire des Patriotes)*, 1937, granite and bronze, 563.9 x 78.7 cm, Parc des Patriotes, Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu, MRC de la Vallée du Richelieu. RIGHT: Henri Bisson, *Sketch (Esquisse)*, 1973, charcoal, chalk and sanguine on paper, 27.5 x 20.6 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

Riopelle had many happy yet conflicting memories of his drawing teacher and what he later called his “bissonnière school.”⁵ Bisson advocated that artists should copy nature as realistically as they could, which was a philosophy of art that condemned anything that departed from faithful representation. In particular, his dislike of the Impressionists would have a profound effect on Riopelle, who would soon come to enjoy their expressive use of paint and novel combinations of colour.

Many of Riopelle’s earliest works can be traced back to his time with Bisson. An example is Riopelle’s *Very Still Life (Nature bien morte)*, 1942, which is, according to Henri Bisson’s daughter, Yvette, a copy of a work by her father. Art historian Pierre Schneider (1925–2013) observes that it is modelled after Bisson’s *Darwin Vanitas (Vanité au Darwin)*, n.d.⁶ Riopelle’s interpretation depicts a vanitas of the arts (paintbrushes, palette, bugle, books) and sciences, and he, ever the wit, called it *Very Still Life*.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Very Still Life (Nature bien morte)*, 1942, oil on canvas, 42 x 61 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

THE ÉCOLE DU MEUBLE

Riopelle's parents wanted to see him concentrate on a more profitable profession than painting, so he was enrolled in 1941 at the École polytechnique de Montréal, where he studied architecture and engineering. The following year, still enamoured with painting and having failed at the school, he enrolled in the École des beaux-arts, only to move on shortly thereafter to the École du meuble.

Less academic than the École des beaux-arts then under the direction of Charles Maillard (1887-1973), the École du meuble, with its broader curriculum, gave Riopelle the opportunity to take courses from Paul-Émile Borduas (1905-1960), Marcel Parizeau (1898-1945), and Maurice Gagnon (1904-1956). He quickly fell in with many of Borduas's students, some of them future members of the Automatistes, such as the painter Marcel Barbeau (1925-2016) and the photographer Maurice Perron (1924-1999), whom Riopelle had previously met at the Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague school during his teenage years.

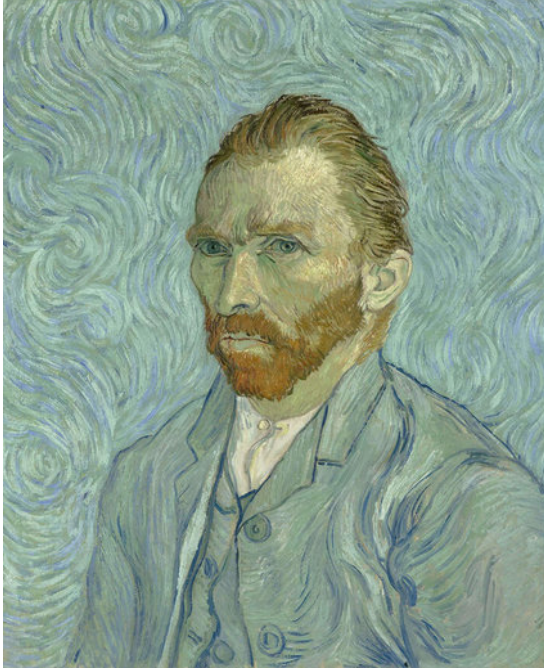
At the beginning of his training at the École du meuble, and still influenced by Bisson's lessons, Riopelle resisted Borduas's style of teaching. Borduas was interested in abstract painting, and he encouraged his students to let go of their preconceived ideas and paint from a new perspective. At first, Riopelle could not understand why Borduas graded his academic drawings as the lowest in the class. However, Riopelle soon embraced his teacher's direction and began to excel.⁷ Borduas was a committed teacher, eager for each student to develop a unique voice and his courses were formative for them as both artists and humanitarians.⁸ For Riopelle, Borduas's automatic writing and painting exercises, based in Surrealist techniques that encouraged spontaneous thought and embraced the unconscious imagination, were decisive; as a result, he abandoned Bisson's academic teaching.



Jean Paul Riopelle painting in Saint-Fabien-sur-Mer, c.1944. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Françoise Riopelle. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.

While still a student, Riopelle spent part of the winter of 1944 to 1945 with Borduas in order to focus on his study of painting. Borduas had recently returned to his birthplace of Saint-Hilaire (now Mont-Saint-Hilaire), thirty-five kilometres northeast of Montreal, and his home had become a safe haven of artistic incubation for the young Automatistes. Together, the group began to explore radical ideas about art and politics that would see their culmination some years later in the creation of the *Refus global* manifesto, but they were, according to Riopelle, out of step with the international scene. Ideas about art, and specifically about painting, took time to travel from the artistic centres of New York City and Paris to Montreal, and Riopelle felt that, as a result, the group lagged behind.⁹

Another crucial event of this period that marks Riopelle's transition from the academic painting of his early days to the abstraction for which he would become known is his encounter with the paintings of Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890). In 1944 a major Dutch art exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts included the artist's work.¹⁰ Riopelle was struck by Van Gogh's Post-Impressionist style. Not long after seeing the works, he travelled to Saint-Fabien, a small village on the Lower Saint Lawrence. There Riopelle produced his first "abstraction": a representation of a water hole left on the shore by the tide that his friends described as "non-figurative." Riopelle would later claim to have painted exactly what he saw.¹¹ Unfortunately, there is no record of this decisive work.



LEFT: Vincent van Gogh, *Self-Portrait*, 1889, oil on canvas, 65 x 54.5 cm, Musée d'Orsay, Paris. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Saint-Fabien*, 1944, oil on canvas attached to cardboard, 30.4 x 41 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City.

THE ALLEY STUDIO

In 1946 Riopelle's friend Marcel Barbeau rented for \$10 a month (using the money he made as a grocery store attendant) a "studio," or rather a shed, overlooking an alley between Saint-Hubert and Resther Streets in Montreal. Riopelle, whose newest paintings were no longer appreciated by his parents—his mother actually called his "abstractions" the works of the devil—shared the space with Barbeau and Jean-Paul Mousseau (1927–1991). It was in this makeshift studio that Riopelle, Barbeau and Mousseau began to truly explore the explosive potential of automatism.

Riopelle referred to his early automatism paintings as works of "destruction." As he would explain, later in his life:

Very few of these paintings lasted, as they were generally easily damaged. They were made with enamel, with car paint, because we didn't have the money to buy anything else. And besides, we painted at such a pace that we used everything we could get our hands on. The most important thing was to paint at all costs, for the sake of painting. It was a destruction, rather than a construction.¹²



LEFT: Perron, Maurice, *Firstxhibition of the Automatistes*, photo from the layout of the Refus global manifesto, 1946. Gelatin silver print, 5.9 x 10.2 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.205.02). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Ontario, December 9 (Ontario, 9 décembre)*, 1945, enamel on canvas, 86.5 x 106.1 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Charest family.

From April 20 to 29, 1946, Riopelle took part in the first exhibition of the Automatistes, simply titled *Exposition de peinture (Painting Exhibition)*, at 1257 Amherst Street in Montreal, with Barbeau, Borduas, Roger Fauteux (b.1923), Pierre Gauvreau (1922–2011), Fernand Leduc (1916–2014), and Mousseau.¹³ In line with their interests of the time, the works on display were experimental in nature and the exhibition was intended not to commemorate something monumental or lasting but to revel in the joy of the moment. Many of the works were collaborations, as a philosophy of the young artists was to paint not unique works of art but spirited and impersonal automatic creations.

Today, and perhaps in true form with the intent of the exhibition, all that remains of Riopelle's participation is an account by the journalist and poet Charles Doyon.¹⁴ In an article Doyon mentions three paintings: *Thus There Is No More Desert (Ainsi il n'y a plus de désert)*, *All Is Found Again (Tout se retrouve)*, and *Never Did April Appear (Jamais avril n'apparut)*. While these titles cannot be found in the first volume of the Riopelle catalogue raisonné,¹⁵ it should be noted that Doyon was not a very good source for this kind of information. Known to dabble in poetry, he was not averse to taking liberties with the titles of the works he was reviewing—or to plain and simple make them up.¹⁶



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Within the Four Walls of the Wind, I'm Listening—Nadaka* (*Entre les quatre murs du vent, j'écoute—Nadaka*), 1947, oil on canvas, 76 x 92 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

THE FIRST TRIPS TO FRANCE

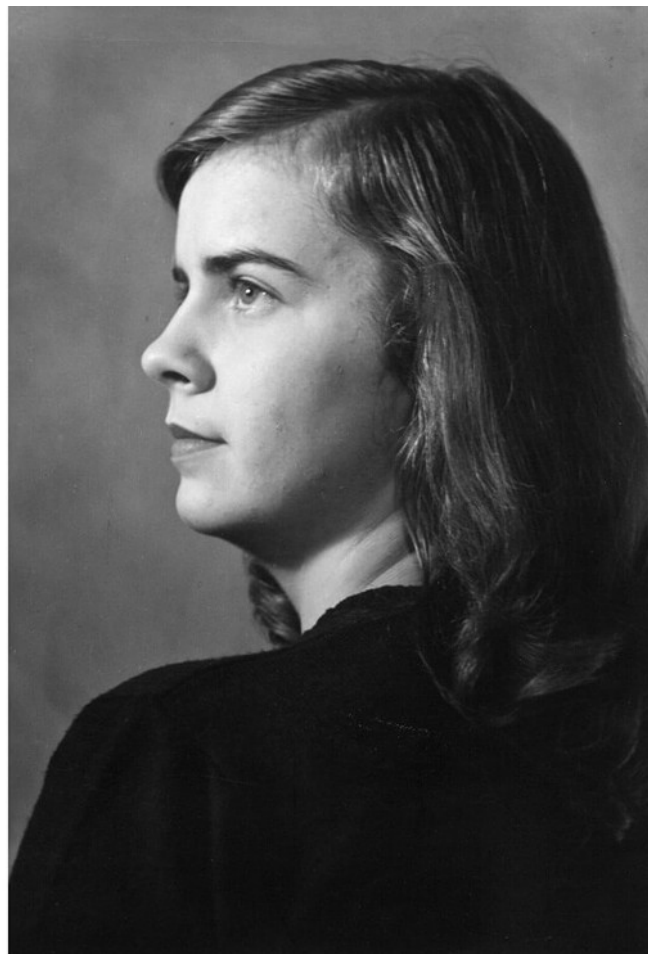
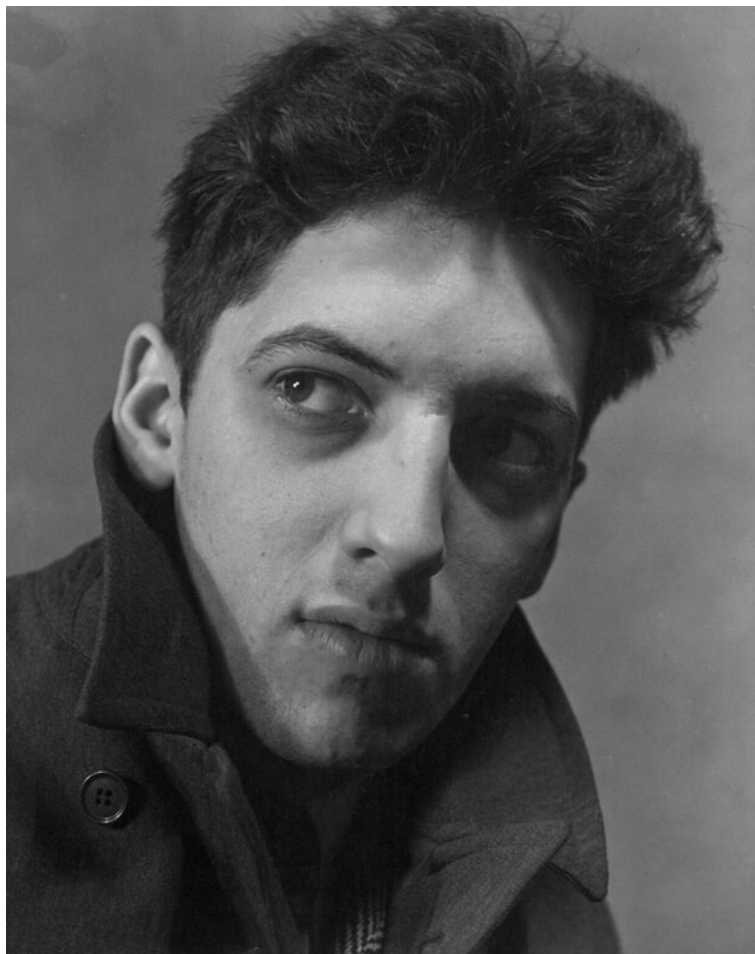
In the summer of 1946, Riopelle travelled to France, a trip he said he had made "à fond de cale,"¹⁷ working as a horse groom as he traversed the countryside. During this formative time away from home, Riopelle was struck by the extraordinary paintings of horses by the Romantic painter Théodore Géricault (1791–1824) that he saw at the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen.

Eventually, Riopelle was able to visit the Musée de l'Orangerie in the Jardins des Tuileries in Paris, where he saw the exhibition *Les Chefs-d'œuvre des collections privées françaises retrouvés en Allemagne par la Commission de récupération artistique et les Services Alliés* (Masterpieces from French Private Collections Retrieved in Germany). The paintings that most interested Riopelle were by Claude Monet (1840–1926), Berthe Morisot (1841–1895), Jean-Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), and Francisco Goya (1746–1828).¹⁸ Monet in particular would prove to be a lifelong inspiration to the artist.



LEFT: Théodore Géricault, *Study of a Dapple Grey* (*Cheval arabe blanc-gris*), c.1812, oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Rouen. RIGHT: Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, *The Third of May 1808 in Madrid, or "The Executions"*, 1814, oil on canvas, 268 x 347 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

Riopelle called this first trip to France a revelation: "I decided that it was in the Île-de-France [the Paris Region], where the light is the most beautiful, that I would live."¹⁹ He returned to Canada in 1946 at the end of September and reconnected with his girlfriend, Françoise Lespérance. The lovers went off to New York City for a few weeks in October with Riopelle's friend the playwright Claude Gauvreau. There, Riopelle visited the studio of the British artist William Hayter (1901–1988) and he became familiar with basic print techniques among other important artists of the time.²⁰ Once back in Canada, they married on October 30, 1946, at the Church of the Immaculate Conception in Montreal. Riopelle went against the wishes of his parents, who thought the couple was too young. Still, Riopelle's father gave the newlyweds a house as a wedding gift, which they sold before long, providing them with the means to live and travel as they desired. They chose to start with Paris, and most likely left for Europe on December 9, 1946.²¹



LEFT: Perron, Maurice, *Jean Paul Riopelle*, c.1947. Gelatin silver print, 34.3 x 27.3 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.14 2). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron. RIGHT: Perron, Maurice, *Françoise Lespérance Riopelle*, c.1947. Gelatin silver print, 34.3 x 23.8 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.145). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.

Riopelle soon met the Parisian art dealer Pierre Loeb (1897–1964), owner of the Galerie Pierre, which promoted major Surrealist and Cubist artists, including Pablo Picasso (1881–1973) and Joan Miró (1893–1983). It was through Loeb that Riopelle met the French writer and father of the Surrealist movement André Breton (1896–1966). Breton invited Riopelle to participate in the major Surrealist exhibition of June 1947, and asked Riopelle to forward the invitation to Borduas and his friends. Riopelle wrote the following to Borduas about his encounter with Breton:

We discussed Automatism and Surrealism in general. Although Automatism is not in his [Breton's] opinion the only key to this inner world, his reaction to our paintings shows that if among Surrealist painters, Automatism manifested itself only timidly, that was hardly his fault. So, as you can see here, you are invited to take part in an international Surrealist exhibition. This invitation extends to Barbeau, Gauvreau, Mousseau, and Fauteux.²²

As a result of Breton's somewhat dismissive attitude toward them, Borduas and the other members of the group decided to postpone their official collaboration with the European Surrealists to another occasion. Riopelle was the only Canadian both to sign with Breton the *Rupture inaugurale* manifesto, written by Breton's disciple Henri Pastoureau²³, and to participate in the

VI^e Exposition internationale du surréalisme (6th International Exhibition of Surrealism) organized by Breton and Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), held during the summer of 1947 at the Galerie Maeght in Paris. Riopelle showed two watercolours, one of which was *Mother Liquors (Eaux-mères)*, 1947.



LEFT: Perron, Maurice, *Mousseau-Riopelle exhibition at Muriel Guilbault's apartment*, 1947. Gelatin silver print, 25.5 x 25.5 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.205.02). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Mother Liquors (Eaux-mères)*, 1947, ink on paper, 27.5 x 45.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

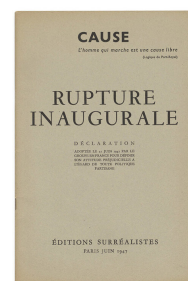
REFUS GLOBAL AND THE FIRST PARISIAN EXHIBITION

In 1947 the Riopelles returned to Montreal for the birth of their first child, Yseult. Riopelle soon contributed to a joint exhibition with Jean-Paul Mousseau, held in the apartment of Muriel Guilbault on Sherbrooke Street West from November 28 to December 15. As he reconnected with the Automatistes, he discouraged them from signing the French manifesto *Rupture inaugurale* and, instead, proposed that they produce their own declaration and take a position against the insularity of Quebec society under Premier Maurice Duplessis (1890–1959), an ultraconservative traditionalist who had won several consecutive elections.

It was therefore at Riopelle's suggestion that Borduas began, in February 1948, to write the principal essay of what became *Refus global (Total Refusal)*, an anti-clerical, anti-establishment, and anarchistic manifesto denouncing the obscurantism of Quebec society at the time.

Supplementary texts were written by Pierre and Claude Gauvreau, Françoise Sullivan (b.1923), and Fernand Leduc, among others. Riopelle supplied the watercolour for the cover. Maurice Perron took photographs of some of the group members' artworks, which were added to complete the publication. There were sixteen signatories: Madeleine Arbour, Barbeau, Borduas, Bruno Cormier, Marcelle Ferron, Claude and Pierre Gauvreau, Muriel Guilbault, Leduc, Mousseau, Maurice Perron, Louise Renaud, Thérèse Renaud, the Riopelles, and Sullivan.

At first the idea was to turn the *Refus global* into a kind of catalogue to accompany an exhibition of the group's works, but Riopelle objected and insisted on making the launch of the manifesto itself the main event. Borduas thought that its August 9 release date, during school holidays, would lessen



LEFT: Cover page of the Surrealist manifesto *Rupture inaugurale* (1947). RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle and Pierre Gauvreau, cover page of the manifesto *Refus global (Total Refusal)*, 1948, ink on paper, 21.5 x 18.5 cm. Paul-Émile Borduas and other signatories, *Refus global*, Saint-Hilaire, Éditions Mithra-Mythe, 1948. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate and Pierre Gauvreau Estate / SOCAN (2019).

any risk of the publication threatening his teaching position at the École du meuble. Unfortunately, the uproar caused by the manifesto's release could not be ignored and Borduas was let go.²⁴ However, *Refus global* proved to be one of the essential factors that led to the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and the eventual transformation of Quebec society.

Near the end of 1948, the Riopelles returned to Paris. Jean Paul's first solo exhibition in Paris, *Riopelle à La Dragonne* (*Riopelle at La Dragonne*) soon followed. It took place from March 23 to April 23, 1949, at Galerie Nina Dausset,²⁵ where he showed his inks, watercolours, and oil paintings. Works like *City of No Words–The Wood Hive* (*Cité sans parole–La ruche du bois*), 1948, show a colourful background offset by bold applications of ink, characteristic of his work at that time. André Breton, Élisabeth Breton (1906–2000), and Benjamin Péret (1899–1959), the latter a poet, Dadaist, and Surrealist, created a text about Riopelle for the occasion: "Aparté" (a private conversation) emphasized his "Canadian" character—his accent, the "pearl grey" houses of Gaspésie, the "dark lakes" north of Montreal, and the "great woods." Breton described Riopelle as a "superior trapper," a label that long remained attached to him in Paris:

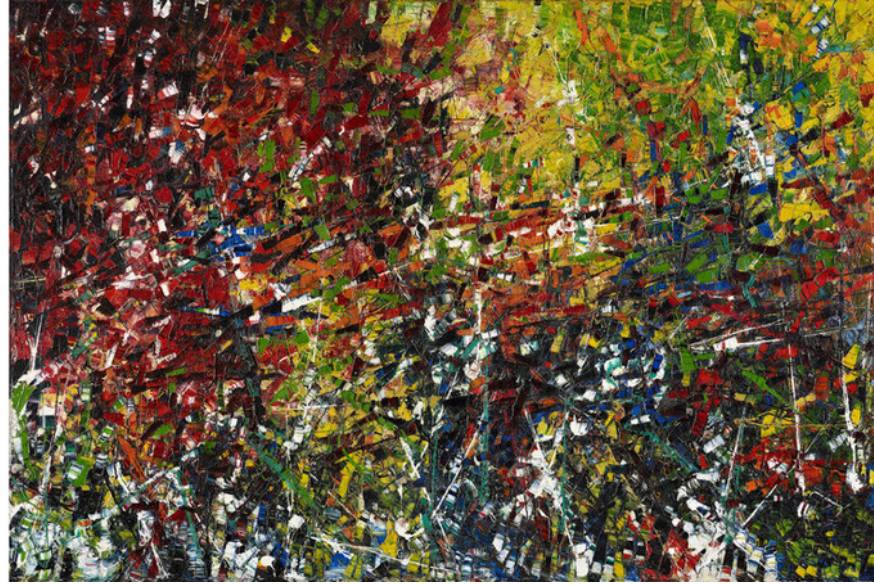
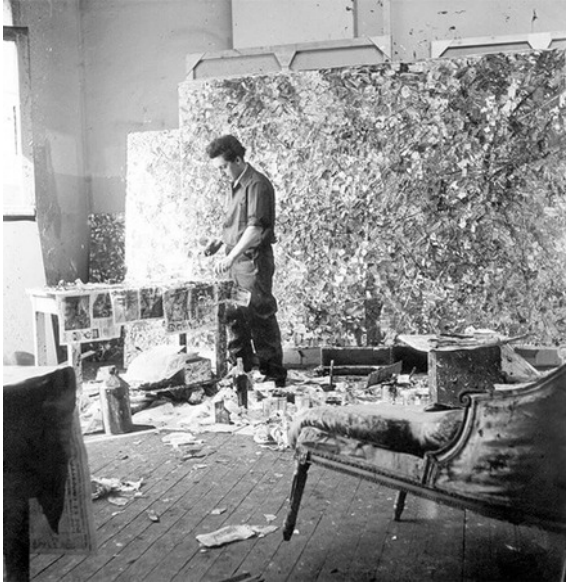
For me, his art is that of a superior trapper. Traps both for the animals of the burrows and for those of the clouds, as [the Symbolist poet] Germain Nouveau said. What I find useful about the notion of a trap, which I like somewhat, is that they are also traps for traps. Once these traps are trapped, a high degree of freedom is achieved.²⁶



Jean Paul Riopelle, *City of No Words–The Wood Hive* (*Cité sans parole–La ruche du bois*), 1948, watercolour and ink on paper, 24.6 x 34.4 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. This painting was included in the exhibition *Riopelle à La Dragonne* (*Riopelle at La Dragonne*), an alternative name of the Galerie Nina Dausset, 19 rue du Dragon, Paris, 1949.

VÉHÉMENTES CONFRONTÉES AND THE MOSAIC BREAKTHROUGH

In 1951 the painter Georges Mathieu (1921–2012), leader of the French Lyrical Abstraction movement, organized an international exhibition, *Véhérences confrontées* (*Confronted Vehemences*). Its intention was to "confront" the various trends in contemporary art in France, Germany, Italy, and North America. The show included paintings by Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), Willem de Kooning (1904–1997), Giuseppe Capogrossi (1900–1972), Alfred Russell (1920–2007), and Riopelle.²⁷ As Mathieu later wrote, he "had the handout for the exhibition made in the form of a large manifesto-poster on coated paper with the texts in red on the front and the reproductions of the artworks and the graphics in black on the back."²⁸



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio on rue Durantin, Paris, 1952. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by John Craven. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Robert the Evil One (Hommage à Robert le Diabolique)*, 1953, oil on canvas, 200 x 282 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Fondation Gandur pour l'Art, Geneva.

For Riopelle, who was already feeling a certain detachment from Breton's Surrealism, his participation in *Véhémences confrontées* marked a move toward a body of work that would come to be known as the "mosaics." Throughout the 1950s, these large paintings, including *The Wheel (Cold Dog–Indian Summer)* (*La roue [Cold Dog–Indian Summer]*), 1954–55, would come to make Riopelle's name and garner him international renown for his abandonment of the brush for the palette knife. The canvases, composed of pure colour straight from the tube applied with a palette knife, have an ethereal quality and resemble the tesserae of a mosaic.

In 1952 Riopelle's friend Henri Fara lent him his studio on rue Durantin in Montmartre. "This is the first time I've had a workshop of my own," the artist confessed. Having the creative space enabled him to exhibit at the Galerie Pierre Loeb from May 8 to 23, 1953. For Pierre Schneider, this decisive exhibition was the starting point for Riopelle's Paris celebrity: "Unknown in 1947, exhibiting only in small galleries on the Left Bank, he gained some fame only around 1953, while he was exhibiting at Pierre Loeb's."²⁹



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Wheel (Cold Dog-Indian Summer)* (*La roue [Cold Dog-Indian Summer]*), 1954-55, oil on canvas, 250 x 331 cm.
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal.

Riopelle's increasing fame led Pierre Matisse, the youngest child of the French painter Henri Matisse (1869-1954), to include him in a group exhibition in his New York gallery from October 26 to November 14, 1953, which featured the work of internationally renowned painters such as Balthus (1908-2001), Georges Braque (1882-1863), Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957), Marc Chagall (1887-1985), André Derain (1880-1954), Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), Alberto Giacometti (1901-1966), Joan Miró (1893-1983), Amadeo Modigliani (1884-1920), and Georges Rouault (1871-1958). Among Riopelle's works in the exhibition was *Tribute to Robert the Evil One (Hommage à Robert le diabolique)*, 1953, one of his most remarkable mosaics to date. The show was a success and from 1954 onward, Pierre Matisse regularly held solo exhibition of Riopelle's art in New York, which was significant since a manufactured rivalry between the Paris school of artists and the New York one was under development (and Riopelle was associated with the former); the two men became close friends, sharing an enthusiasm for sailboats and vintage cars.



LEFT: Sam Francis with Jean Paul Riopelle on his Peugeot motorcycle in Paris, 1953. © 2019 Sam Francis Foundation, California / SOCAN, Montreal / Artists Rights Society. Photograph by Carol Haerer. RIGHT: Pierre Matisse and Jean Paul Riopelle (with his famous Bugatti) on the Côte d'Azur, c.1964, photographer unknown.

THE 1960S AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH MITCHELL AND MONET

Joan Mitchell (1925–1992), a young painter from Chicago, met Riopelle in Paris in the summer of 1955. (Riopelle and Françoise Lespérance separated a few years later in 1958; they would divorce in 1959). The two quickly became romantic partners and began a relationship that lasted nearly twenty-five years. Riopelle had recently exhibited twice at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York in 1955, the first time in May and the second in December. Mitchell may have seen the second show, as she had returned to America a few weeks after meeting Riopelle and worked at her studio in St. Mark's Place in New York. The two artists corresponded while apart. In a letter to her dated January 10, 1956,³⁰ Riopelle confided that being short of inspiration in oils, he was painting in gouache. It is a medium in which he became proficient, as is clear in *Eskimo Mask*, 1955.

By 1959 Mitchell had settled permanently in Paris, where she lived with Riopelle on rue Frémicourt, in the fifteenth arrondissement. In the summer of 1960, after a brief visit to Long Island and New York City, Riopelle resumed the practice of sculpture. The artist liked to say that he had "always" been sculpting, as evidenced by three small mud-brick figures, dated 1947–48, photographed in the snow by Riopelle himself.³¹ On his return to France, he shared a studio in Meudon, southwest of central Paris, with Roseline Granet (b.1936), a French sculptor known



Joan Mitchell and Jean Paul Riopelle in their studio / apartment on rue Frémicourt, Paris, in 1963. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Heidi Meister.

for her *Tribute to Jean-Paul Sartre (Hommage à Jean-Paul Sartre)*, 1987, a work commissioned by the City of Paris. Throughout his career, Riopelle created many sculptures to which he said he attached “enormous importance.”³²

From June 26 to August 23, 1962, Riopelle represented Canada at the 31st Venice Biennale, where his work—paintings and sculptures freshly cast in bronze such as *The Tooth at the Opera (La dent à l'opéra)*, 1960—filled the entire Canada Pavilion. The work earned him the UNESCO Prize, “a distinction that no other Canadian artist had yet won.”³³ At the same Biennale, Alberto Giacometti won the grand prize for sculpture and Alfred Manessier (1911–1993) the prize for painting.

Both Riopelle and Mitchell greatly admired the work of Claude Monet, particularly the large paintings of his pond and garden at Giverny. Already in 1957, Riopelle had been referred to as an heir to the artist’s work by *Life* magazine.³⁴ What they found fascinating was how the works appeared abstract even though they were intended to represent a natural setting. Additionally, the works looked to have neither top nor bottom and could be exhibited any which way. The water, plant life, and their reflections seemed to blend seamlessly into a unified whole.³⁵



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1969, pastel on paper, 50 x 65.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Galerie Simon Blais, Montreal. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Beyond (Par-delà)*, 1961, oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. This piece was presented at the 31st Venice Biennale.

Riopelle and Mitchell’s mutual interest led them in 1967 to Vétheuil, a village on the Seine about sixty kilometres northwest of Paris, which is where Monet lived from 1878 to 1881. In Vétheuil, Mitchell acquired La Tour, a vast property with a garden where the pair then settled. Riopelle would travel to Paris almost every day, notably to Meudon, where he worked on his sculpture. He also spent time at the Imprimerie Arte-Adrien Maeght, a printmaking atelier. He got into the habit of cutting up his unwanted prints to make collages, sometimes creating ones of impressive size, such as *Verb-Herb (Verbe-Herbe)* and *Sawed Spikes (Épis sciés)*, both from 1967. With these new works, Riopelle went towards an increasingly fragmented artistic style. Nonetheless, the collages are recognized as some of his most interesting work of the period.³⁶



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Verb Herb (Verbe Herbe)*, 1967, collage on canvas, 129.5 x 95.3 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Sawed Spikes (Épis sciés)*, 1967, lithograph collage mounted on canvas, 180 x 131.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Galerie Maeght, Paris.

A personal highlight of the decade for Riopelle was his first major exhibition in Quebec, *Peintures et sculptures de Riopelle (Paintings and Sculptures by Riopelle)*, held in the summer of 1967.³⁷ The exhibition was organized by Guy Viau (1920–1971), who was an associate of the Automatistes and at the time was the director of the Musée du Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec). The exhibition included pieces such as *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1967, an assemblage donated to the museum by the artist on the occasion of the ambitious retrospective.

THE 1970S AND THE RETURN HOME

In the 1970s Riopelle's visits to Canada became increasingly longer and more frequent. At the suggestion of his friend Champlain Charest, Riopelle set up a studio in Sainte-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson in the Quebec Laurentians, in 1974. He had become familiar with the area from hunting and fishing trips over the years with Charest. Riopelle designed the studio space according to plans he had once drawn up at the École du meuble: the building, essentially a large loft able to accommodate his sizable paintings allowed him to work in isolation. His travels in the Quebec wilderness as far north as Abitibi and even to James Bay influenced his art practice. He found an abundance of inspiration in his new surroundings: "The string games, the hunting. Fishing. . . . Making artificial flies: now, that is art."³⁸

In 1969 Riopelle began a major sculpture project: *The Joust* (*La Joute*). It is a monumental ensemble of thirty figures and was first executed in clay and then in plaster. The plaster version was first exhibited at the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul de Vence in the south of France from 1970 to 1971, and again in Paris in 1972, as part of the show *Ficelles et autres jeux* (*Strings and Other Games*) presented at the Canadian Cultural Centre and the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. This exhibition, which included such works as *Owl-Shovel* (*Hibou-pelle*), *Fish* (*Poisson*), *Bear* (*Ours*), and *Dog* (*Chien*), confirmed Riopelle's remarkable talent and creative range. As the critic Michel Dupuy wrote, the artist "drops the brushes to sculpt in plaster, clay, or bronze his animals full of power and humour."³⁹ *The Joust* was cast in bronze in 1974 and installed at Olympic Park for the 1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Joust* (*La Joute*), 1969–70 (cast in bronze c.1974), bronze, 380 cm high, 1,240 cm in diameter (approximate dimensions). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. In 2004 *The Joust* was relocated to the Place Jean-Paul-Riopelle in Montreal's Quartier international. Nearby is a sculpture of Riopelle, 2003, by Roseline Granet, his old sculpture-studio mate from his Paris days.

The owl, an important element of *The Joust* (*La Joute*), soon became a recurring motif in Riopelle's art. From 1970 alone there are more than twenty paintings and almost as many bronze sculptures dedicated to the nocturnal bird. While the works show an incredible variety of representation, they also signify Riopelle's return to figuration, a trend that had begun in 1965. Some considered this abandonment of pure abstraction by the painter as an affront; however, Riopelle did not consider abstract and figural work to be separate from one another. As he explained:

Those of my paintings considered the most abstract have been, for me, the most figurative, in the true sense of the word. On the other hand, geese, owls, moose. . . . These paintings whose meaning we think we can read—aren't they even more abstract than the rest? Abstract: "abstraction," "drawing from," "taking from. . ." My approach is the opposite. I don't draw from nature, I go toward nature. . . . To be honest, abstraction doesn't exist in painting. Abstraction is impossible; figuration is just as impossible. Paint the sky?. . . One could risk it, but only if one has never seen the sky. In this sense, as I have already said, I am less impressionist than depressionist. I move just the right distance away from reality, but I don't totally separate myself from it. How much distance do I establish? The right amount.⁴⁰



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Owl-Jet Black (Hibou-Jet Black)*, 1970, oil on canvas, 72.4 x 59.7 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

Beginning in 1976 large snow geese were added to Riopelle's repertoire, such as in *The Lachance Brothers (Les frères Lachance)* from 1983. He became fascinated by their annual migration, when more than seventy-five-thousands of them would invade Cap Tourmente, just north of Quebec City.⁴¹ The experience affected Riopelle so deeply that he would often return to it in his later work, including in a series of thirteen lithographs on Japanese paper from 1983.

THE 1980S AND RECOGNITION

In the 1980s numerous Canadian retrospective exhibitions devoted to the art of the Automatistes took place, including *Riopelle: La Révolution automatiste*, organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in 1980 and *L'Étoile noire (Black Star)*, a 1981 travelling exhibition organized in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Peterborough, Ontario, the National Gallery of Canada, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and the Musée du Québec (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec). Galerie Dresdnere in Toronto mounted two shows, *Les Automatistes d'hier à aujourd'hui / The Automatistes Then and Now* in 1986 and *Borduas and Other Rebels* in 1988; and the Drabinsky Gallery, also in Toronto, showed in 1990 *Les Automatistes: Montreal Painting of the 1940s and 1950s*. Finally, the Musée de Saint-Hilaire (now Musée des beaux-arts de Saint-Hilaire), Quebec, presented *Saint-Hilaire et les Automatistes* in 1997. These events showcased Riopelle's work, which was seen as central to the Automatistes' rejection of the cultural and political status quo in Quebec in the 1940s.



Jean Paul Riopelle on the occasion of the exhibition *Riopelle, peintures, estampes (Riopelle, Paintings, Prints)* held at the Musée des beaux-arts and at the Hôtel d'Escoville in Caen, Normandy, 1984, photograph by P. Victor. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.

In the same period, Riopelle was also honoured in France: in 1981 the Musée national d'art moderne de Paris organized a retrospective of his work from 1946 to 1977. This exhibition travelled to the Musée du Québec, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City, and finally the Galería de Arte Nacional in Caracas. In 1981 the Prix Paul-Émile-Borduas, Quebec's most prestigious award for an artist, was presented to Riopelle in recognition of his major contribution to cultural life.⁴²

Soon after these accolades Riopelle returned to his first remote studio, the one he built in 1974 at Sainte-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson in the Laurentians. Before long he travelled to Île-aux-Oies (island of geese) and Isle-aux-Grues (island of cranes), two islands connected by a sandbar that are part of an archipelago in the Saint Lawrence River northeast of Quebec City. Riopelle had frequented the area since 1974 as a member of a hunting club and in 1976 undertook a series of drawings documenting the area. A work like *Blue Geese (Les oies bleues)*, 1981, details the natural panoramas that surrounded Riopelle as he lived alternately in the Laurentians and Isle-aux-Grues after his permanent

return from France in 1990. It was on the windy Île-aux-Oies where the artist set up a new studio in the former town hall—an old farm house called Le Repaire (the lair). There he produced many of his works from 1990 and 1992.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Blue Geese (Les oies bleues)*, 1981, lithograph, 50.1 x 66 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. RIGHT: Greater Snow Geese at Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, Quebec, 2017, photograph by Pierre Rochette.

A FINAL TRIBUTE AND LAST YEARS

Joan Mitchell died on October 30, 1992, in the American Hospital of Paris, Neuilly-sur-Seine. Although the couple had separated in 1979, when Riopelle returned to Île-aux-Oies that fall, he began his last great monumental

painting, *Tribute to Rosa*

Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa

Luxemburg), 1992, in memory of

their shared life. The work, more

than forty metres long and

comprising thirty paintings, was

first exhibited in Mont-Rolland in

the Laurentians in April 1993. For five days nearly a hundred visitors admired

the piece. It was shown in the fall of the same year in a Montreal gallery, Michel

Tétreault Art International, under the title *Œuvres vives et l'Hommage à Rosa*

Luxemburg (Œuvres vives and the Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg).⁴³ The three

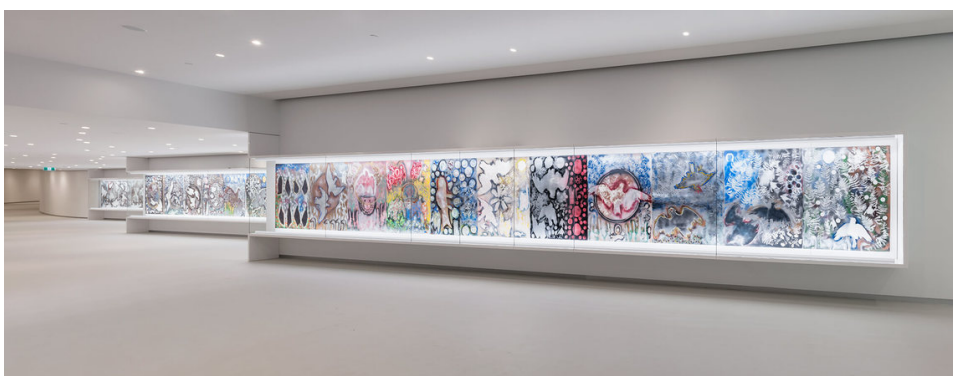
sections were arranged in a U shape so viewers literally had to enter the work

to see it. It then travelled in 1995 to the Château de La Roche-Guyon, not far

from Paris, and on to the Musée du Québec (now the Musée national des

beaux-arts du Québec [MNBAQ]) in the spring of 1996, where, over a five-week

period, thirty-three thousand visitors were able to see it.⁴⁴



Installation view of *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 155 x 1,424 cm (1st element); 155 x 1,247 cm (2nd element); 155 x 1,368 cm (3rd element). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, in the Pierre Lassonde pavilion of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, c.2016. Photograph by Idra Labrie.

Following an agreement with Loto-Québec, the work was acquired in 1996 as a

gift from Riopelle to the Musée du Québec, together with two other major

works by the artist, *Pangnirtung*, 1977, and *Victory and the Sphinx (La victoire et*

le sphinx), 1963. *Tribute* was to be hung in the Casino de Hull (now the Casino

du Lac-Leamy) for twenty years but spent only three years there before being

moved to the Musée du Québec in May 2000 to ensure its preservation.

Thanks to the diligence of John R. Porter, then director of the museum, the

work was retrieved and exhibited in two ways: its three sections were first

presented in a Z shape, then reorganized as they can be seen today, along a corridor in the new Pierre Lassonde Pavilion of the MNBAQ.⁴⁵

Riopelle's last works, such as *The Happy Isle* (*L'Isle heureuse*), 1992, a luminous large-format painting on wood, radiate the serenity of the later years of a worldly painter who chose for his final destination a tranquil retreat into the natural environment he loved. Having been made a Grand Officer of the National Order of Quebec in 1994, he was recognized both at home and abroad as one of the great artists of his generation. Jean Paul Riopelle died at his home on Île-aux-Grues on March 12, 2002. On March 18, the government of Quebec, at the behest of the Parti Québécois premier Bernard Landry, held a national funeral in his honour.



Jean Paul Riopelle in Paris, 1985, photograph by Michel Nguyen. © Michel Nguyen.

KEY WORKS

This selection of twelve key works reviews the trajectory of Jean Paul Riopelle's career. Over the span of fifty years, from his first figurative pieces from the 1940s to his ambitious 1992 masterpiece *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* (*Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg*), Riopelle continued to push the limits of his art. The stories behind these works are as important as the evolving artistic styles they manifest; they highlight the artist's wide-ranging interests, expanding practice, and his unique development as an artist. By focusing on works that exemplify watershed moments in Riopelle's career, we gain an appreciation of his dedication to his art and his exacting exploration of techniques, which he honed in several mediums over his lifetime.

UNTITLED (PASTORAL SCENE), C.1940



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Pastoral Scene)* (*Sans titre [Scène pastorale]*), c.1940

Oil on cardboard, 23.3 x 30.6 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

This early work by Jean Paul Riopelle of a Quebec country scene looks nothing like the paintings for which he would become famous and everything like the art of his teacher, Henri Bisson (1900–1973). However, *Untitled (Pastoral Scene)* (*Sans titre [Scène pastorale]*) is important because it reveals how Riopelle began making art. Visible in its bottom left is a trace of the first step the artist took in creating the composition: the horizontal and vertical grid that he drew across the painting's cardboard surface. The technique is one that the young Riopelle, who was a teenaged art student when he created this work, learned from Bisson; it enabled the artist to conserve proper proportions throughout the piece.

Bisson instructed his students to copy widely circulated prints of art, illustrations, and even his own work; it was one of Bisson's paintings that formed the basis for Riopelle's *Untitled (Pastoral Scene)*. Recently, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts acquired a number of small paintings by Riopelle done in the manner of Bisson, such as *Untitled (Winter Landscape)* (*Sans titre [Paysage]*

d'hiver)), c.1941. When asked in 1963 about his early paintings, he said he found them to have little artistic merit and observed: "I did super-academic painting! We copied from catalogues. We quickly passed over the Impressionists. I found it awful!"¹

About three years after *Untitled (Pastoral Scene)*, Riopelle created *Mont-Royal*, c.1943, a view of a house in a nearby Montreal borough. According to Bisson's instruction, a "substitute" for nature—that is, faithful reproduction—was to be the objective, even part of the conception of an artwork. However, as Riopelle told a Toronto journalist in 1964, "when we worked from reproductions, if we ever came across an Impressionist painting in a book, my teacher would whisper, 'This is poor,' and we would move on to something else."²



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Mont-Royal*, c.1943, oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 30.4 x 35.7 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019) Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Winter Landscape) (Sans titre [Paysage d'hiver])*, c.1941, oil on canvas board, 45.5 x 60.8 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Why did Bisson find the Impressionists so "poor"? Precisely because they did not confine themselves to reproducing nature as it was—they interpreted their motifs in their own way and did not paint strictly what they saw, but how they felt. The work, inevitably subjective, reveals the personality of each artist. One could not have confused a Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1841–1919) with a Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), even when they painted the same place at the same time.

Ultimately, Riopelle abandoned Bisson's techniques; he did not care to reproduce the realistic academic style of his teacher, as in *Untitled (Pastoral Scene)*. Riopelle would become best known as a painter who sometimes used abstraction and other times figuration, creating an inventive art at once detached from and reflecting the world around him.

DECALCOMANIA NO. 1, 1946



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Decalcomania No. 1* (*Décalcomanie n° 1*), 1946

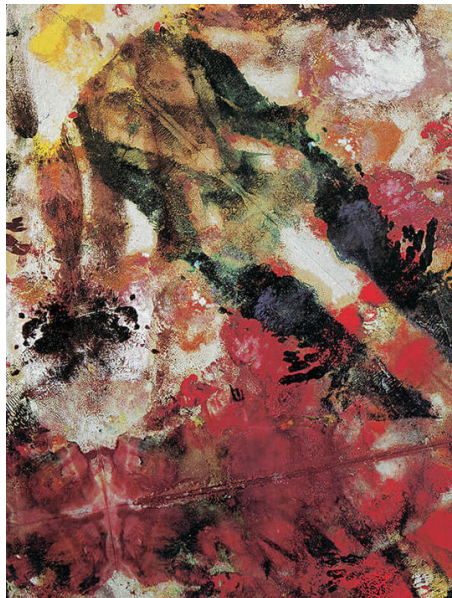
Decalcomania, oil on paper, 21.5 x 28 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

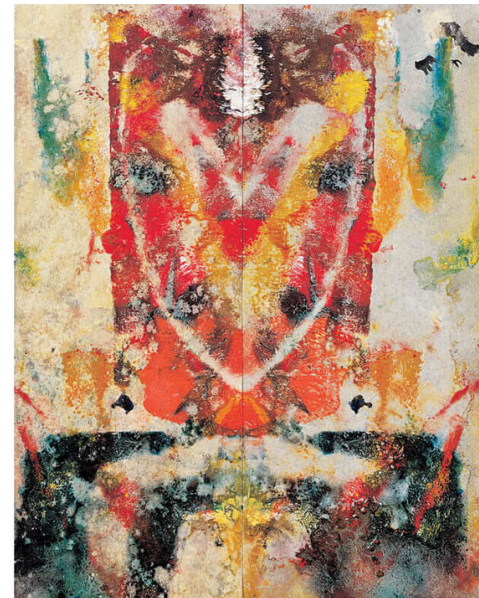
Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

In *Decalcomania No. 1* (*Décalcomanie n° 1*) Jean Paul Riopelle abstractly painted a portion of a piece of paper and then folded the page obliquely, producing a mirror image of what he painted. He added energetic brush strokes to complete the work. The title *Decalcomania No. 1*, refers to a strategy used by artists to remove themselves from the creation of a work of art through chance, a technique which fascinated Riopelle. His creative process became informed and motivated by attempts to produce a final composition directed by fortuitousness and embodying an act of “not seeing.”¹ In this sense, *Decalcomania No. 1* is an example of the automatism Riopelle practiced during the late 1940s.

The decalcomania process, invented in 1750 by Simon François Ravenet (1706–1774), consists of marking ink spots on a sheet of paper which is pressed onto another clean surface—wood, metal, glass, and so on. The purpose is to create a composition from the random shapes that are revealed through this method, such as the bicycle wheel and lion that happened to appear in *The Lion-Bicycle* (1935) by Óscar Domínguez (1906–1957). The technique was employed by the Surrealists, who enthusiastically embraced any opportunity to bring the element of chance into art.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Gypsy (Gitan)*, 1946, decalcomania, oil on paper, 28 x 21.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Versombreuse*, 1946, decalcomania, oil on paper, 28 x 22 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.



In a subsequent decalcomania work, called *Gypsy (Gitan)*, 1946, Riopelle made at least three diagonal folds. Yet, he did not always obtain symmetrical figures on either side of the central axis of these numerous creases. The temptation to intervene after the fact became too strong not to succumb to, and evidence suggests that Riopelle added stains after the initial decalcomania, rebuking the chance operation so critical to the process. Such an intrusion was not unusual for decalcomania; in general, painters interpret the imprints and purposely retouch them where necessary.

On a few occasions, it occurred to Riopelle to fold a sheet directly down the middle to obtain a perfectly symmetrical effect. A later work using the decalcomania technique, *Versombreuse*, 1946, is reminiscent of a Rorschach ink blot test; and the pressed painting revealing an image resembling a face. While the dominant shapes are undeniably symmetrical, the spots of colour, which look like drops of watercolour, bestow a random visual effect over the whole. The composition then rests on the irregularities of the shapes and the density of the hues applied by an act of chance.

UNTITLED (STROLL), 1949



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Stroll)* (*Sans titre [Promenade]*), 1949

Oil on canvas, 81.1 x 100.1 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

In 1949 Jean Paul Riopelle abandoned the brush for the palette knife and began creating what would become his most iconic works of art. He called his preferred utensil a *couteau* (French for “knife”), most likely influenced by the English term. Nonetheless, in this work there may be a few remaining traces of brush strokes where the arrangement of painterly elements has been compared to the tesserae of ancient mosaics.¹ It is not a completely satisfactory comparison, because mosaics, whether figurative or decorative, follow a preconceived plan and generally a preparatory drawing. Under the influence of automatism and the French avant-garde, Riopelle painted directly on his canvas with neither a pre-established idea, drawing, or study. The piece was composed, so to speak, before his eyes and according to no program. This was the central tenet of the style: to proceed into an art without knowing and to arrive at a place unknown as a result.

There is one oddity that deserves our attention in *Untitled (Stroll)*—an abundance of white and black filaments that streak across the surface of the piece. As he did in his watercolours of the same period, such as *Untitled (Composition, 1947)* (*Sans titre [Composition, 1947]*), 1947, Riopelle here creates a network of coloured spots and then connects them with lines of what look to be paint thrown across the canvas. This effect was achieved by a flick of the wrist, using the end of a stick dipped in paint. Therefore, while *Untitled (Stroll)* appears similar to the famed drip paintings of the American painter Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), it should not be forgotten that the canvas on which Riopelle worked was placed vertically on an easel while Pollock’s canvases were set down on the floor. Despite this work’s similarity to paintings by the master of American Abstract Expressionism, Riopelle’s lines could not have been made by dripping paint. These are the loose marks of the automatist, engaged with the moment, yet contained by the millennia-old tradition of easel painting.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Composition, 1947)* (*Sans titre [Composition, 1947]*), 1947, pen and black ink with coloured ink wash on wove paper, 22.8 x 30.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Many of Riopelle’s signature works from 1949 and the early 1950s appear to direct the eye using lines. In *Untitled (Stroll)*, the eye slides across the surface of the painting, predominantly to the right, but also, to a lesser extent, to the left, where the lines form a kind of irregular V near the middle of the canvas. By directing the viewer’s gaze, these lines introduce movement into the painting—indicating how the work might be read or navigated. Perhaps the title of this piece suggests then the “stroll” that the painting invites the eye to take or even the stroll artists take as they navigate their way through and into the canvas.

UNTITLED, 1949–50



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1949-50

Oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Private collection

For many years, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, the painting that Jean Paul Riopelle exhibited at the legendary 1951 Paris exhibition *Véhémences confrontées*, was known only from a very poor-quality photo. Recently, the original was located and today is included in the painter's catalogue raisonné.¹ As a result of its discovery, we now know that the work was not painted with a palette knife, which is what was originally assumed. Rather, it appears that Riopelle applied paint directly from the tube onto the canvas using neither a brush nor a knife. The furrows of varying width seem to follow the laws of gravity and slide across the surface, while overall harmony is achieved through contrasting colours. Riopelle produced other paintings in this same style, in which the material is allowed to flow, but they are few and far between and are important links between his loose brushwork abstraction and the mosaic style for which he would become globally recognized. Soon after this painting, Riopelle began to make strict use of the palette knife to spread, or sculpt, his colour.

Organized by the leader of the Lyrical Abstraction movement, Georges Mathieu (1921-2012), the *Véhémences confrontées* exhibition was held at La Dragonne, alternatively known as Galerie Nina Dausset, where in 1949 Riopelle's first Parisian solo exhibition was held. Mathieu's exhibition was the first to combine avant-garde artists from North America, Italy, and France. While billed as an opportunity to see art created by artists at odds with one another, in fact there was only camaraderie among the participants, who saw it as a rare opportunity to exhibit together. Moreover, the show and Riopelle's presentation of *Untitled (Sans titre)* added to the artist's reputation in both Europe and the United States. Regarded as an example of a bold abstract style firmly grounded in the tradition of new painting, this work announced Riopelle as a young painter to be considered among the great artists of the period.

Mathieu was the founder of a bilingual magazine called *United States Lines: Paris Review*, which was published by Marcel Coudeyre in France and distributed free of charge on United States Lines passenger ships that regularly crossed the Atlantic between New York and European shores. In a review of the exhibition, it was noted that "he [Mathieu] continues his role as a cultural agent"; the exhibition is today regarded as one of his most crucial achievements.²



LEFT: Jackson Pollock, *Number 8*, 1950, enamel and aluminum painting on canvas mounted on fibreboard, 142.5 x 99 cm, collection of David Geffen. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / SOCAN (2019). RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle's work on the poster catalogue of the exhibition *Véhémences confrontées (Confronted Vehemences)*, held at Galerie Nina Dausset in 1951. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photographer unknown.





JEAN PAUL RIOPELLE

Life & Work by François-Marc Gagnon

Despite the historic significance of this painting and the exhibition that housed it, accurately reconstructing the show is not easy. For example, it is known that Jackson Pollock's (1912-1956) magnificent 1950 painting, *Number 8*, which synthesized his previous stylistic achievements, was exhibited, as was a painting by Willem de Kooning (1904-1997). Both works came from the collection of Pollock's East Hampton neighbour Alfonso Ossorio. However, other than hearsay and rumour, little to no information is available and today we are left with only traces of the show's influence.

BLUE NIGHT, 1953



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Blue Night (La nuit bleue)*, 1953

Oil on canvas, 114 x 194.9 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York

Blue Night, by Jean Paul Riopelle, is an ambitious composition. A multilayered painted surface of criss-crossed colours in a complex pattern, at once restrained and explosive, it looks to be regulated by the rhythm of the palette knife strokes that so distinctly define it. The image itself appears fractured, as if the window to the world that the painting was intended to be has been smashed by the artist, rupturing the night sky into a multicoloured abstraction.

This painting was first shown in the landmark exhibition *Younger European Painters: A Selection*, presented at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum from December 2, 1953, to February 21, 1954. The iconic Frank Lloyd Wright building had yet to be built and exhibitions were held at 24 East Fifty-Fourth Street in Manhattan.¹ The show was organized by the museum's director, James Johnson Sweeney, who was motivated by a desire to fabricate a confrontation between avant-garde painters from both sides of the Atlantic. At the same time, he wished to celebrate the École de Paris artists after the warm welcome the Americans had received in Paris in 1951 with the exhibition *Véhémences confrontées (Confronted Vehemences)*.² In media reports about the exhibition Riopelle was described as a Parisian painter of Canadian origin.

While American critics reacted positively to the Guggenheim show, the “younger Europeans” were inevitably compared to the more established American Abstract Expressionists. Riopelle, in particular, was associated with Jackson Pollock, no doubt because of the white lines that criss-cross his paintings, such as those in *Blue Night*. Robert Goldwater, an American art historian and husband of the artist Louise Bourgeois (1911–2010), was thrilled by the exhibition and declared Sweeney’s choice highly representative of the new artistic development. “Abstraction dominates. . .,” he wrote, “as it should, but is presented in an astonishing variety of styles.” He was particularly interested in the work of Georges Mathieu (1921–2012), linking him and Riopelle, who shared what he called “expressionist tendencies.”³

While the exhibition manufactured a rivalry between the Paris and New York schools, which was taken up during the 1950s under the influence of the formalist art critic Clement Greenberg (1909–1994), it was nevertheless notable for the great camaraderie that grew among the painters from both sides of the ocean.⁴ The experience was a blessing for Riopelle: on December 5, 1953, the Montreal daily *La Presse* announced that *Blue Night* had been acquired by the Guggenheim for its permanent collection.⁵



Georges Mathieu, *Fourth Avenue*, 1957, oil on canvas, 152.4 x 152.4 cm.
© Georges Mathieu Estate / SOCAN (2019).

PAVANE (TRIBUTE TO THE WATER LILIES), 1954



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Pavane (Tribute to the Water Lilies) (Pavane [Hommage aux Nymphéas])*, 1954

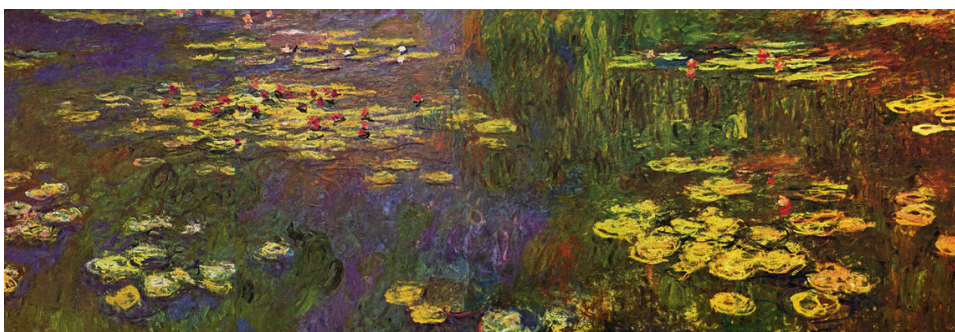
Oil on canvas, 300 x 550.2 cm (triptych)

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

The great triptych, *Pavane*, is one of Jean Paul Riopelle's most famous paintings, not only because it has been widely exhibited (in Paris in 1955, 1960, 1968, and 1981; at the 31st Venice Biennale in 1962; in several Canadian museums in 1963, 1991, and 2002; in Tel Aviv in 1970) but also because it received immense critical acclaim. The piece is named after a ceremonial slow dance that was performed in costume at the Spanish court during the sixteenth century.¹ In this composition, comprising three panels, texture plays an essential role while a gentle cadence seems to guide the overall flow of colour.

As he had done with *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1949-50, Riopelle created the work by squeezing oil paint directly from the tube onto the canvas surface. He applied pigment seemingly spontaneously, guiding the motion of the paint with a palette knife to build up a deep and imperfect automatist style of impasto. Today, *Pavane* is proudly owned by the National Gallery of Canada.



Claude Monet, *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)*, 1920-26, oil on canvas, 219 x 602 cm, Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris.

The painting looks back to the last great series of works by Claude Monet (1840–1926), *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)*, 1920–26, found at the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris. Its alternative title, *Hommage aux Nymphéas*, and the explicit reference to Monet are attributed to Riopelle's close friend the critic Patrick Waldberg.² Riopelle's rhythmic palette knife strokes and combinations of shimmering colour give the work an organic impression. It is as if the piece quivers with movement in a similar manner to that of the *Water Lilies (Nymphéas)*. This vast composition depicts, without seeking to mimic, the living materials of the natural world: water, plants, flowers, and above all else, fleeting light.

In *Pavane* Riopelle went against the ideas of the French art critic Georges Duthuit (1891–1973), who asked the artist to create "voids, spaces where thought can and should move." In response, Riopelle created a scene where movement prevails over everything else, from top to bottom and back again. The problem contemplated by Duthuit, that of a canvas which could appear full yet empty, escaped Riopelle. Even the white palette knife strokes, seen in the lower left and right sections of the far panels and in the upper half of the centre panel, do not create voids. They become simply another feature of the composition and rest harmoniously among the coloured strokes.

UNTITLED, 1964



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1964

Oil on canvas, 276.4 x 214.5 cm (panel A); 275.5 x 214.7 cm (panel B); 275.5 x 214.5 cm (panel C)

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

Jean Paul Riopelle enjoyed producing vast three-part compositions, as did his romantic partner Joan Mitchell (1925–1992), the American painter with whom he spent almost twenty-five years. Their paintings are often compared, as in the case of Riopelle's *Untitled (Sans titre)* and Mitchell's *Girolata*, both from 1964. According to Riopelle scholar Michel Martin, each painting is intended to evoke a seascape.¹ Not only are these works contemporaries, today they rest in the collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

In this painting, panels one and three are related, both in colour (red, blue, grey, and brown) and in the way paint is applied, using a palette knife with broad strokes in the coloured sections and narrow ones in the grey. Section two in the centre, however, is much more uniform in the tone and intensity of colour. In contrast Mitchell's *Girolata* is a triptych unified by shape and hue, focusing on grey, black, and white, with some green, beige, and pink accents. In

Mitchell's piece, the eye moves comfortably from one section to another, which is not the case in Riopelle's work. In *Untitled* the dark painted passages seem to purposefully rupture the

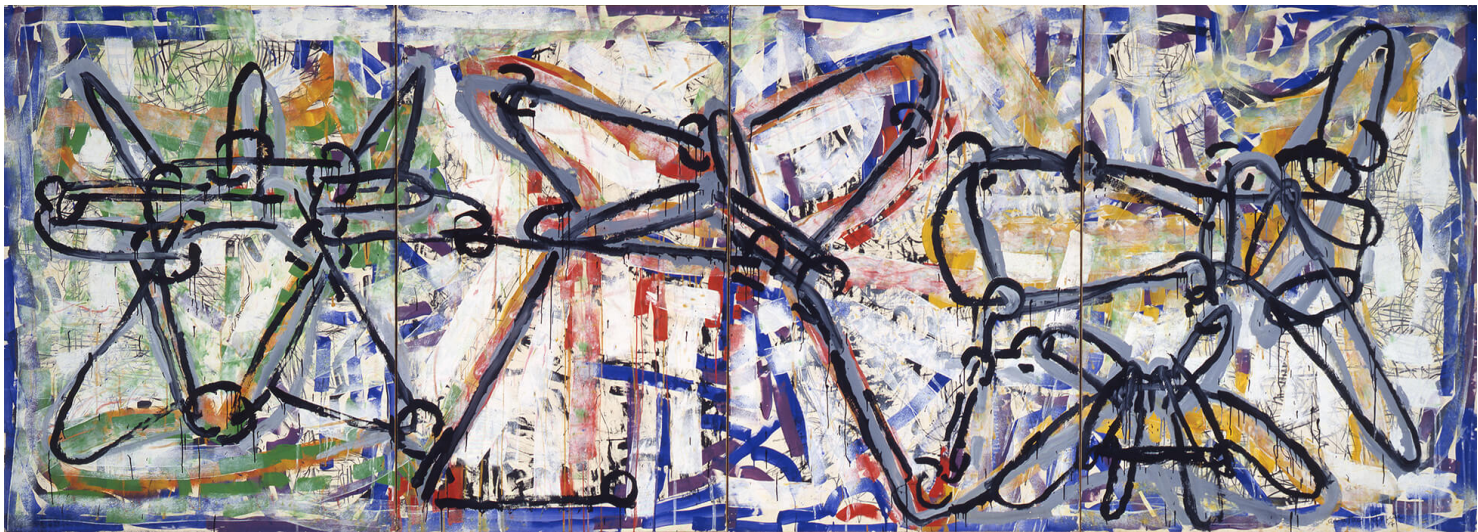


Joan Mitchell, *Girolata*, 1964, oil on canvas, 258.4 x 481.6 cm, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C.

flow from one section to the next, imbuing the work with a kind of assertive monumentality. The abstract shapes in this triptych appear to resist containment within the framed sides of all three canvases. Contrary to Riopelle's piece, Mitchell's work seems calmly self-aware of the limits of the painted surface, with the shapes organized centrally in each of the three sections. Riopelle's composition is therefore closer to the all-over abstraction recognized as American Abstract Expressionism—the pictorial elements, which are more or less uniformly distributed over the surface, look to press beyond the physical confines of the work.

When Abstract Expressionism sought to distinguish itself from European modern art, it did so via the moderate size of its paintings. In Europe, artists used mural (that is, very large) paintings to convey a social or political message. Examples include *The Raft of the Medusa* (*Le Radeau de la Méduse*), 1818–19, by Théodore Géricault (1791–1824), which measures nearly five by seven metres, or *Liberty Leading the People* (*La Liberté guidant le peuple*), 1830, by Eugène Delacroix (1798–1863), measuring two and a half by three metres. The Americans, according to the formalist critic Clement Greenberg (1909–1994), adopted an intermediate scale between mural and easel painting to distance their works from the large-format realist European tradition, often containing political messages. Yet, with *Untitled*, Riopelle demonstrates that he does not seem to care much about the format-distinction debate. Cut into three almost identical panels nearly three by two metres each, Riopelle's does not shy away from its own monumentality.

AVATAC, 1971

Jean Paul Riopelle, *Avatac*, 1971

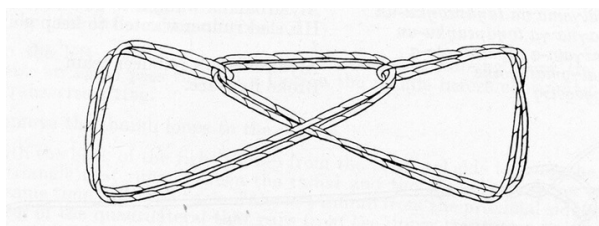
Acrylic on lithograph mounted on canvas, 160 x 448 cm (quadripartite)

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Galerie Maeght, Paris

Avatac, 1971, is a vast four-part composition that draws inspiration from Inuit string games. Starting in the late 1960s and until the early 1970s, Jean Paul Riopelle became fascinated by these games; he saw Inuit succeeding in creating a visual and impermanent language that was, according to the art historian Ray Ellenwood, “figurative and yet not strictly representational.”¹ The non-objective shapes that populate the painting summarize Riopelle’s understanding of the essence of the games.

In the game called *ajaraaq* in Inuktitut, a person either alone or with a partner manipulates a string to create various configurations. Soon, such images as a dog team, a tent, a drying rack, a snow shovel, glasses, or a hare escaping a hunter come to life. Emulating this Inuit form of play, in *Avatac* Riopelle presents supple black lines, almost alive, that wriggle along the surface of the multilayered composition; a textured background subtly echoes these dominant shapes.



LEFT: A figure known as the “little finger” or “anus” in the Western Arctic or “mouth” in the Eastern Arctic. Image from *Eskimo String Figures: Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913-1918, part B: Eskimo String Figures* by Diamond Jenness, Ottawa, F.A.A. Acland, 1924, p. 26. RIGHT: An *avataq* is a sealskin float inflated with air and connected to a harpoon by a long line made of sinew. It allows the hunter to recover his prey before it sinks. Pictured is a creation of Nunavimut (or Ungava Inuit), c.1900-09. McCord Museum, Montreal.



An *avatac*, as referred to in the title of the work, is a float used in traditional hunting made from a single sealskin. The device is fastened by wooden plugs at either end and is connected to a harpoon by a rope made of sinew. The tool is used to keep the hunter’s catch afloat or as a beacon to locate a marine mammal that has been harpooned underwater. In Riopelle’s composition,



JEAN PAUL RIOPELLE

Life & Work by François-Marc Gagnon

however, the energetic motifs seem detached from their original name and use; the result, as interpreted by Michel Martin, is a “broad landscape plan,” animated by playful forms, for which the artist invites the viewer to “decode the sign.”² Riopelle would dedicate an entire exhibition and a series of paintings to this style: *Strings and Other Games (Ficelles et autres jeux)* was presented at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris and at the Musée d’art moderne de la Ville de Paris in 1972.

Another reason that Inuit string games may have caught Riopelle’s attention is that their players take a simple line and interpret it figuratively. After a few twists and turns, a piece of string between the fingers becomes a form open to interpretation. Riopelle did not conceive of his artistic approach as abstract and therefore found the game to be commensurate with his own intentions. For him, art was not about imitating nature, like a model to be reproduced, but of encountering it. Beginning with colour, form, and matter, he travelled toward nature without claiming to accurately represent it. In the Inuit string games, as in Riopelle’s work, this encounter is allusive.

ICEBERG NO. 1, 1977



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Iceberg No. 1 (Iceberg n°1)*, 1977

Oil on canvas, 250 x 500 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Private collection, Montréal

Iceberg No. 1 (Iceberg n°1), 1977, is a large oil painting comprised of dense passages intended to represent a vast and natural expanse. Jean Paul Riopelle worked and reworked the paint until it appeared to embody only the dazzling white of a glacial environment. Thin black furrows and a few heavier black lines mark the limits of the huge floating ice blocks, which evoke nature's millennia-old formations. Yet this painting, one of many in a series of the same name, is not a landscape in the true sense of depicting a specific northern view. It is also not an example of pure abstraction. Rather it is something in-between and a point of destination or place of arrival.

In the late 1970s, Riopelle, at this point in his life, long recognized as a virtuoso of colour, began producing large black-and-white paintings. Almost immediately the works were assumed to be abstract interpretations of the icebergs Riopelle had seen in the company of his friend Dr. Champlain Charest, who took him to the Far North on several occasions throughout the decade.



Jean Paul Riopelle in the Far North in July 1977, photograph by Claude Duthuit.

Charest and Riopelle had met during the former's trip to Paris in 1968. While visiting the artist's small studio, Charest came across a painting titled *Sainte-Marguerite*. "It captivated me," he noted. "I came from Sainte-Marguerite-du-Lac-Masson. I asked Riopelle if it was for sale."¹ Riopelle did not answer, but in the evening after several drinks and a great conversation – "We didn't talk too much about painting, we talked about people, about our lives," remembered Charest – the painter offered to arm-wrestle Charest for the painting. Charest won, and, mortified, attempted to buy a second painting on credit the very next day. The resulting friendship between the two men developed from both sides of the Atlantic. Eventually, Charest encouraged Riopelle to build a studio on Lac Masson so he could extend his hunting and fishing trips, and, of course, paint.²

The result of this new environment and the trips the two men would take is a kind hybrid work that embodies both abstraction and representation simultaneously. When critics could not understand this position, Riopelle elaborated:

I never thought my paintings were abstract. When my paintings were called abstract, I opened the dictionary and read: "coming from..." So I concluded: I am not abstract, because I am going toward it [nature]. My paintings can be considered abstract, but the approach is not abstract, on the contrary. My painting was also regarded as a form of Automatism. It is, by reference to the automatic writing of Surrealists. The way I paint has nothing to do with automatism.³

One may be tempted to contest the painter's statement, which attests to his desire to separate himself from the automatism and Surrealism that he was firmly associated with in the 1950s. But the idea that his painting travels to nature rather than being derived from it is far-reaching and must be applied to his entire body of work. With *Iceberg No. 1* if the result appears abstract the approach is not. Riopelle managed to synthesize the essence of his subject: the slow dance of the glacier's departure – their majestic silence and subtle life. For Riopelle, nothing in the physical universe is inanimate.⁴

THE OWLS, 1970



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Owls (Les hiboux)*, 1970
 Lithograph, 44/75, 76.4 x 109.9 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)
 Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City

It is nearly impossible to estimate the number of times Jean Paul Riopelle depicted owls over the course of his career. In this one lithograph alone, *The Owls (Les hiboux)*, there are seventy-nine of them, arranged in six rows. Riopelle so often depicted owls that one might assume that the subject fascinated him. However, his statements about them suggest quite the opposite:

If people ask me why I drew two thousand owls, I would say, "It's to make lithographs." But in reality, it's having made the two thousand owls that interests me. Not because they're owls. I don't care about owls. For all that, they are not symbols. I didn't think about what they meant when I made them. I made them.¹

During his training with Henri Bisson (1900-1973), the young Riopelle created a painting titled *First Owl (Hibou premier)*, 1939-41. This early attempt was inspired by a stuffed bird, most likely a product of Bisson's hunting. While not great, it is not Riopelle's worst painting from the period. He painted freely with less restraint than in his other compositions. The influence of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890) is obvious, even though Riopelle's interest in the painter was forbidden by Bisson's teachings.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *First Owl (Hibou premier)*, 1939-41, oil on canvas cardboard, 40.5 x 30 cm, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Owl-Rock (Hibou-Roc)*, 1969-70 (cast in bronze 2010), bronze and leftover wax, 2/8, 54.8 x 44 x 27.3 cm, private collection, Winnipeg.



During the 1970s and after over twenty years of dedicated abstraction, the theme of the owl returned in full force to Riopelle's art along with figuration more broadly. Works on paper, as in *The Owls*; paintings in oil on canvas as in *Owl-Jet Black (Hibou-Jet Black)*, 1970; and sculptures, as in *Owl-Rock (Hibou-roc)*, 1969-70 (cast in bronze 2010), showcase Riopelle's incredible skill in a diversity of media. These works mark the return of figuration into Riopelle's oeuvre. In *The Owls*, the multiplication of portraits, each distinctive, depersonalizes the owl. In *Owl-Rock*, the unique detail of the sculpted form accentuates its imposing presence and singular identity. Riopelle's bronze cast sculptures are characterized by his finger imprints, which were left on the clay and serve to represent traces of the artist's act of creating, or doing.

Soon after the owls began to appear in his work, so did the snow geese of Cap Tourmente. Each year during hunting season, they arrived by the thousands and Riopelle, an avid hunter, would set out to meet them. Once the hunt was complete, he would create hundreds of images and drawings. Of this work he remarked, "The important thing is to do."² All these works with bird subjects are evidence of a practise that is supported by nature and serves as the pretext for creation. For Riopelle, there was no gap between his abstract work and his figurative work. Both were a part of the same act, the same "doing."

THE JOUST, 1969–70 (CAST IN BRONZE C.1974)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Joust (La Joute)*, 1969–70 (cast in bronze c.1974)

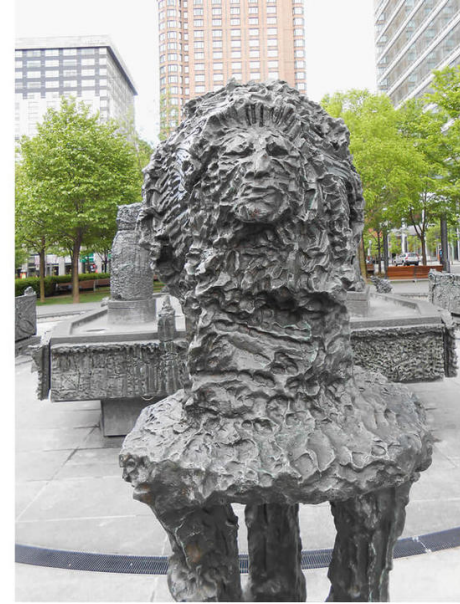
Bronze, 380 cm high x 1,240 cm in diameter (approximate dimensions)

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

The Joust (La Joute) is a fountain made by Jean Paul Riopelle and arguably his most important work of sculpture. Cast circa 1974, this kinetic public art installation is an imposing grouping comprised of 30 bronze elements that surround a "Tower of Life" and depict various animal and mythological figures—including the Owl, the Fish, the Bear and the Dog—drawn from Riopelle's childhood and imagination. The "joust" in question in this work is not hockey (in Quebec a hockey game is a *joute de hockey*), but a game called "capture the flag", which consists of taking a flag from the opposing team and successfully bringing it back to your own team's side of the field, without it being snatched back.

Approaching the work, one can see individual sculptures representing either a curious three-legged character or mysterious animals that together constitute fanciful “players.” They are placed in a pond and are surrounded by a ring of fire that is created by natural gas and doused each hour by shoots of mist. Operating on a kinetic sequence, it takes about 32 minutes for the cycle to complete. A major and monumental work, Riopelle first exhibited a plaster version of the sculpture in 1970 at the Fondation Maeght in Saint-Paul de Vence.



LEFT: Detail of *The Joust (La Joute)*, 1969-70 (cast in bronze c.1974). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). RIGHT: Detail of *The Joust (La Joute)*, 1969-70 (cast in bronze c.1974). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).

Throughout his life, Riopelle remained interested in sculpture. No doubt this was a result of the distant influence of his art teacher, Henri Bisson (1900–1973), whose practice was predominantly sculpture, based on drawing from life models. In 1960, shortly after meeting Joan Mitchell, Riopelle formally resumed his practice of sculpture, a medium the artist said he worked in since 1947. While in France, Riopelle devoted himself to the practise, notably at the studio of Roseline Granet (b.1936) who had set up the Berjac foundry in Meudon, with Jacques Delahaye (1928–2010), Turriddu Clementi (1916–1983) and Riopelle.

The model for *The Joust* was first made of clay, then recreated in plaster, then cast in bronze in 1974 in Italy. Two years later it was installed at Montréal’s Olympic Park for the 1976 Summer Olympic Games, near the Pie-IX Métro station. Riopelle was not pleased with this location because a café soon opened a short distance from the piece, an establishment that he felt trivialized his work of art. Thanks to the generosity of many donors, the sculpture was transferred to Place Riopelle, in the heart of Montreal’s business district, where it is still located today. It remains the legal property of the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal.

TRIBUTE TO ROSA LUXEMBURG, 1992



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

155 x 1,424 cm (1st element); 155 x 1,247 cm (2nd element); 155 x 1,368 cm (3rd element)

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City

When Jean Paul Riopelle learned of the death of Joan Mitchell (1925–1992), his companion of twenty-five years, he set to work on a monumental work comprised of thirty paintings for her, which he titled *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*. The work, which unfolds like a “succession of animal paintings”¹ was not painted with a palette knife, a tool long associated with Riopelle, but with spray paint, a medium he used near the end of his career.

Riopelle created the work by laying its panels flat on a table, one after another. In producing *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg*, a work more than ten metres long, the artist used up three bolts of canvas. As he unrolled each segment he would paint. On it he placed various objects—some more unusual than others—including dead geese, horseshoes, radiator fans, various tools, bolts, nails, and screws.

Riopelle sprayed each item with paint to make a real-life cut out of the object, leaving a silhouette or trace. This evocation of an absent item is particularly significant when one considers that the work was made in the context of the death of a loved one.



The bird pierced by an arrow on the right in this detail of *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992, represents Joan Mitchell. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).

The title of the composition derives from the fact that Riopelle called Mitchell his “Rosa Malheur,” an ironic pun referring first to the famous Second Empire Parisian painter Rosa Bonheur (1822–1899), and second to Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), the famous Marxist, socialist activist, and theorist opposed to the First World War, who died in Berlin in 1919 during the German revolution that led to the democratic parliamentary republic known as the Weimar Republic.² Riopelle was no more interested in the painting of the first Rosa than in the political ideas of the second; however, from the latter he obtained the habit of coding hidden messages in his written correspondence, as Luxemburg had done from prison. In this way, the *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* must be understood as a coded work, revealing in symbolic form several episodes drawn from his and Mitchell’s time together. For example, the work includes references to Riopelle’s encounters with the artist Sam Francis (1923–1994), his stage set for a play, and Mitchell, who is represented as a bird pierced by an arrow.

Riopelle painted his *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* over three months in his studio on Île-aux-Oies. This impressive painting, “whose signs and codes recount, as if as a watermark, his encounter with Mitchell,” was created “in a single extended burst of inspiration.”³ While the visual effect is particularly festive—with the lively composition showing many dancing shapes on the surface, highlighted by bright, shimmering colours—the piece is nevertheless one of mourning.

Riopelle reflected with these words: “Today, there is no longer any Rosa Malheur. There is not even a Rosa Bonheur anymore. All the Rosas are dead.”⁴

SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

Three mid-twentieth-century contemporary art movements—Quebec automatism (informed by international Surrealism), French Lyrical Abstraction, and American Abstract Expressionism—were influential in the development of Jean Paul Riopelle's body of work. Although he made every effort to set himself apart from them, it is in relation to these movements that the significance of his art must be understood. In Quebec he was a leading member of the Automatistes, signing *Refus global* in 1948 before setting his sights on France. Once settled in Paris, he fell in with the Surrealists then joined the Lyrical Abstractionists. Finally, during the 1950s, American critics associated him with the Abstract Expressionists, but he rejected the comparison.

The artistic positions taken by the young Riopelle in the first decades of his career connect him to many movements and artistic practices but they are united by a single thread: Riopelle's intense desire to stand apart from his peers and follow his own path.

AUTOMATISM AND ITS REJECTION

Jean Paul Riopelle began his career as a full participant in the Quebec Automatiste movement. He was a contributor to the group's manifesto *Refus global*, released on August 9, 1948, insisting that its text not be a repetition of similar European declarations such as the Surrealist movement's *Rupture inaugurale*, which he had also signed in 1947 alongside André Breton (1896–1966).

Riopelle defended the scandalous *Refus global* manifesto after its historic publication, and his abstract works at the time were in harmony with the intentions of his fellow Automatistes, including Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960) and Marcel Barbeau (1925–2016). Collectively they called for a rejection of figuration in favour of the spontaneous, instinctive creative act. In Riopelle's *Hochelaga*, 1947, for instance, touches of colour are distributed over the entire surface, which is strewn with drips that suggest a speedy execution and a lack of conscious control—hallmarks of the automatist style.

However, by the early 1950s, Riopelle had begun to break away from the movement. In an automatist work of art, the artist maintains control even though he or she might use coincidental elements to create the composition. This bothered Riopelle, who was in search of an art that removed any type of control and allowed for free creation. He found the work of his compatriots, such as Borduas and Barbeau, limited in this regard. They restricted the opportunity for accidental elements to invade the composition of a painting. Riopelle understood this to be a rejection of chance and he distanced himself from them as a result.



Perron, Maurice, *Second collective Exhibition of the Automatistes at the Gauvreau home, 75 Sherbrooke Street West, February 1947*. Black-and-white negative, 6.5 x 11 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (P35.S7.Pd). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Hochelaga*, 1947, oil on canvas, 60 × 73 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Power Corporation of Canada Art Collection, Montreal.

For instance, Borduas' two-stage creation of *Nature's Parachutes* (19.47) (*Parachutes végétaux* [19.47]), 1947, seems to restrict chance. The dark background was painted first; then, once the paint had dried, the "objects" (the "parachutes") were added and carefully placed to avoid any overlapping. The Montreal artist Guido Molinari (1933-2004) suggested that this composition would have been impossible if Borduas had proceeded with his eyes closed. Yet Borduas claimed to have no preconceptions of what his painting would become: "faced with the white page, my mind free of any literary ideas, I respond to my first impulse. If I feel like placing my charcoal in the middle of the page, or to one side, I do so without question, and then go on from there."¹ Therefore, his assertion must be questioned. It is difficult to see how any element of the whole could be moved without compromising the balance of the composition.² Something similar can be said of Barbeau's painting, *Tumult with a Tense Jaw* (*Tumulte à la mâchoire crispée*), 1946. In this painting the artist oriented his marks in a V shape, its ends pointing to the upper left and right corners of the pictorial surface. It seems that here, too, a "restriction of chance" occurs.

At the Paris exhibition *Véhémences confrontées* (*Confronted Vehemences*) at La Dragonne, also known as the Galerie Nina Dausset, which ran from March 8 to 31, 1951, Riopelle joined several other artists in releasing a written statement that outlined their dissenting position against the movement:

Automatism, which was meant to achieve total openness, has shown itself to be limited by the action of chance. The refusal of the conscious act turns it into a systematic "ism." A painter who draws involuntarily can only repeat indefinitely the same curve; nothing allows us to prefer this act to one restricted by the kind of tool an architect might use to draw a curve. Only total chance is fertile—no longer an exclusive function of the means, it instead can take real control—because truly total chance necessitates a physiological, physical, and psychic opening by the painter's physicality, giving cosmic liberation every opportunity to enter and influence the work.³



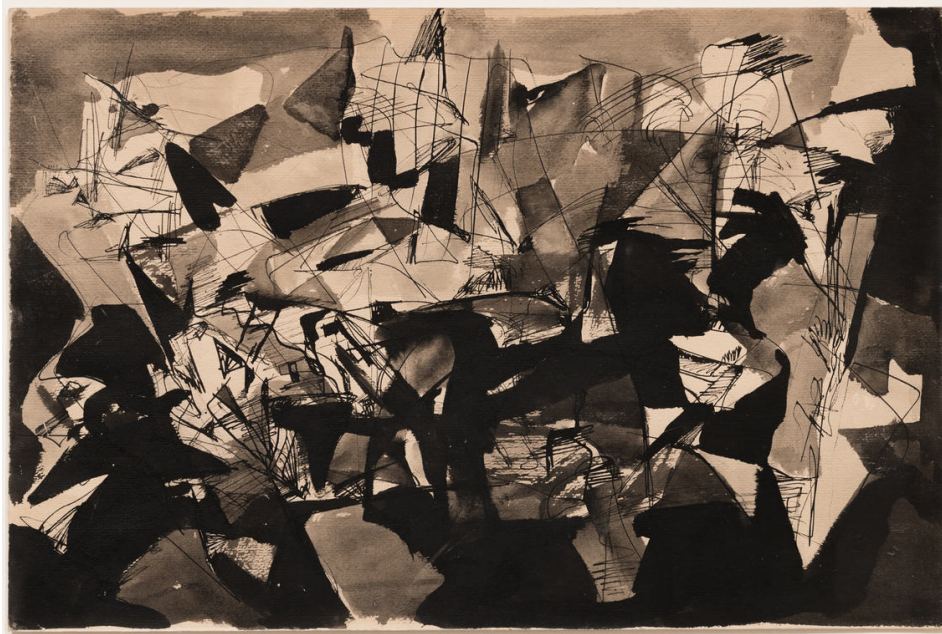
LEFT: Paul-Émile Borduas, *Nature's Parachutes* (19.47) (*Parachutes végétaux* [19.47]), 1947, oil on canvas, 81.8 x 109.7 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. © Estate of Paul-Émile Borduas / SOCAN (2019). RIGHT: Marcel Barbeau, *Tumult with a Tense Jaw* (*Tumulte à la mâchoire crispée*), 1946, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 89.3 cm, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Ironically, while Riopelle spoke out against automatism in Paris, his contribution to *Véhémences confrontées*, *Untitled* (*Sans titre*), 1949–50, embodies the movement's desire for "total chance." Following the showing of this painting, however, he withdrew from the group altogether, which he felt had betrayed him because they claimed a "total openness" that nonetheless restricted opportunities for true spontaneity to occur.

Ultimately, Riopelle could not accept automatism as a "refusal of conscious intent" and found it to be a principle that resulted only in constraint. "The important thing is intensity," he observed, and to maintain a "state of purity, of availability before the work."⁴ Anything less would lead to monotonous and repetitive work. A "dead end" he declared.⁵

FROM SURREALISM TO LYRICAL ABSTRACTION

During his first trip to France in 1947, Riopelle encountered members of the Surrealist movement and contributed two watercolours to the VI^e Exposition internationale du surréalisme (6th international exhibition of Surrealism) held at the Galerie Maeght in Paris and organized by André Breton (1896–1966). The exhibition included *Mother Liquors* (*Eaux-mères*), 1947, which had been given its title by none other than Breton.⁶ The composition is typical of Riopelle's automatist style of abstraction; it is dense and hurried, showing little regard for traditional pictorial space and accentuated by fine pen line to evoke simple shapes and patterns.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Mother Liquors (Eaux-mères)*, 1947, ink on paper, 27.5 x 45.5 cm.
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

Fernand Leduc (1916–2014), a fellow member of the Automatistes, criticized Riopelle for participating. He believed that his friend's work had nothing to do with the esoteric intentions, which Breton had articulated about Surrealism, in particular his hope to bring occultism back to the movement. Leduc observed that Riopelle "seems to have lost his way even in the execution of his work."⁷ Although Breton had asked for the participation of Borduas and the Automatistes in the Surrealist exhibition, Leduc stated, "There's nothing for us here."⁸ In the end, Riopelle was the only Canadian, out of eighty-seven artists, to exhibit at the Galerie Maeght. He soon returned home to Quebec but would travel back to France in 1948.

Once back in France, Riopelle quickly reconnected with the Surrealists and André Breton. Before long, however, he realized, that the avant-garde no longer revolved around them. Their reputation had been tarnished during the Second World War after their leader, Breton, went into exile in the United States, and one of their main poets, Benjamin Péret (1899–1959), had relocated to Mexico for a time. Some members, like the writer-performer Tristan Tzara (1896–1963), who had faced Nazi persecution, reproached them bitterly for their desertion. Divisions developed within the group as a result, with some claiming to be followers of Breton and others of the Communist Party. Riopelle felt that there was not much to gain from this infighting and began to look elsewhere for like-minded associates. He found the affinity he had had with the Surrealists to be insubstantial, of the intellect only and not with the imagery; the rapport was "not precise enough," he observed.⁹

Riopelle would soon fall in with the Lyrical Abstractionists, a group of painters with ideas similar to his own. Their work was abstract, but they sought to move beyond the geometric abstraction that dated back to the paintings of Paul

Cézanne (1839–1906) and was still favoured by disciples of Piet Mondrian (1872–1944). A famous photo from 1953 brings together several members of the movement, who were represented by the gallerist Pierre Loeb, including Maria Helena Vieira da Silva (1908–1992), Jacques Germain (1915–2001), Georges Mathieu (1921–2012), Pierre Loeb, Riopelle, and Zao Wou-ki (1921–2013).



The Lyrical Abstraction group in 1953. *From left to right:* Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Jacques Germain, Georges Mathieu, Pierre Loeb, Jean Paul Riopelle, and Zao Wou-ki, photograph by Denise Colomb.

Lyrical Abstraction, as it was named by Mathieu in 1947, was more in the tradition of painting established by Vincent van Gogh (1853–1890), “in which a baroque style extends into expressiveness.”¹⁰ The first exhibition of the group had fourteen participants and included Leduc and Riopelle. It took place at the Galerie du Luxembourg under the title *L’imaginaire* (*The Imaginative World*). Mathieu was enthusiastic about the “new Canadians” and their automatism, which he admired for its “advantageous submission to the demands of spontaneity, pictorial indiscipline, technical chance, romanticism of the brush, the overflowing of lyricism.”¹¹ In this vein, Mathieu’s own abstract works, such as *Fourth Avenue*, 1957, are a kind of free calligraphy within a central image.

Riopelle’s involvement with Lyrical Abstraction proved to be much more valuable to him than his brief time with the Surrealists. His association with the former throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s was a crucial learning period in which he explored a multitude of ways to consider abstract art without

relying on the dominant Mondrian-style geometricism or any other prescriptive formula. Riopelle, described by the French art critic Michel Waldberg as an artist “hostile to any formalism, to any ritualization, even those of a modern whose ‘religion’ exists without God,”¹² would soon take artistic flight in his own way and be rewarded with success in both Paris and in New York.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Composition) (Sans titre [Composition])*, 1952, gouache on paper, 25 x 35.2 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée d'art de Joliette. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1953, coloured ink on wove paper, 74.5 x 107.4 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

APART FROM ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISM

American critics often compared Jean Paul Riopelle—wrongly, in his opinion—to Jackson Pollock (1912–1956). Notably, the art historian Robert Goldwater saw a connection with the drip paintings of the famous American artist in the white paint drips of Riopelle's *Untitled (Stroll) (Sans titre [Promenade])*, 1949. One of the first to grasp and describe the important differences between the paintings of Riopelle and Pollock was the art critic Thomas B. Hess, editor of *Art News* magazine. In his article “Jean Paul Riopelle,” published in the 1973 catalogue of the exhibition devoted to the Canadian painter at the Pierre Matisse Gallery in New York, Hess noted (without naming Pollock) that certain new American painters, specifically Abstract Expressionists, began with a piece of canvas not yet mounted on a stretcher and either tacked to the wall or simply laid flat on the floor.¹³ The paintings therefore developed outward from the centre toward undetermined limits. When the periphery of the image was established, the excess canvas would be cut away, and only at this point would the painting be mounted on a stretcher.

As Hess observed, Riopelle's process was very different. He always worked with a stretched canvas placed on an easel. He favoured three canvas formats: the portrait (more or less square), the landscape (horizontal rectangle), and the seascape (more elongated to represent a beach or shoreline). Thus, the shape of each composition was decided in advance. In this way, Riopelle was a traditional painter who used formats common to the European painters he most admired: Henri Matisse (1869–1954), Claude Monet (1840–1926), and Gustave Courbet (1819–1877).

Hess's crucial point was illustrated by including two photos for comparison in his article. One shows Pollock at work in his studio, the other Riopelle in his. In the first image, Pollock is shown creating one of his signature drip paintings. The paint falls on a canvas that has been unrolled and laid on the floor. He dips a dry brush or stick into a can of paint rather than using tube paint. The paint drips from his stick in thin streams or drops. He does not hesitate to step or walk on the canvas. Overlooking the entire picture surface from above, Pollock appears in perfect command of his work, creating an all-over effect without a focal point or a hierarchy. Sometimes Pollock would cut a large painted canvas into segments to make different autonomous works, depending on how the composition had developed as it was created directly on the floor.

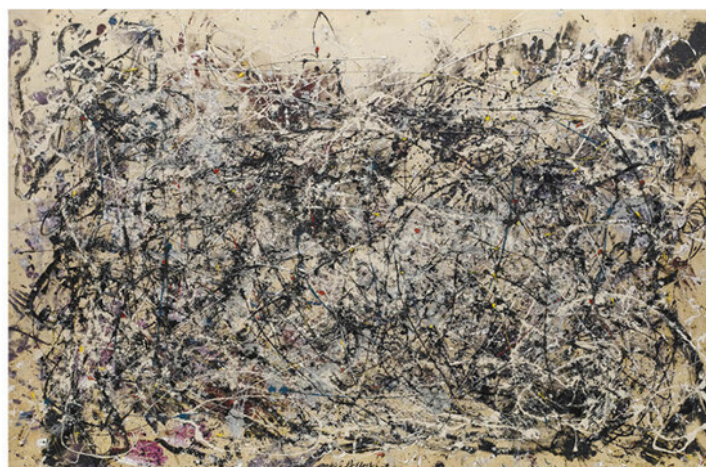


LEFT: Jackson Pollock in 1950, working on his painting *Autumn Rhythm*, 1950. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Hans Namuth. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio on rue Durantin, Paris, in 1952. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by John Craven. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



In contrast, the second photo shows Riopelle at work. He maintains a much more conventional relationship with the canvas, face to face with his work and maintaining a critical distance from it, as has been traditional among painters for centuries. His canvas, propped up on an easel, shows black patches of paint at the bottom left. These signal the painter's awareness of the limits of the support on which he works. From the photo it is possible to see how Riopelle applies the paint, squeezing it directly on the canvas from a tube or other container. He then uses a palette knife to spread the paint.

While the results may sometimes appear similar, Riopelle's method was vastly different from that of the Abstract Expressionists, and in particular the Action Painters, a group who saw the canvas as (in the words of the American critic Harold Rosenberg) an "arena in which to act."¹⁴ Pollock's way of moving within the physical space of the work created an unprecedented intimacy between the artist and the painted surface. Riopelle, for his part, adhered to a more conventional relationship, which placed the painter at a distance from his canvas, allowing him a certain perspective from which to contemplate rather than act.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Spain (Espagne)*, 1951, oil on canvas, 150 x 232 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. RIGHT: Jackson Pollock, *Number 1A*, 1948, oil and enamel on canvas, 172.7 x 264.2 cm. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / SOCAN (2019). Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Riopelle's *Spain (Espagne)*, 1951, and Pollock's *Number 1A*, 1948, are alike in their vividness and animation—both brim with vital energy and evoke a sense of freedom. Yet, although they seem closely related as acts of artistic expression, the creative means employed by the two artists to achieve these results are very different. Riopelle noted of Pollock, whom he met only twice in 1955: "I don't feel any relationship with him at all."¹⁵ Riopelle was right.

THE CREATION OF A WORLD

If Riopelle's interactions with automatism, Lyrical Abstraction, and Abstract Expressionism prove anything, it is that he learned how to create, and show to the viewer, a world that was entirely his own. By distancing himself from these art movements of the mid-twentieth century, he followed a path of his individual design. Rather than imitate nature as so many artists had done before him, he wished to draw from it and create his own world, a place that could exist between abstraction and figuration. Here, illustrated by a work such as *Austria III (Autriche III)* from 1954, the artist is inspired by nature without having to distinctly picture it.

From an early age Riopelle learned to establish this critical distance between himself and those around him. His first move toward abstraction and away from academicism was the result of an attempt to picture water exactly as he saw it. It was precisely by trying to reproduce "the movement, the reflections of light, and the transformation of volumes under the prism of water"¹⁶ that firmly separated Riopelle from the academic approach of his teacher Henri Bisson (1900–1973) in favour of a more instinctive and expressive artistic practice.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Austria III (Autriche III)*, 1954, oil on canvas, 200 x 300.7 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Likewise, as he delved deeper and deeper into abstraction, he did so not as a means to walk away from reality, but as a means to ground himself more firmly within it. For Riopelle, the relationship between abstraction and figuration is uncomplicated. It is a river that flows both ways.

The French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy's observations about creation can be applied to Riopelle. As Nancy writes, "Art is always the art of making a world."¹⁷ Riopelle succeeded in creating such a world, and he made this world easily accessible and allowed us throughout his career to play within it. Yet, at the same time, he knew how to explore it for himself, from the inside, and on his own terms.

In Riopelle's later works, such as *Owl VII (Hibou VII)*, 1970, and *The Goose Hunt (Chasse aux Oies)*, 1981, the artist shows us the imaginative and distinct possibilities of the creative world he envisioned. In these paintings we see the culmination of Riopelle's influences arrive at a focal point where abstraction and figuration meet in unique and uncomplicated ways. It is of course impossible not to see the owl pictured, or the snow geese repeated in a jumble quite reminiscent of the seasonal congregation that floods the sky, however, there is so much more to these pictures than meets the eye. In them expressions of wind, the currents of air that guide and lift the birds beyond our reach, the traces of the earth left in the deep brown hues painted against a stark white background, or the great movements of the earth itself, all converge and are represented in ways only available to an artist deeply engulfed by the world around him. In the end, Riopelle understood that his painting moved in concert with nature, rather than seeking to replace it.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Owl VII (Hibou VII)*, 1970, lithograph, 42/75, 76 x 54 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Goose Hunt III (Chasse aux oies III)*, 1981, lithograph on paper, 64.8 x 77.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

Jean Paul Riopelle's career as an artist was productive, extending more than fifty years and filled with unceasing, assured practice. It is marked by free experimentation and intuitive exploration. A multitude of techniques characterize his style: the academic approach of his early years, focused on "copying" nature, which was taught at the schools of fine arts in Montreal and Quebec City; the distinctive "mosaic" technique of his bold multichromatic work of the 1950s, which retain a sculptural effect; his 1960s return to sculpture; the printmaking and collage; and finally, the audacious spray-paint medium that he took up during the final years of his career. From first to last, Riopelle's artistic journey was remarkable.

THE ACADEMIC TECHNIQUE

From about 1936 to 1941, as a student of the realist sculptor Henri Bisson (1900–1973), Riopelle was instructed in the academic tradition. His painting *Still Life with Violin* (*Nature morte au violon*), 1941, shows Bisson's influence. The work depicts a vanitas, a symbolic visualization of the ephemeral nature of all the arts. Music, literature, and sculpture are subtly represented by a violin, a metronome, a book, and other transitory objects in an arrangement reminiscent of those in still lifes by Paul Cézanne (1839–1906), work that Riopelle admired despite his mentor's dismissal of it. The irregularly angled leaf of sheet music is visible to the viewer while the other objects are held together in a delicate balance that is an uneasy combination of the artist's competing influences.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Still Life with Violin* (*Nature morte au violon*), 1941, oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 35.8 x 27.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. RIGHT: Henri Bisson, c.1973, photograph by Studio Beaulac.



While at art school, Riopelle studied traditional academic theories, in which drawing means at once the physical act of working on paper and the underlying purpose or design of the composition—that is to say, it represents the idea that takes intellectual shape before its execution as an image. For many years, drawing was considered the purest form of expression. At the time of Riopelle's training, it was still given the greatest emphasis in art schools—and line drawing was a technique taught to students early on; they were tested on their ability to draw accurately and faithfully from nature. Riopelle's second mentor, Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960), recalled that during his time at Montreal's École des beaux-arts, its first directors, Emmanuel Fougérat and Charles Maillard, never stopped repeating, "Drawing, drawing, drawing again . . . first, last, and always, drawing."¹ Bisson, Riopelle's teacher, no doubt gave him the same instruction. During his time at the "*bissonnière*" school,² he would have spent countless hours copying Old Master works.

An example of this influence is apparent in *Still Life with Violin*: pictured is a head of a Roman emperor, probably Julius Caesar. The art school would have collected such plaster reproductions because of their use in training artists in the study of chiaroscuro and contour before the application of colour. Apprentices such as Riopelle learned drawing in stages: first, they copied from engraved reproductions of works of art by the great masters; second, they drew from a three-dimensional model, often a reproduction such as this Roman emperor's head (a copy of an ancient sculpture); and finally, the culmination of every drawing course: drawing from nature, using a life model. In the tradition of the Renaissance, the artists of Florence were devoted to the practice of drawing, while the Venetians, like the great Titian, were known for their mastery of colour.



LEFT: Titian, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine and a Shepherd*, known as *The Madonna of the Rabbit*, c.1525-30, oil on canvas, 71 x 87 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris. RIGHT: Johann Jacob von Sandrart, *The Invention of Painting*, c.1674. This print is reproduced in the original edition of *L'Academia Todesca della Architectura, Scultura & Pittura: Oder Teutsche Academie der Edlen Bau-Bild-und Mahlerey-Künste* (1674-79) and in a later version published by J.J. Volkmann (1768-75).

Still current when Riopelle was a student was the idea that the birth of drawing could be traced to ancient accounts, particularly to a fable by Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE).³ In it, Kora, daughter of the potter Butades of Sicyon, fell in love with a young man who was leaving to travel abroad. She decided to immortalize his silhouette in a picture to comfort her in her loneliness while he was away. During the seventeenth century, Johann Jacob von Sandrart immortalized the story in an engraving that was published in an early treatise on the arts. The fable of Pliny was still popular during the twentieth century and teachers like Bisson continued to emphasize the importance of drawing as a result. Even if Riopelle did not pursue a career within it, academic painting was nevertheless the foundation of his apprenticeship, as it was for most of the painters he admired, such as Claude Monet (1840-1926), and the majority of his contemporaries.

THE MOSAICS

Riopelle's paintings of the 1950s belong to his "mosaics" period. It is not clear who first spoke of mosaics in connection with Riopelle. Yseult Riopelle, one of his two daughters and the author of his catalogue raisonné, suggests that the comparison may have originated with Georges Duthuit (1891-1973), who was the son-in-law of Henri Matisse (1869-1954). Duthuit, who married Matisse's daughter Marguerite, was a great defender of contemporary painters, including his father-in-law Henri, Nicolas de Staël (1913-1955), Bram van Velde (1895-1981), and Riopelle. An art historian who specialized in Byzantine and Coptic art, Duthuit was familiar with the mosaic tradition practised by the Byzantines from the fifth to the fifteenth century.

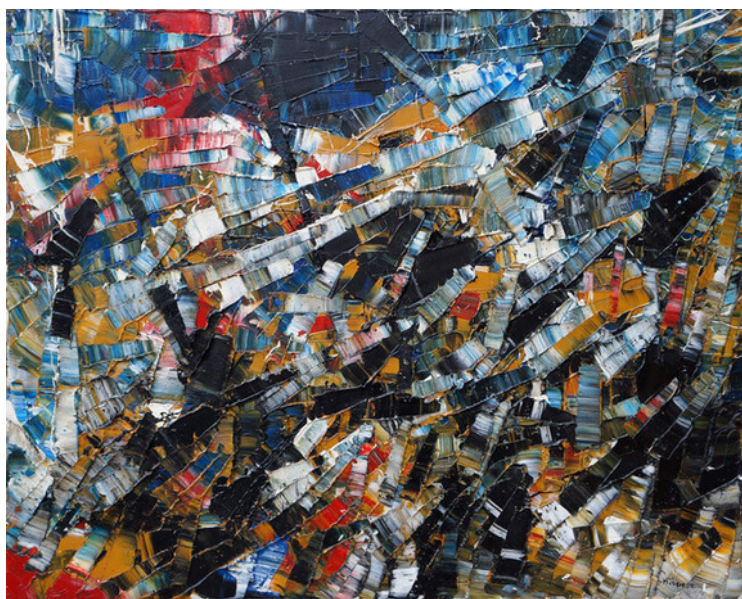
The "mosaic" effect in Riopelle's work is derived from his use of the palette knife to directly apply paint on the surface of the canvas, giving each dab of colour a sculptural character. The juxtaposition of colours in a work such as *Composition*, 1954, suggests the appearance of a mosaic—that is, an assemblage of tesserae, which are small coloured squares of marble, stone



Jean Paul Riopelle and Georges Duthuit in 1954, in front of *Pavane (Tribute to the Water Lilies)* (*Pavane [Hommage aux Nymphéas]*), 1954. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photographer unknown. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.

or glass placed close together and affixed to a wall to form a picture. Riopelle's rhythmic and irregular applications evoke the square shapes of tesserae and the paintings are reminiscent of Byzantine mosaics in their use of geometric assemblages, harmonious colours, and vivid materiality.

According to Pierre Schneider (1925-2013),⁴ in an affirmation echoed by the critic René Viau, it was around 1949 that the painter abandoned the brush.⁵ For Riopelle, the brush had become a limitation and hindrance as he moved toward creating ambitious abstract compositions characterized by generous applications of paint in many colours. This change in pictorial technique may seem of little consequence today. After all, Riopelle simply decided to use one tool instead of another. How could that have influenced the artist's conception of a picture, his style, or his very understanding of painting? In fact, the decision to abandon the brush had a profound effect on Riopelle's art and his subsequent body of work. The move took Riopelle as far away from his academic training as he could imagine. Without drawing, without figuration, without a brush, he was forced to rethink how he understood pictorial space, and he arrived at a new way to apply paint, achieving exceptional results in the process.



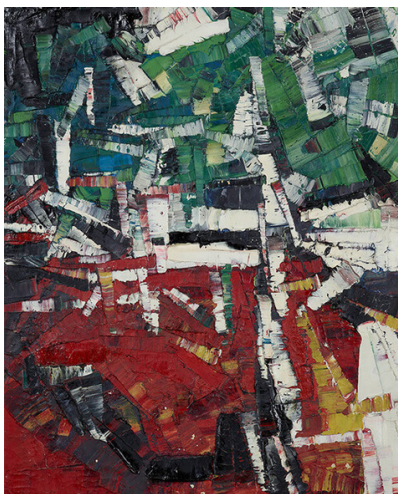
LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Composition*, 1954, oil on canvas, 81.3 x 99.1 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). private collection, Toronto. RIGHT: Mosaic with doves at the House of the Faun, Pompeii, second century BCE.

Not only did the palette knife introduce a fundamental change to the way Riopelle thought about the act of painting, but it also added an element of chance and a loss of visual control. Before he applied paint to canvas, he would first load his tool with different configurations of colours straight from the tube. Once he pressed the pigment against the composition, he could move, push, and shape the paint without seeing the effect. In this way, the outcome of his act remained unknown until he could see the results. As Riopelle progressed across the canvas, he discovered the painting as he painted it. For Riopelle, this loss of visual control clearly distanced his work from that of the Automatistes, who in his mind had never abandoned it in their production. Much earlier in his career, Riopelle had called for "*hasard total*," or "absolute chance," as the basis for a work of art, and that early demand is a clear indication of the direction of his later works, particularly the mosaics.

Because Riopelle was an academically trained artist, we must consider his art as an example of working within and outside of the rules of the discipline. Throughout his early and mid-career, he did his utmost to remove any question of the skilled hand from his production, taking away the painter's brush and any semblance of figural line. This conscious act is an obvious reaction to his training in copying and drawing under Henri Bisson.

The question of the hand of the artist, or the trace left by the artist, in the act of making their art never left Riopelle's mind. He simply searched out new ways in which to express it. Take, for example, a detail from the 1956 piece *Encounter (Rencontre)*; Riopelle leaves multiple and recurring marks, or traces, which evolve along the surface of the canvas. These imprints reveal Riopelle's movements and are a record of the process of making art. While this might seem as trivial as the changing of a tool, his interest in this idea of record, of trace, and of being there, would increase during his final creative period. He became fascinated by what we leave behind.

The mosaics lasted only a decade. By the 1960s, he wielded the palette knife in new ways, creating marks that he could see and sculpt along the way. *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1965, is a prime example of this style. Gone are the separate and distinct tiles of the mosaic works of the 1950s, that sense of an artist in search of a loss of vision and line. They are replaced with something new; now, the viewer can follow the path of the palette knife as it moves, leaving trails that sometimes look as if a finger has been drawn through the material. The grooves sometimes form thin stripes, sometimes wider bands, and they appear to fragment when they meet each other. The coloured areas are also more varied, resulting in a composition full of new possibilities.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Encounter (Rencontre)*, 1956, oil on canvas, 100 x 81 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Museum Ludwig, Cologne. RIGHT: Detail of *Encounter (Rencontre)*, 1956. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1965, oil on canvas, 65.5 diameter. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

At first, when works in this new style began to appear, collectors accustomed to the mosaics were bewildered and only slowly began to take an interest in them. His 1960s works in particular were noted because they became much wider, a trend that is referred to as "abstract landscapism." Sales were initially affected, but Riopelle did not return to his previous art-making technique. His new freedom of execution led him to return to figuration, to the owls and snow geese of his art during the 1970s and beyond.

SCULPTURE

Even though Jean Paul Riopelle would not make sculpture a serious component of his practice until the 1960s, the medium fascinated him from a young age. On the origin of this interest, he noted: “when I was small—and still today when I get the chance—I made snow sculptures. Starting with the traditional children’s snowman, I would create fantastic improvisations to which my bronzes owe a great deal.”⁶

Riopelle’s earliest documented sculptures date to 1947: works of modelled small clay figures, depicting raw earth, the results of which he photographed.⁷ Aside from these pieces, the sculptures from the artist’s early years are gone. Riopelle’s attention to the medium lay dormant throughout the 1950s.

This changed shortly after Riopelle moved to France when, during the 1960s, he returned to sculpture as a way to “break away from the habits of painting.”⁸ In part, this renewed interest was one of convenience; Riopelle could now afford to employ skilled assistants to help him execute his ideas. At the Berjac Foundry in Meudon and later the Clementi Foundry, he developed a unique casting method. Riopelle noted, “the caster’s trade is one of the finest in the world. I once wanted to be a mechanic, and before that a hockey player. Later, it was the occupation of the caster that seemed to me the most fulfilling.”⁹



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Owl A (Hibou A)*, 1969-70, (cast c.1974), bronze, 1/4, 143 x 93 x 74 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Tower (La Tour)*, 1969-70 (cast c.1974), bronze, 1/4, 258 x 243 x 85 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée des beaux-arts du Québec, Québec City.

Not until 1962 were Riopelle’s sculptures exhibited for the first time as part of an exhibit at the Galerie Jacques Dubourg in Paris.¹⁰ Among the works that were likely part of the show was *B.C.*, a small sculpture only half a meter in height. It is characterized by jagged edges, with elements that would collapse were it not for the bronze holding the sculpture in place. Many pieces made by Riopelle during this period resemble organic forms and no doubt symbolize a return to his first experiments in clay. Upon seeing this body of work, Pierre Schneider noted that they did not renounce his paintings, but in fact focused the artist and, in the process, appeared to free him.¹¹

Typically in sculpture, and especially with bronze works, artists tend to favour smooth creations that blend seamlessly together, accentuating the material’s unique properties. This is not so with Riopelle. Like the artist’s painting, his sculpture is fragmented. *Owl A (Hibou A)* from 1969-70 (cast 1974), is a notable example. Thin sheets along the base appear layered and the sculpture is perforated by the hands of the artist, as if he modelled it while still molten.

Of course, we know this to be impossible. No person can mold bronze as it transitions from a liquid to a solid. Yet Riopelle, using the lost wax method, made his sculptures appear as if the artist had the ability to defy the very tradition he was working within. In doing so he made the medium his own.



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Joust (La Joute)*, 1969-70 (cast in bronze c.1974), bronze, 380 cm high, 1,240 cm in diameter (approximate dimensions). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Installed at the Montreal Stade Olympique, photograph by Claudette Desjardins.

The Joust (La Joute), 1969-70 (cast c.1974), is Riopelle's largest sculptural arrangement. Composed of a central "Tower of Life" figure—reminiscent of both an Inuit *inuksuk* and a birdbath—surrounded by thirty bronze elements in the form of animals and mythical figures, it introduces the viewer to a complex mythology drawn from Riopelle's childhood. Titled *The Tower (La Tour)*, this principal component of the work held considerable symbolic meaning for the artist. Of course, Riopelle would never admit this; however, his dedication to picturing and sculpting the natural world around him in novel ways is a reminder of the complexity of its influence. That at heart, he was always returning to his childlike fascination of moulding something with his hands.¹²

PRINTMAKING AND COLLAGE

When Riopelle first visited New York in 1946, he passed by the printmaking studio of William Hayter (1901–1988). There he met fellow artists such as Joan Miró and Franz Kline, who would become close friends later in life.¹³ This was Riopelle's first encounter with printmaking. During the 1960s while he and Joan Mitchell lived in the French countryside, his interest in it spiked and his first full blown creations received much critical attention.

Dense layers of abstraction are visible in works such as *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1967, a mixed-media piece using the techniques of printmaking and collage. From his studio, Riopelle would cut up his prints and reassemble them into grand new creations. This use of cut shapes is reminiscent of the late work of Henri Matisse, who in his final years began to create beautiful images by cutting up bright pieces of paper and arranging them. Yet Riopelle explored the technique quite differently. His are not bright works marked by clear shapes. They are complex and anarchic patterns reminiscent of his early abstractions. In them, fine line is accentuated by larger and smaller cut up abstraction prints, arranged in a haphazard fashion that shows little regard for the way an image should look. His collage work, grounded in printmaking, is an exploration of potential abstract arrangements that celebrate the chance encounter that occurs when pieces never intended to share the same space are brought into contact with one another.

Riopelle's interest in printmaking continued upon his return to Québec. He developed an important collaboration with the printmaker Bonnie Baxter, and the two worked together, either at Baxter's Atelier du Scarabée in Val-David in Quebec or from the studio that Riopelle continued to keep in France, from 1985–1993. The practice, she notes, appealed to Riopelle because it allowed him to try out different arrangements. A print could progress and advance based on reworking, layering, and then be deconstructed and reformatted as a collage.¹⁴ Of his practice, she observed, "Just as in his painting, Riopelle was daring and experimental; he liked to mix it up and was allergic to abiding formulas."¹⁵

THE AEROSOL SPRAY CAN

At the end of his career and afflicted with osteoporosis, Riopelle became fascinated with spray paint. He saw it as an innovative tool for creating art that was easily accessible given his physical limitations. There were precursors to this technique for the artist, who had during the 1950s worked with a pipette (an open-ended pipe that allows one to release drops of paint) and in the 1960s with a Fly-Tox hand sprayer (to manually release pumped paint). In the 1970s, Riopelle discovered spray paint and used it to develop many new and extremely varied motifs, techniques, and vocabularies—including a unique form of interplay between positive and negative space.¹⁶



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1967, collage of lithographic elements glued to canvas on three panels, overall 491 x 243 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City.

Unlike the pipette or atomizer, which are activated by pumping a liquid up through a tube or spritzing or blowing it out, the aerosol can makes it possible to spray bursts of colour with the simple touch of a finger. Riopelle was delighted with the fact an object could be laid flat on a canvas and sprayed, which would create a negative image similar to a cut-out beneath it. An example of the process is found in photographic documentation of Riopelle and the hockey player Maurice Richard (of whom Riopelle was a passionate fan in his youth) as the artist creates *Tribute to Duchamp* (*Tribute to Maurice*



Jean Paul Riopelle with Maurice Richard in the process of creating *Tribute to Duchamp* (*Tribute to Maurice Richard*) (*Hommage à Duchamp* [*Hommage à Maurice Richard*]), March 29, 1990. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Pierre McGann (*La Presse*).

Richard) (*Hommage à Duchamp* [*Hommage à Maurice Richard*]), 1990. As in much of Riopelle's oeuvre, this painting, which has two sides, shows the return of his fascination with the hand, yet this time it is the hand of the hockey player that Riopelle intends to mark. Richard lays his hand flat on the canvas and Riopelle records the negative imprint, then records his own hand, that of the artist using the spray can. It is through this act that Riopelle enters himself into a millennia old dialogue about art that has been ongoing since the time of the Paleolithic Chauvet Cave painters, the question of what remains.

The title *Tribute to Duchamp* (*Tribute to Maurice Richard*) (*Hommage à Duchamp* [*Hommage à Maurice Richard*]), 1990, pays homage not only to the great hockey player but also to one of the most important artists of the twentieth century, Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968). Duchamp contributed the readymade to art history in 1917 by turning a urinal on its back, titling it *Fountain*, signing it with an invented name, and declaring it a work of art. *Tribute to Duchamp* (*Tribute to Maurice Richard*) (*Hommage à Duchamp* [*Hommage à Maurice Richard*]) employs readymade items, but they are used in reverse. Like the imprint of the hand, these are imprints and outlines of tools. The tool of the architect, the French curve template, borders the painting. The tool of the trapper, the snowshoe, is in the upper half while two hockey sticks, tools of the player, are outlined in the lower half. These silhouettes are all that remain of the objects that once rested on the work. After he completed it, Riopelle gave the painting to Maurice Richard, who later donated it to the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Duchamp (Tribute to Maurice Richard) (Hommage à Duchamp [Hommage à Maurice Richard])*, 1990, mixed technique on plywood (recto), 203.2 x 91.4 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Duchamp (Tribute to Maurice Richard) (Hommage à Duchamp [Hommage à Maurice Richard])*, 1990, mixed technique on plywood (verso), 203.2 x 91.4 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Using spray paint, Riopelle developed his skill and began to search for every possible way he could of present the negative imprint of an object. In *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992, the technique finds its most spectacular application. The imprints created by the spray paint are now lighter or darker, depending on how the artist chose to emphasize them in different areas of the composition. The dominant visual effect is now ethereal as opposed to dark, with constellations of material sprayed across the canvas that create an impression of soft, almost muted, shapes. The colours are

festive, tender, and beautifully vivid, despite the contrasts of black and white. Some areas show a clear X-ray effect, with negative imprints captured in white paint against a black background. Elsewhere, the bright colours enhance and overlap paler shapes. They reveal fiery-red birds, or frosted bright blue and white birds that flutter against shaded forms of deep red, rose-pink, green, yellow, and orange—the whole appears temporary and, yet, at the same time has an intense monumentality.

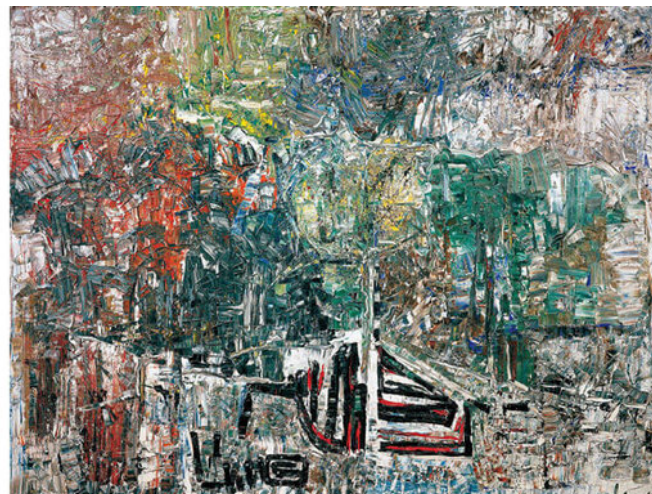
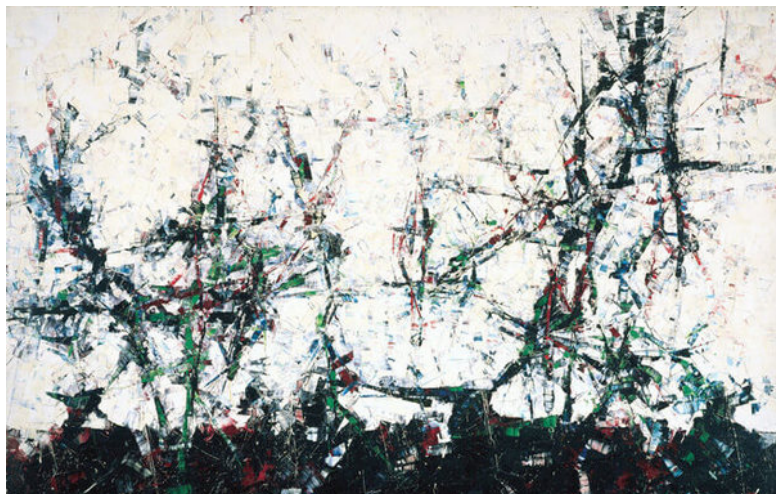


LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* (*L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg*) (detail), 1992, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 155 x 1,424 cm (1st element); 155 x 1,247 cm (2nd element); 155 x 1,368 cm (3rd element). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. Installed in the Gérard-Morisset Pavilion of the Musée du Québec, Quebec City, May 2000 (Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec since 2002), photograph by Idra Labrie. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio on Île-aux-Oies in 1992, executing a preparatory work for *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* (*L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg*), 1992. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photographer unknown.

The suite of thirty paintings that makes up *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* is extraordinarily coherent, despite the density of the overall composition. The colours work to create linkages between them while the forms are repeated and transformed, fading and falling into a rather mysterious repertoire of objects. Everything contributes to the whole, from ordinary bolts and a white goose shot by Riopelle himself, to ferns and common tools, including a drill. All these objects are easily recognizable, but they are not portrayed by real contour lines. They appear as shapes against blurred or hazy backgrounds, and the impression they leave is one of absence as opposed to presence. They are ghosts, both animate and inanimate. Traces of a life lived to the fullest.

A CAREER OF TRANSFORMATIONS

Riopelle's career inspires reflection on the evolution of art over time. The art that we recognize as historic is steeped in the academic tradition. Through training, the artist learned to hide their brush strokes, to disguise the work of painting the background, to eliminate the marks of hesitation that occur while tracing an outline, to paint over ugly colours, and to never exhibit a failure. Looking at a painting by Nicolas Poussin (1594–1655), who would know that he ever hesitated? This is what Riopelle learned from his teacher Bisson: to create works that were pure “copies of nature,” to hide their secrets and the presence of the artist.



LEFT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Saint-Anthon*, 1954, oil on canvas, 248 x 388 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection, New York. RIGHT: Jean Paul Riopelle, *Homage to Grey Owl (Hommage à Grey Owl)*, 1970, oil on canvas, 299.5 x 400 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Modern and contemporary art proceeds in a completely different way. No contemporary artist would hesitate to show us the genesis of a painting. Today, painters intentionally leave visible traces, inviting viewers to redefine the work in their own way. When Riopelle moved away from the academy and toward the methods of Automatism, Lyrical Abstraction or American Abstract Expressionism, he began to include the viewer as a witness to the origin of each painting. Every application of paint is visible on the surface of the finished work. We see it repeated in the famous mosaics of the 1950s; later, we follow the traces of palette-knife marks as his work develops in a new direction, which leaves us to visually reconstruct his painting process.

Finally, when Riopelle turns his attention to spray paint, his interest in the mark, the trace, the hand of the painter, returns with full force. We understand that the shapes that appear on the canvas, such as those of the wild birds, owls, and rabbits, of his last great work, *The Happy Isle (L'Isle heureuse)*, 1992, are the negative imprints of objects first laid physically on the canvas by Riopelle. Yet surprisingly, they are now combined with the line and pictorial techniques of the classically trained painter, made visible by the line work that gives precious detail to elements of the composition. In this culmination, Riopelle's entire production intersects, resulting in an image solely individual in its execution. Thus, at the end of his career, the genesis of form no longer holds any mystery—Riopelle, by his own creative process, deliberately exposes it. This creation of another world.



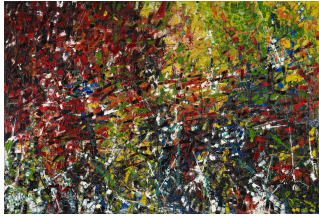
Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Happy Isle (L'Isle heureuse)*, 1992, mixed technique on two wood panels, 154.3 x 203.2 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.

WHERE TO SEE

The works of Jean Paul Riopelle are held in public and private collections, in Canada and internationally. Although the following institutions hold the works listed below, they may not always be on view. This list contains only the works in public collections discussed and illustrated in this book.

FONDATION GANDUR POUR L'ART

12 Michel-Servet Street
CH-1206
Geneva, Switzerland
+41 22 301 81 40
fg-art.org



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Robert the Evil One (Hommage à Robert le Diabolique)*, 1953

Oil on canvas
200 x 282 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate /
SOCAN (2019)

HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN

Independence Ave and 7th Street
Washington, DC, USA
hirshhorn.si.edu
202-633-1000
hirshhorn.si.edu

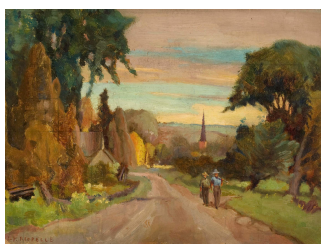


Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans titre)*, 1964

Oil on canvas
276.4 x 214.5 cm (section A);
275.5 x 214.7 cm (section B);
275.5 x 214.5 cm (section C)

MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

1380 Sherbrooke Street West
Montréal, Quebec, Canada
514-285-2000
mbam.qc.ca



Jean Paul Riopelle,
Untitled (Pastoral Scene) (Sans titre [Scène pastorale]), v.1940
Oil on cardboard
23.3 x 30.6 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



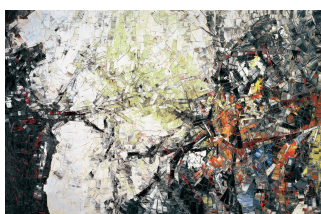
Jean Paul Riopelle, *Still Life with Violin (Nature morte au violon), 1941*
Oil on marouflaged canvas on cardboard
35.8 x 27.5 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle,
Mont-Royal, c.1943
Oil on marouflaged canvas on cardboard
30.4 x 35.7 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



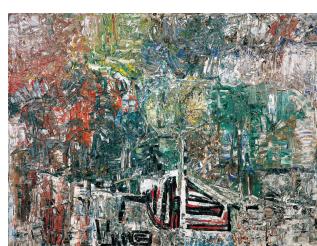
Jean Paul Riopelle,
Decalcomania No. 1 (Décalcomanie n° 1), 1946
Decalcomania, oil on paper
21.5 x 28 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle,
Austria III (Autriche III), 1954
Oil on canvas
200 x 300.7 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Wheel (Cold Dog–Indian Summer) (La roue [Cold Dog–Indian Summer]), 1954–55*
Huile sur toile
250 x 331 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle,
Tribute to Grey Owl (Hommage à Grey Owl), 1970
Oil on canvas
299.5 x 400 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

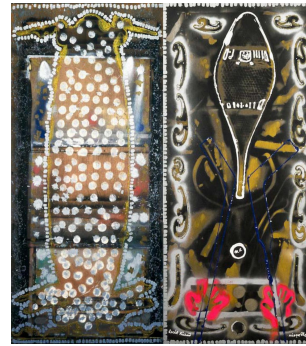
185 Saint Catherine Street West
Montréal, Quebec, Canada
514-847-6226
macm.org



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Stroll)* (Sans titre [Promenade]), 1949
Oil on canvas
81.1 x 100.1 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Joust (La Joute)*, 1969-70 (cast c.1974)
Bronze
Approx. 380 cm high x 1.2 cm in diameter
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Duchamp (Tribute to Maurice Richard)* (Hommage à Duchamp [Hommage à Maurice Richard]), 1990
Mixed technique on plywood (painted on both sides)
203.2 x 91.4 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

MUSÉE D'ART DE JOLIETTE

145 Père-Wilfrid-Corbeil Street
Joliette (Quebec) Canada
450-756-0311
museejoliette.org



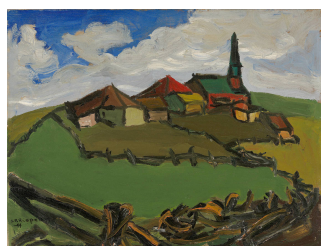
Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Composition)* (Sans titre [Composition]), 1952
Gouache on paper
25 x 35.2 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019)

MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC

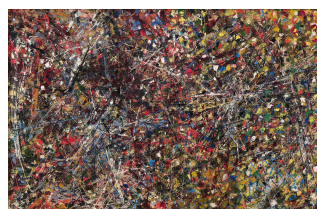
179 Grande Allée Ouest
 Québec (Quebec) Canada
 1-418-643-2150
www.mnbaq.org



Jean Paul Riopelle, *First Owl (Hibou premier)*, 1939-41
 Oil on canvas board
 40.5 x 30 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Saint-Fabien*, 1944
 Oil on canvas attached
 to cardboard
 30.4 x 41 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Spain (Espagne)*, 1951
 Oil on canvas
 150 x 232 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Untitled (Sans Titre)*, 1967
 Collage of lithographic
 elements glued to
 canvas on three panels
 Overall: 491 x 243 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Owl A (Hibou A)*, 1969-70 (cast c.1974)
 Bronze, 1/4
 143 x 93 x 74 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Tower (La Tour)*, 1969-74 (cast c.1974)
 Bronze, 1/4
 258 x 243 x 85 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Owl VII (Hibou VII)*, 1970
 Lithography, 42/75
 76 x 54 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *The Owls (Les Hiboux)*, 1970
 Lithography, 44/75
 76.4 x 109.9 cm
 © Jean Paul Riopelle
 Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992

Acrylic and spray paint on canvas

155 x 1.4 cm (1st element);

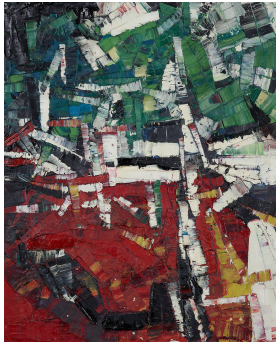
155 x 1.2 cm (2nd element);

155 x 1.4 cm (3rd element)

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate /
SOCAN (2019)

MUSEUM LUDWIG

Heinrich-Böll-Platz,
50667 Cologne, Germany
+49 221 22 126 165
museum-ludwig.de



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Rencontre (Encounter)*, 1956

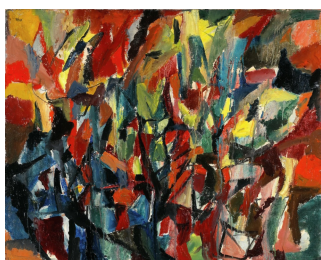
Oil on canvas

100 x 81 cm

© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate /
SOCAN (2019)

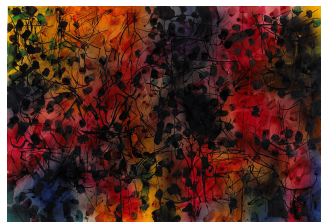
NATIONAL GALLERY OF CANADA

380 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
613-990-1985
gallery.ca



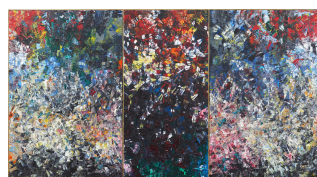
Jean Paul Riopelle,
Untitled (Composition,
1947) (Sans titre
[Composition, 1947]),
1947

Pen and black ink with
coloured ink wash on
vellum paper
22.8 x 30.5 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle,
Untitled (Sans titre),
1953

Coloured ink on vellum
paper
74.5 x 107.4 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)



Jean Paul Riopelle,
Pavane (Tribute to the
Water Lilies) (Pavane
[Hommage aux
Nymphéas]), **1954**

Oil on canvas
300 x 550.2 cm
(triptych)
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)

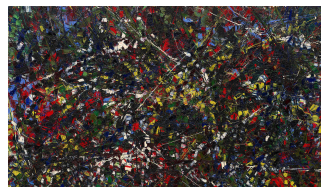


Jean Paul Riopelle,
Untitled (Sans titre),
1965

Oil on canvas
65.5 cm in diameter
© Jean Paul Riopelle
Estate / SOCAN (2019)

SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

1071 5th Ave
New York, New York, USA
+1 212-423-3500
www.guggenheim.org



Jean Paul Riopelle, *Blue Night,*
1953

Oil on canvas
114 x 194.9 cm
© Jean Paul Riopelle Estate /
SOCAN (2019)

NOTES

BIOGRAPHY

1. There were sixteen signatories of the *Refus global*: Madeleine Arbour, Marcel Barbeau, Paul-Émile Borduas, Bruno Cormier, Marcelle Ferron, Claude Gauvreau, Pierre Gauvreau, Muriel Guilbault, Fernand Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Maurice Perron, Louise Renaud, Thérèse Renaud, Françoise Riopelle, Jean Paul Riopelle and Françoise Sullivan.
2. The biography presented here is not exhaustive. It should only be considered as a summary of Jean Paul Riopelle's rich life.
3. Marie-Claude Corbeil, Kate Helwig, and Jennifer Poulin, *Jean Paul Riopelle: The Artist's Materials* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2011), 3.
4. In her biography, Hélène de Billy suggests that the death of the artist's brother, which left Riopelle feeling that he himself had no right to be alive, and was probably the origin of his ambition: "[Riopelle] worked ceaselessly to prove that he was someone, that he deserved to have survived." Hélène de Billy, *Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Éditions Art Global, 1996), 18.
5. Translator's note: *bissonnière* is a play on words, combining Bisson's name and the French expression *école buissonnière*, which literally means "school in the bushes," i.e., truancy.
6. Michel Martin, preface, in Pierre Schneider and Georges Duthuit, eds., *Jean-Paul Riopelle: Peinture 1946-1977* (Paris: Le Centre, 1981), 15. Catalogue of the exhibition at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, September 30-November 16, 1981; Musée du Québec, December 9, 1981-January 24, 1982; as well as Montreal, Mexico, and Caracas. With texts by Pierre Schneider, Georges Duthuit, André Breton, Patrick Waldberg, Werner Schmalenbach, Guy Viau, Jacques Dupin, Pierre Boudreau, Franco Russoli, Paul Auster, and Thomas B. Hess.
7. Jean-Paul Riopelle, Gilbert Erouart, and Fernand Seguin, *Entretiens avec Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Liber, 1993), 94.
8. On Borduas's teaching, see François-Marc Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas: Life & Work* (Toronto: Art Canada Institute, 2014), <https://www.aci-iac.ca/francais/livres-dart/paul-emile-borduas/style-et-technique/#idees-et-enseignement>.
9. Jean-Paul Riopelle, Gilbert Erouart, and Fernand Seguin, *Entretiens avec Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Liber, 1993), 72.
10. *Loan Exhibition of Great Paintings: Five Centuries of Dutch Art / Exposition de tableaux célèbres: cinq siècles d'art hollandais* was held from March 9 to April 9, 1944.
11. First reported by Pierre Schneider in *Jean-Paul Riopelle : Peinture 1946-1977*, 12.

12. Comments reported by Pierre Schneider in Pierre Schneider and Georges Duthuit, eds., *Jean-Paul Riopelle: Peinture 1946–1977* (Paris: Le Centre, 1981),

14. Catalogue of the exhibition at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, September 30–November 16, 1981; Musée du Québec, December 9, 1981–January 24, 1982; Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal, July 16, 1982–August 22, 1982.

13. Excluding the fleeting presentation of the works of Borduas, Gauvreau, Mousseau, Riopelle, Leduc, and Guy Viau at Studio Boas in New York in January 1946.

14. Charles Doyon, "Borduas et ses interprètes!," *Le Jour* (Montreal), May 11, 1946, 7.

15. Yseult Riopelle, ed. (with texts by Monique Brunet-Weinmann, Michel Waldberg), *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939–53* (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999); see also online, <https://riopelle.ca/introduction/catalogue-tome-1/>.

16. One thing is certain—these titles have never resurfaced. They may have been changed in the meantime and are perhaps hiding behind *Trap (Piège)*, 1946, and *Within the Four Walls of the Wind, I'm Listening—Nadaka (Entre les quatre murs du vent, j'écoute—Nadaka)*, 1946, ones with appropriate dates.

17. Translator's note: *à fond de cale*, which literally means "bottom of the hold," where the horses were kept on the ship, can also be used figuratively to mean "no longer have any resources, be in a state of misery."

18. Douglas Cooper, "Paris: Les chefs-d'œuvre des collections privées françaises retrouvés en Allemagne," *Burlington Magazine* 88, no. 521 (August 1946): 198–201.

19. Comments reported by Pierre Schneider in *Jean-Paul Riopelle: Peinture 1946–1977* in Pierre Schneider and Georges Duthuit, eds., *Jean-Paul Riopelle: Peinture 1946–1977* (Paris: Le Centre, 1981), 86. Catalogue of the exhibition at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, September 30–November 16, 1981; Musée du Québec, December 9, 1981–January 24, 1982; Musée d'art contemporain, Montreal, July 16, 1982–August 22, 1982. In his mention of the Musée du Luxembourg, Riopelle seems to have misremembered the name of the museum—the *Chefs-d'oeuvre des collections françaises* exhibition was at the Orangerie des Tuileries, as described in the text here.

20. Bonnie Baxter, "Jean Paul and I: *Impression passagère*," *Transatlantic Passages: Literary and Cultural Relations between Quebec and Francophone Europe*, eds. Paula Gilbert and Miléna Santoro (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019) 231.

21. Fernand Leduc, Montreal, to Guy Viau, November 22, 1946: "Riopelle will be in Paris soon: he leaves on December 9." Guy Viau fonds, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec.
22. Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Paul-Émile Borduas fonds, file 159.
23. The manifesto *Rupture inaugurale* defended André Breton's postwar values by asserting that Surrealism should be detached from any political party, including the Communist Party.
24. François-Marc Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas: A Critical Biography*, trans. Peter Feldstein (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013), 25-67.
25. Georges Mathieu, *De la révolte à la renaissance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 68.
26. André Breton, Elisa Breton, and Benjamin Péret, "Aparté entre Elisa, André Breton et Benjamin Péret," manuscript and typescript of February 1949 (Paris: Galerie Nina Dausset, 1949).
27. Georges Mathieu, *De la révolte à la renaissance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 69ff.
28. Georges Mathieu, *De la révolte à la renaissance* (Paris: Gallimard, 1972). In the texts mentioned by Mathieu, some of the exhibiting artists, Riopelle among others, express their artistic positions; in his book, Mathieu reproduces fragments of these texts. For Riopelle's text, see note 1 on p. 70.
29. Pierre Schneider, "Jean-Paul Riopelle," *L'Œil* 18 (June 1956), 39.
30. Riopelle to Mitchell in a letter of 10 January 1956. Quoted in Michel Martin, 'Mitchell / Riopelle: Painting Bears Witness', in *Mitchell / Riopelle: Nothing in Moderation*, exh. cat. (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2017), 26; and Joan Mitchell Foundation Archives, New York.
31. Gilles Daigneault, introduction, "Le plaisir de la sculpture: Prolégomènes à l'analyse de l'œuvre tridimensionnelle de Riopelle," *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Riopelle*, Yseult Riopelle, ed., online, <https://riopelle.ca/introduction/catalogue-tome-3/le-plaisir-de-la-sculpture/>. For visuals of the three small sculptures, see volume 1 of the catalogue, <https://riopelle.ca/introduction/catalogue-tome-1/>.
32. Gilles Daigneault, introduction, "Le plaisir de la sculpture: Prolégomènes à l'analyse de l'œuvre tridimensionnelle de Riopelle," *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean Paul Riopelle*, Yseult Riopelle, ed., <https://riopelle.ca/introduction/catalogue-tome-3/le-plaisir-de-la-sculpture/>.
33. Annie Lafleur, "Art d'après-guerre et contemporain—November 5, 2018," from the website *Les enchères BYDealers*, <https://bydealers.com/fr/auction/5-novembre-2018/forteresse/>.

34. Roald Nasgaard, *Abstract Painting in Canada* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2008), 82.
35. Roald Nasgaard, *Abstract Painting in Canada* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2008), 82.
36. Hélène de Billy, *Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Éditions Art Global, 1996), 197.
37. See Riopelle's chronology on the website of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Exhibition Directory, *Mitchell/Riopelle, Nothing in Moderation* (*Mitchell/Riopelle, un couple dans la démesure*), <https://www.mnbaq.org/en/exhibition/mitchell-riopelle-1252>.
38. Jean-Paul Riopelle, Gilbert Érouart, and Fernand Seguin, *Entretiens avec Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Liber, 1993), 39.
39. Michel Dupuy, "Œuvres de Riopelle à Paris, Ficelles et autres jeux," *Le Droit* (Ottawa), June 30, 1972, 20, cited in Jean Brien, "La Joute: Autour d'une œuvre de Jean-Paul Riopelle," *Espace*, no. 20 (Summer 1992): 17-19.
40. Gilbert Érouart and Fernand Seguin, *Entretiens avec Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Liber, 1993).
41. René Viau, *Riopelle au Cap Tourmente: De la nature à l'atelier* (Montreal: Kétoupa Édition, 2016).
42. On the Borduas prizes, see Gilles Daigneault, François-Marc Gagnon, and Fernande Saint-Martin, *Montréal 1942-1992: L'anarchie resplendissante de la peinture* (Montreal: Galerie de l'UQAM, 1992).
43. *Oeuvres vives* as used here is another play on words. The phrase has several meanings: it is a shipbuilding term (sailboats in particular were important to Riopelle), used in English as well as French, referring to the vital parts of a ship, i.e., the underwater hull (*oeuvres mortes* are the parts above water); in the context of a painting, *oeuvres vives* could mean a bright or vivid artwork; or it could be a figurative reference to vitals, essential parts.
44. See Riopelle's chronology on the website of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Exhibition Directory, *Mitchell/Riopelle: Nothing in Moderation* (*Mitchell/Riopelle, un couple dans la démesure*), <https://www.mnbaq.org/en/exhibition/mitchell-riopelle-1252>.
45. Jean-François Boisvert, "Hommage à Riopelle...et à Rosa Luxemburg," *Le Devoir* (Montreal), July 2, 2002, <https://www.ledevoir.com/non-classe/4571/hommage-a-riopelle-et-a-rosa-luxemburg>.

KEY WORKS: UNTITLED (PASTORAL SCENE), C.1940

1. "Jean-Paul Riopelle, 'Un fauve à l'étroit dans la cage de Paris,'" *La Presse* (Montreal), January 12, 1963, 2-3.

2. Pearl Sheffy, "Jean-Paul Riopelle Talks about Art," *Globe Magazine* (Toronto), May 9, 1964, 6-8.

KEY WORKS: DECALCOMANIA NO. 1, 1946

1. Jacques Derrida, "Penser à ne pas voir," in *Penser à ne pas voir: Écrits sur les arts du visible (1979-2004)*, ed. Ginette Michaud, Joana Masó, and Javier Bassas (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, "Essais" series, no. 82, 2013), 56-78.

KEY WORKS: UNTITLED, 1949-50

1. Yseult Riopelle, ed., *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53* (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 213, 371; see also online, <https://riopelle.ca/introduction/catalogue-tome-1/>.

2. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 91-92.

KEY WORKS: BLUE NIGHT, 1953

1. In 1952, when James J. Sweeney replaced Hilla Rebay as head of the institution, it was located at 24 Fifty-Fourth Street East. Its name was changed from the Museum of Non-Objective Painting in 1952 to the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum to honour its founder (deceased in 1949).

2. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 95.

3. Robert Goldwater quoted in François-Marc Gagnon, *Chronique du mouvement automatiste québécois, 1941-1954* (Outremont: Lanctôt, 1998), 870.

4. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 95.

5. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 95.

KEY WORKS: PAVANE (TRIBUTE TO THE WATER LILIES), 1954

1. See information on *Pavane* on the National Gallery of Canada's website <https://www.gallery.ca/collection/artwork/pavane>.

2. Michel Martin, "Mitchell / Riopelle: la peinture témoigne," in *Mitchell Riopelle: Nothing in Moderation / Un couple dans la démesure* (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2017), 25. Catalogue.

KEY WORKS: UNTITLED, 1964

1. Michel Martin, "Mitchell / Riopelle: la peinture témoigne," in *Mitchell Riopelle. Nothing in Moderation / Un couple dans la démesure* (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2017), 33. Catalogue.

KEY WORKS: AVATAC, 1971

1. Ray Ellenwood, Egregore: *A History of the Montreal Automatist Movement* (Toronto: Exile editions, 1992), 277.

2. Michel Martin, "Mitchell / Riopelle: la peinture témoigne," in *Mitchell Riopelle. Nothing in Moderation / Un couple dans la démesure* (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2017), 37. Catalogue.

KEY WORKS: ICEBERG NO. 1, 1977

1. Le tableau *Sainte-Marguerite*, cependant, fait référence à l'une des îles de Lérins situées au large de la ville de Cannes.

2. Josianne Desloges, "Cinq souvenirs de Riopelle," *Le Soleil* (Quebec City), March 9, 2012.

3. Philippe Briet, excerpts from an interview with Jean Paul Riopelle in February 1984, cited in *Riopelle: Les migrations du Bestiaire; Une rétrospective*, ed. Yseult Riopelle, Simon Blais, Gilles Daigneault, and Robert Enright (Montreal: Kétoupa Éditeur, 2014), 84.

4. Michael Greenwood, "Jean-Paul Riopelle: Icebergs," *artscanada*, no. 226-27 (May-June 1979), retrieved from <http://ccca.concordia.ca/c/writing/g/greenwood/gre002t.html>.

KEY WORKS: THE OWLS, 1970

1. Remarks by Riopelle reported by Gilles Daigneault, "Did You Say Bestiary?," in *Riopelle: Les migrations du Bestiaire; Une rétrospective*, ed. Yseult Riopelle, Simon Blais, Gilles Daigneault, and Robert Enright (Montreal: Kétoupa Éditeur, 2014), 13.

2. Remarks by Riopelle reported by Gilles Daigneault, "Did You Say Bestiary?," in *Riopelle: Les migrations du Bestiaire; Une rétrospective*, ed. Yseult Riopelle, Simon Blais, Gilles Daigneault, and Robert Enright (Montreal: Kétoupa Éditeur, 2014), 13.

KEY WORKS: TRIBUTE TO ROSA LUXEMBURG, 1992

1. See the description of the piece on the website of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec,

2. Translator's note: Rosa Malheur is a play on words, with *malheur*, the French word for "calamity" and *bonheur*, the French word for "bliss."

3. Michel Martin, "Mitchell / Riopelle: la peinture témoigne," in *Mitchell / Riopelle. Nothing in Moderation / Un couple dans la démesure* (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2017), 41.

4. Riopelle cited by Michel Martin, "Mitchell / Riopelle: la peinture témoigne," in *Mitchell / Riopelle. Nothing in Moderation / Un couple dans la démesure* (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2017), 41.

SIGNIFICANCE & CRITICAL ISSUES

1. Cited by François-Marc Gagnon in *Paul-Émile Borduas: Life & Work*, published by the Art Canada Institute in 2014, online book, Style & Technique section: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/paul-emile-borduas/style-and-technique>.

2. François-Marc Gagnon, "À propos de Parachutes végétaux de Paul-Émile Borduas: Essai de définition du 'surréalisme' pictural de Borduas," *National Gallery of Canada Annual Bulletin* 4 (1980-81).

3. Cited in François-Marc Gagnon, *Chronique du mouvement automatiste québécois 1941-1954* (Montreal: Lanctôt, 1998), 738-39.

4. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 90.

5. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 92. In the same catalogue, on these questions see also the text by Michel Waldberg, "Riopelle, l'écart absolu," 29.

6. Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 75.

7. Leduc cited in Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 75.

8. Leduc cited in Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 75.

9. Riopelle cited in Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 76.

10. Mathieu cited in Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 78.

11. Mathieu cited in Monique Brunet-Weinman, "Genèse d'une signature," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 1: 1939-53*, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 78.

12. Michel Waldberg, "Riopelle, l'écart absolu," in *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle*, vol. 1: 1939-53, ed. Yseult Riopelle (Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999), 21.

13. Thomas B. Hess, in the catalogue of the 1973 Jean Paul Riopelle exhibition, *Paintings from 1970-1973 and The le Roi de Thulé series* (New York: Pierre Matisse Gallery, 1974).

14. Harold Rosenberg, "The American Action Painters," *Art News* (January 1952), 22.

15. Riopelle cited by Stéphane Aquin, ed., in *Riopelle* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine arts; Paris: Connaissance des arts, 2002), 112.

16. Riopelle cited in Hélène de Billy, *Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Montréal: Art Global Edition, 1996), 41.

17. Jean-Luc Nancy, "L'art aujourd'hui," unpublished, 2006, p. 2, cited in Ginette Michaud, *Cosa volante: Le désir des arts dans la pensée de Jean-Luc Nancy* (Paris: Hermann Éditeurs, 2013), 6.

STYLE & TECHNIQUE

1. On the training of Borduas and the rigidity of Maillard, director of the Montreal École des beaux-arts from 1925 and resistant to modern art, see François-Marc Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas: Life & Work*, published by the Art Canada Institute in 2014, online book, Biography section: <https://www.aci-iac.ca/art-books/paul-emile-borduas/biography>.

2. Translator's note: *bissonnière* is a play on words, combining Bisson's name and the French expression *école buissonnière*, which literally means "school in the bushes," i.e., truancy.

3. Pliny the Elder, *Histoire naturelle: La Peinture*, XXXV, translated from Latin by Jean-Michel Croisille (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997), § XLIII (12), pp. 132 and 134 (for the Latin text) and pp. 133 and 135 (for the translation).

4. Pierre Schneider, preface, in Pierre Schneider and Georges Duthuit, eds., *Jean-Paul Riopelle: Peinture 1946-1977* (Paris: Le Centre, 1981), 16. Catalogue of the exhibition at the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, September 30-November 16, 1981; Musée du Québec, December 9, 1981-January 24, 1982; as well as Montreal, Mexico, and Caracas. With texts by Pierre Schneider, Georges Duthuit, André Breton, Patrick Waldberg, Werner Schmalenbach, Guy Viau, Jacques Dupin, Pierre Boudreau, Franco Russoli, Paul Auster, and Thomas B. Hess.

5. René Viau, "Jamais deux fois le même tableau," *Vie des arts*, no. 187 (2002): 48; reprinted in René Viau, *Jean-Paul Riopelle* (Quebec City: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2003), 29: "1949. After the apotheosis of *Le Perroquet vert* (*The Green Parrot*) Riopelle forgoes the brushes."

6. Jean Paul Riopelle, *Riopelle, estampes, peintures* (Caen: Musée des Beaux-Arts et Hôtel d'Escoville, 1984) in *Jean Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), 114.
7. Gilles Daigneault, "The Pleasure of Sculpture," *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 3, 1960-65*, ed. Yseult Riopelle and Tanguy Riopelle (Quebec: Hibou Éditeurs, 2009), 401.
8. Jean Paul Riopelle, *Riopelle, estampes, peintures* (Caen: Musée des Beaux-Arts et Hôtel d'Escoville, 1984) in *Jean Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), 114.
9. Jean Paul Riopelle, quoted in Gilles Daigneault, "The Pleasure of Sculpture," *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 3, 1960-65*, ed. Yseult Riopelle and Tanguy Riopelle (Quebec: Hibou Éditeurs, 2009) 406.
10. Denise L. Bissonnette, *Jean Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), 36.
11. Pierre Schneider, from *Riopelle: Signes mêlés* (Paris: Maeght Éditeur, 1972) in *Jean Paul Riopelle* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1991), 101.
12. Monique Brunet-Weinmann, "The Matter; the Hand," *Le catalogue raisonné de Jean-Paul Riopelle, vol. 3, 1960-65*, ed. Yseult Riopelle and Tanguy Riopelle (Quebec: Hibou Éditeurs, 2009), 25: She writes: "Riopelle came close to painting directly with his fingers, the way he sculpted, for he took the coloured matter in hand."
13. Bonnie Baxter, "Jean Paul and I: *Impression passagère*," *Transatlantic Passages: Literary and Cultural Relations between Quebec and Francophone Europe*, eds. Paula Gilbert and Miléna Santoro (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019) 231.
14. Bonnie Baxter, "Jean Paul and I: *Impression passagère*," *Transatlantic Passages: Literary and Cultural Relations between Quebec and Francophone Europe*, eds. Paula Gilbert and Miléna Santoro (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019) 236.
15. Bonnie Baxter, "Jean Paul and I: *Impression passagère*," *Transatlantic Passages: Literary and Cultural Relations between Quebec and Francophone Europe*, eds. Paula Gilbert and Miléna Santoro (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2019) 233.
16. Yseult Riopelle, "Migrations," in *Riopelle: Les migrations du Bestiaire; Une rétrospective*, ed. Yseult Riopelle, Simon Blais, Gilles Daigneault, and Robert Enright (Montreal: Kétoupa Éditeur, 2014), 38.

GLOSSARY

abstract art

Visual art that uses form, colour, line, and gestural marks in compositions that do not attempt to represent images of real things. Abstract art may interpret reality in an altered form, or depart from it entirely. Also called nonfigurative or nonrepresentational art.

Abstract Expressionism

A style that flourished in New York in the 1940s and 1950s, defined by its combination of formal abstraction and self-conscious expression. The term describes a wide variety of work; among the most famous Abstract Expressionists are Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, Barnett Newman, and Willem de Kooning.

academic tradition

Associated with the royal academies of art established in France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively, the academic tradition emphasized drawing, painting, and sculpture in a style highly influenced by ancient classical art. Subject matter for painting was hierarchically ranked, with history painting of religious, mythological, allegorical, and historical figures holding the position of greatest importance, followed, in order, by genre painting, portraiture, still lifes, and landscapes.

automatism

A physiological term first applied to art by the Surrealists to refer to processes such as free association and spontaneous, intuitive writing, drawing, and painting that allow access to the subconscious without the interference of planning or controlled thought.

Automatistes

A Montreal-based artists' group interested in Surrealism and the Surrealist technique of automatism. Centred on the artist, teacher, and theorist Paul-Émile Borduas, the Automatistes exhibited regularly between 1946 and 1954, making Montreal a locus of mid-century avant-garde art. Members included Marcel Barbeau, Marcelle Ferron, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Jean Paul Riopelle, Fernand Leduc, and Françoise Sullivan.

avant-garde

From the French for "vanguard" or "advance guard," avant-garde entered discussions about art in the early nineteenth-century work of the socialist thinker Henri de Saint-Simon, who believed that artists had a role to play in building a new society. The meaning of "avant-garde" has shifted over the years, referring to artists in relation to their times rather than to a particular group of artists working at a specific time in history. It connotes radicalism and rejection of a status quo and is often associated with work that is provocative and confrontational.

Balthus (French, 1908–2001)

Born Balthasar Klossowski de Rola, this self-taught painter, illustrator, and stage designer from a highly artistic family whose circle included writer Rainer

Maria Rilke and artist Pierre Bonnard. Although precociously talented, Balthus was not widely appreciated until late in his career, perhaps because his classically inspired oeuvre appeared incongruent with the ethos of modernism, which dominated the fine arts of his era.

Barbeau, Marcel (Canadian, 1925–2016)

A member of the Automatistes and a former student of its founder, Paul-Émile Borduas, at the École du meuble in Montreal. Barbeau alternated between a free approach in the Automatiste vein and painting in a hard-edge style with pure colour.

Bisson, Henri (Canadian, 1900–1973)

A Montreal artist and educator, Bisson worked primarily in sculpture, producing numerous works in plaster and contributing bronzes to public monuments including the *Monument à la gloire des Patriotes* commemorating regional heroes of the 1837 rebellion in what is now Quebec. He was also an academic painter of still lifes and genre scenes. One of Bisson's students was the artist Jean Paul Riopelle as a youth.

Borduas, Paul-Émile (Canadian, 1905–1960)

The leader of the avant-garde Automatistes and one of Canada's most important modern artists. Borduas was also an influential advocate for reform in Quebec, calling for liberation from religious and narrow nationalist values in the 1948 manifesto *Refus global*. (See *Paul-Émile Borduas: Life & Work* by François-Marc Gagnon.)

Bourgeois, Louise (French/American, 1911–2010)

Born in Paris, Bourgeois moved to New York City in 1938, where she would establish herself as an artist. Although she began her career in printmaking and drawing, she became known for her psychologically charged sculptures and installations. Bourgeois's work draws on childhood trauma, her complicated relationships with her parents, and her relationship to sex and her body, often through recurring figures (the spider in particular). Overlooked for decades, her art began to attract wide acclaim in the 1970s, when its feminist implications became a subject of interest for critics, artists, and audiences.

Brancusi, Constantin (Romanian, 1876–1957)

An abstract sculptor, whose unique focus on expressing natural forms as simply as possible influenced later sculptors, including Amedeo Modigliani and Carl Andre. Active for most of his life in Paris, Brancusi became known in America following his inclusion in the Armory Show, the 1913 International Exhibition of Modern Art.

Braque, Georges (French, 1882–1963)

A seminal figure in the history of modern art. Working alongside Picasso from 1908 to 1914, Braque developed the principles of major phases of Analytic and Synthetic Cubism and, along with the latter, the use of collage. After the First World War he pursued a personal style of Cubism admired for its compositional and colouristic subtleties.

Breton, André (French, 1896–1966)

A poet and the leader of the Surrealists, whose members included the artists Max Ernst, Salvador Dalí, and Man Ray, and the poets Paul and Gala Éluard. Breton outlined in successive manifestos the tenets and techniques of Surrealism, and he organized the group's first exhibition in 1925.

Breton, Elisa (Chilean, 1906–2000)

Elisa Breton, née Bindhoff, was a Surrealist artist and writer and the third wife of André Breton, leader of the Surrealist movement in Paris. She met Breton in New York City after she immigrated there in the early 1940s, and they married in 1945, moving to Paris in 1946. Although she is mentioned in André Breton's works and was an active member of the Surrealist circle in Paris, Elisa Breton published and exhibited infrequently.

Capogrossi, Giuseppe (Italian, 1900–1972)

One of the founders of the short-lived Gruppo Origine (1950–51), Capogrossi was a painter who became celebrated for abstract works featuring distinctive comb- and fork-shaped glyphs. After beginning his career as a figurative painter, Capogrossi experimented with shapes, symbols, letters, and numbers before arriving at his definitive style in 1949. With Gruppo Origine and subsequently, he was part of a reaction against more decorative forms of abstraction and sought a return to an essential, rigorous abstract art free of dimensionality and often gestural.

Chagall, Marc (Russian/French, 1887–1985)

A painter and graphic artist, Chagall's work is characterized by colourful, dreamlike images and a defiance of the rules of pictorial logic. Although he employed elements of Cubism, Fauvism, and Symbolism, Chagall did not formally align with any avant-garde movement.

chiaroscuro

A term that refers, at its most general, to an artist's use of light and dark and the visual effects thus produced in a painting, engraving, or drawing. Chiaroscuro can serve to create atmosphere, describe volume, and imitate natural light effects. From the Italian *chiaro* (light) and *scuro* (dark).

Clementi, Turriddu (French, 1916–1983)

The son of the owner of a respected Paris foundry, Clementi apprenticed in Italy as well as in Paris before entering his father's profession in the 1930s. With the sculptors Rosaline Granet and Jacques Delahaye, he established the art foundry Fonderie Berjac in Meudon, France, in 1959. He became its sole proprietor in 1963, at which point he changed its name to Fonderie Clementi. Turriddu's son Gilbert in turn succeeded him in the business; the foundry continues to specialize in art casting and the lost-wax process, completing commissions for both small- and large-scale projects.

Courbet, Gustave (French, 1819–1877)

A critical figure in nineteenth-century art, whose paintings—most famously *Burial at Ornans* and *The Painter's Studio*—helped establish the Realist movement and paved the way for later artists, including the Impressionists, to abandon classical subjects for those they encountered in their daily lives.

Cubism

A radical style of painting developed by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque in Paris between 1907 and 1914, defined by the representation of numerous perspectives at once. Cubism is considered crucial to the history of modern art for its enormous international impact; famous practitioners also include Juan Gris and Francis Picabia.

Cézanne, Paul (French, 1839–1906)

A painter of arguably unparalleled influence on the development of modern art, associated with the Post-Impressionist school and known for his technical experiments with colour and form and his interest in multiple-point perspective. In his maturity Cézanne had several preferred subjects, including his wife, still life, and Provençal landscapes.

Dada

A multidisciplinary movement that arose in Europe in response to the horrors of the First World War, whose adherents aimed to deconstruct and demolish traditional societal values and institutions. Artworks, often collages and readymades, typically scorned fine materials and craftsmanship. Chief Dadaists include Marcel Duchamp, Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, and Hans Arp.

decalcomania

Developed in the eighteenth century, decalcomania is a transfer technique in which ink or some other pigment is pressed between two surfaces—often glass, porcelain, paper, or some combination. When paper is used, it may be folded to create a mirror image. The resulting blot may then be embellished or otherwise added to. Decalcomania was adopted by the Surrealists and Automatistes as a way to introduce chance into the making of an image.

de Kooning, Willem (Dutch/American, 1904–1997)

Although a prominent Abstract Expressionist, de Kooning was not concerned with strict abstraction—figures appear in the dense and riotous brushwork that characterizes much of his work. Among his most famous works are those of the *Women* series, first exhibited in 1953 to much critical scorn.

Delacroix, Eugène (French, 1798–1863)

A leading French Romantic painter whose use of rich, sensual colours influenced the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists. Following the Romantic tradition, Delacroix portrayed exoticized Moroccan subjects and dramatic scenes from history and contemporary events. His frenzied brushwork conveyed tragedy and emotion. Among his most well-known paintings is *Liberty Leading the People*, 1830.

Delahaye, Jacques (French, 1928–2010)

Working in plaster and bronze, Delahaye created roughly modelled figurative sculptures. He was active in the 1950s and early 1960s, exhibiting primarily in France and Germany, including at documenta II in Kassel. At some point after 1960 he shifted his focus from artmaking to teaching, and from 1975 to 1993 he was a professor at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris. With Rosaline Granet and Turriddo Clementi, Delahaye established the art foundry Fonderie Berjac in Meudon, France, in 1959.

Derain, André (French, 1880–1954)

A painter, sculptor, printmaker, and designer of theatre sets, Derain co-founded the Fauvist movement, active from about 1905 to 1908. He is known for the expressive characteristics typical of Fauvism, including the use of vibrant and unrealistic colours (sometimes straight from the paint tube), simplified forms, and raw canvas that showed in the final product. Derain's interest in African tribal masks likely influenced Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. His later works turn to a more conservative, Neoclassical style.

de Staël, Nicolas (French/Russian, 1914–1955)

De Staël is recognized for a large number of abstract landscapes that make heavy use of colour blocks, intense hues, and thick impasto. The many ways he applies paint create highly visual works that depict natural forces and movement. In 1919, de Staël's family fled the Russian Revolution and settled in Poland. He later studied in Brussels at the Académie royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, where he was influenced by Cubism and Post-Impressionism.

Domínguez, Óscar (Spanish, 1906–1957)

Domínguez, a painter, moved to Paris when he was twenty-one, becoming involved in the Surrealist movement led by André Breton. In the 1930s he began using the technique of decalcomania to create works, and he introduced fellow Surrealist Max Ernst to this method of artmaking. Domínguez's style shows the influence of Pablo Picasso's Cubist works, and bulls appear frequently in his paintings.

Dubuffet, Jean (French, 1901–1985)

A rebellious avant-garde artist whose career spanned some fifty years and encompassed painting, sculpting, and printmaking. Dubuffet railed against intellectual authority in culture, countering it with art brut (literally, "raw art"). His oeuvre evidences frequent shifts in style and impassioned experimentation.

Duchamp, Marcel (French/American, 1887–1968)

One of the most significant artist-thinkers of the twentieth century, Duchamp influenced Conceptual, Pop, and Minimal art. Best known for the sensational painting *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*, 1912, he is also recognized for his ready-made sculptures, among them the urinal *Fountain*, 1917, and his "desecrated" *Mona Lisa* print, *L.H.O.O.Q.*, 1919.

École des beaux-arts de Montréal

The École des beaux-arts de Montréal was founded in 1922, the same year as its sister institution, the École des beaux-arts de Québec. The curriculum

emphasized industrial arts, trades, and commercial design, but the school gradually came into its own as an important training ground for painters, sculptors, and other serious artists, culminating in what has been called its “golden age” in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In 1969 it was absorbed into the fine arts department of the Université du Québec à Montréal.

École du meuble

In 1930 the artist Jean-Marie Gauvreau established the École du meuble, which trained its students in technical arts and drawing, painting, design, art history, sculpture, and even law. Many of Quebec’s future avant-garde artists, including Paul-Émile Borduas, Marcel Barbeau, Maurice Perron, and other signatories of the *Refus global* (1948), taught or received their training here.

Fauteux, Roger (Canadian, b.1923)

A Montreal painter who participated in the first Automatiste exhibitions in the 1940s, Fauteux became associated with the avant-garde group through the artist Paul-Émile Borduas, whom he met at Montreal’s École du meuble. However, unlike the majority of Automatiste painters, Fauteux never embraced abstraction, nor was he a signatory of the group’s manifesto, *Refus global*, in 1948.

figurative

A descriptive term for an artwork that depicts or references recognizable objects or beings, including humans. Figurative art is often representational and takes source material from the real world, although its subjects may be overlaid with metaphors and allegory. The term arose in popular usage around the 1950s to describe artwork in contrast with the Abstract Expressionist movement as well as nonfigurative and non-objective art.

Francis, Sam (American, 1923–1994)

Associated with the second generation of Abstract Expressionists, Francis was a painter and printmaker. He studied art at the University of California, Berkley, before moving to Paris in 1950, where he met and was influenced by the Quebec artist Jean Paul Riopelle. Francis returned to California in 1962. His paintings relied on a rich, evocative use of colour, moving from centrally placed shapes through an emphasis on white space to fluid forms and drips as his career progressed. As a printmaker and publisher, Francis ran a lithography studio and Lapis Press, dedicated to artists’ books. He helped establish a California style of modernist painting and was involved in the organization of the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles, in 1980.

Gagnon, Maurice (Canadian, 1904–1956)

An art critic and teacher at Montreal’s École du meuble, Gagnon studied art history at the Sorbonne in Paris. His book *Peinture moderne* (1940) analyzes various schools of modern art, including religious art. He was a friend to luminaries of the French and Québécois avant-garde, including Fernand Léger and Paul-Émile Borduas.

Gauvreau, Claude (Canadian, 1925–1971)

A playwright, poet, and polemicist known for contributing greatly to modernist theatre in Quebec, Gauvreau was a leader of the Automatistes and signatory of

the 1948 manifesto *Refus global*. His writing is characterized by poetic abstraction and expression, such as his first play, *Bien-être*, written in 1947 for his muse and lover, Muriel Guilbault.

Gauvreau, Pierre (Canadian, 1922–2011)

A painter, writer, and television producer/director, Gauvreau met Paul-Émile Borduas in 1941 when Gauvreau was a student at the École des beaux-arts in Montreal (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal). The paintings he made before he joined the Automatistes in the late 1940s demonstrate a Fauvist influence. He returned to a free style of painting later in his life.

geometricism

Based on the concept of geometry as an overt or underlying principle in art or design, geometricism involves an exploration of the way geometric forms and relationships can be used to create an illusion of dimensionality on a surface. This objective may involve the creation of optical illusions or, as employed by the Cubists, the reduction of forms to geometric elements that emphasize their relationship in space.

Germain, Jacques (French, 1915–2001)

A student of Fernand Léger's at the Académie Moderne in Paris in 1931 and of Wassily Kandinsky's at the Bauhaus in 1932, Germain was an abstract painter. He was a member of the Lyrical Abstraction group in Paris, which for a time included the Quebec artist Jean Paul Riopelle. Germain's paintings feature dynamic, rectangular applications of paint, often shades of white, with bursts of vibrant colour.

Giacometti, Alberto (Swiss, 1901–1966)

Alberto Giacometti is primarily known as a sculptor, but he was also a painter, draftsman, and printmaker. Although his early, abstract work was Surrealist with Cubist influences, Giacometti after the Second World War turned to sculpting the figure and to phenomenology—a way of understanding the world through perception and experience—increasing the size of his sculptures and thinning the human bodies they depicted until they seemed to almost disappear in space. Frail and isolated, they were written about by the existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and caught the attention of Samuel Beckett, for whom Giacometti designed the first set for his play *Waiting for Godot*.

Goya, Francisco (Spanish, 1746–1828)

Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes was an influential painter of the Spanish Enlightenment whose expressive style would guide the Romantic, realist, and Impressionist painters of the nineteenth century, particularly French artists including Edouard Manet. Though he rose to prominence as a court painter for the Spanish monarchy, Goya's drawings and etchings of the horrors of the Napoleonic Wars and Spanish struggles for independence in the early nineteenth century, none of them published during his lifetime, would prove some of his most enduring work.

Granet, Roseline (French, b.1936)

Working primarily in bronze, Granet is a figurative sculptor. She studied at the Art Students League of New York and the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Paris in the 1950s; since then, she has worked out of a series of Parisian foundries. In addition to participating in exhibitions, Granet has completed public commissions in France and Canada, including a bust of the poet Émile Nelligan and a statue of the painter Jean Paul Riopelle, both in Montreal.

Greenberg, Clement (American, 1909–1994)

A highly influential art critic and essayist known primarily for his formalist approach and his contentious concept of modernism, which he first outlined in his 1961 article “Modernist Painting.” Greenberg was, notably, an early champion of Abstract Expressionists, including Jackson Pollock and the sculptor David Smith.

Géricault, Théodore (French, 1791–1824)

Géricault was a French Romantic painter best known for *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818–19, a monumental painting depicting the aftermath of a notorious contemporary shipwreck. His lifestyle—he was a noted dandy and adventurous equestrian—and his subject matter—he favoured scenes of high drama, psychological pain, and equine athleticism—exemplified the Romantic artistic personality. Géricault’s work had an enduring influence despite his short life and career and the initial public discomfort with his work’s intensity. Though largely self-taught, he shared a teacher with Eugène Delacroix, the most renowned of French Romantic painters, and his style had a formative effect on the latter’s work.

Hayter, Stanley William (British 1901–1988)

The operator of the Paris printmaking studio Atelier 17, Hayter was a teacher and artist. At his workshop, he welcomed avant-garde European and North American artists, maintaining a social circle and working environment for experimental printmaking techniques as well as discussions about modern art: at various times, Pablo Picasso, Joan Miró, Jean Arp, Max Ernst, Marc Chagall, and Alexander Calder all worked at the atelier. Hayter’s background as a research chemist allowed him to develop innovative techniques, bringing printmaking into the vocabulary of modern artists.

Impressionism

A highly influential art movement that originated in France in the 1860s and is associated with the emergence of modern urban European society. Claude Monet, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, and other Impressionists rejected the subjects and formal rigours of academic art in favour of scenes of nature and daily life and the careful rendering of atmospheric effects. They often painted outdoors.

Ingres, Jean-Auguste-Dominique (French, 1780–1867)

A master of Neoclassicism who learned from one of the greatest artists of his age, Jacques-Louis David. In history paintings, portraits, and Orientalist fantasies (such as his iconic *Grande Odalisque*, 1814) Ingres’s brushwork is all but invisible and his emphasis on clean lines predominates. He is often contrasted with the exemplary Romanticist Eugène Delacroix.

Kline, Franz (American, 1910–1962)

An Abstract Expressionist painter and draftsman whose gestural works drew inspiration from contemporaries such as Arshile Gorky and Willem de Kooning. From the late 1940s Kline's paintings were largely black and white, but in the last years of his career he returned to a full-colour palette.

Leduc, Fernand (Canadian, 1916–2014)

A painter and member of the Montreal-based Automatistes. Leduc's earlier paintings evince his interest in Surrealism and automatism; later he began to work in a more formalist mode and then in a hard-edge style, which linked him to the Plasticien movement.

Loeb, Pierre (French, 1897–1964)

The founder of the influential Galerie Pierre, Loeb promoted the work of upcoming modern artists. Born into a culturally inclined Parisian-Jewish family, Loeb opened his gallery in 1924, showing Surrealist and Cubist painters such as Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró. Forced to close it with the Nazi occupation of France in 1940, Loeb spent the Second World War in Cuba with his family. After the war he returned to Paris and reopened the gallery, focusing on younger artists working in the city until he closed in 1964, shortly before his death.

lost-wax process (cire perdue)

A metal-casting technique in which a mould is formed around a wax model, which is then melted away to leave a space into which molten metal is poured. The process can either involve a solid wax model or a wax shell that is used to create a hollow metal sculpture. The lost-wax process has been used to cast metal for approximately six thousand years.

Lyrical Abstraction

A style of abstract art that arose within the larger movement of Art Informel, itself known as the European complement of American Abstract Expressionism. Art Informel paintings typically drew inspiration from the natural world; they were less rigid and more expressive than geometric abstraction, which was dominant at the time.

Manessier, Alfred (French, 1911–1993)

An abstract artist known for his luminous colours, Manessier began painting after studying architecture at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Paris. Part of a wide circle of modern artists working in the city in the early twentieth century, he experimented with Cubism and Surrealism before arriving at a style featuring dynamic shapes and colour, focused on capturing effects of light and on highly abstracted interpretations of the landscape. During the Second World War, Manessier was part of the Salon de Mai group of artists, producing and promoting "degenerate art," as it was called by the Nazis occupying France. Associated with a resurgence in sacred art, he created numerous designs for stained-glass windows and liturgical robes, as well as theatrical sets and costumes.

Mathieu, Georges (French, 1921–2012)

A sculptor, designer, illustrator, and painter who became interested in abstract painting in the 1940s. Mathieu's work is associated with several similar postwar European movements—including Tachism and Art Informel—that privilege geometric abstraction and spontaneous mark making, and which he helped to pioneer.

Matisse, Henri (French, 1869–1954)

A painter, sculptor, printmaker, draftsman, and designer, aligned at different times with the Impressionists, Post-Impressionists, and Fauvists. By the 1920s he was, with Pablo Picasso, one of the most famous painters of his generation, known for his remarkable use of colour and line.

Miró, Joan (Spanish, 1893–1983)

A prolific artist and important figure in the history of abstract art in the twentieth century. Miró engaged with painting, sculpting, printmaking, and decorative arts, and throughout his long career sustained thematic interest in the influence of his native landscape on his artistic creation. French Surrealism influenced his work, though he is recognized to have developed his own deeply personal style.

Mitchell, Joan (American, 1925–1992)

Part of a second generation of Abstract Expressionists, Mitchell began her career in New York, where she was an active member of the city's downtown art scene and one of the few women invited into Abstract Expressionism's inner circle, the Eighth Street Club. In the 1950s, her works became exclusively abstract though they retained a sense of perspective. Between 1955 and 1959 she spent time in both New York and Paris. In 1959 she moved permanently to Paris, where she had met the Quebec painter Jean Paul Riopelle, who became her partner for nearly twenty-five years. Although best known for large, gestural, multi-panelled paintings, influenced by poetry, music, and nature, Mitchell also worked in pastels and printmaking. Her work often evokes remembered landscapes, using tangles of large and small strokes of paint to convey the artist's synesthetic feelings about a time and place. After her death, the Joan Mitchell Foundation was established to sustain her legacy and provide support to artists.

Modigliani, Amedeo (Italian, 1884–1920)

A painter and sculptor of stylized, elongated, and melancholy portraits and nude figures, Modigliani is recognized for the sensuality and sexuality in his nude paintings of woman and for frank bodily depiction, considered vulgar by some during his time. His depictions of faces are mask-like but nonetheless provide psychological insight into his subjects. In 1906 Modigliani moved to Paris and became a central figure of the École de Paris circle of artists who created Fauvism, Cubism, and Post-Impressionism.

Molinari, Guido (Canadian, 1933–2004)

A painter and theorist who was a member of the Plasticien movement in Montreal. His work, beginning in the mid-1950s, set new models for geometric painting internationally. His "razor-edged" Stripe Paintings create the illusion

of a dynamic space, evoked by the viewer's active engagement with how colours appear to change as they rhythmically repeat themselves across the canvas.

Mondrian, Piet (Dutch, 1872–1944)

A leading figure in abstract art, known for his geometric "grid" paintings of straight black lines and brightly coloured squares, whose influence on contemporary visual culture has been called the most far-reaching of any artist. Mondrian saw his highly restrictive and rigorous style, dubbed Neo-Plasticism, as expressive of universal truths.

Monet, Claude (French, 1840–1926)

A founder of the Impressionist movement in France. Monet's landscapes and seascapes are among the canonical works of Western art. Introduced to *plein air* painting as a teenager, Monet returned to it throughout his life as a means of exploring the atmospheric effects and perceptual phenomena that so interested him as an artist.

Morisot, Berthe (French, 1841–1895)

A painter and printmaker who found success at the Paris Salons before becoming involved, in the late 1860s, with the fledgling Impressionist movement. She became one of its most significant figures, best known for paintings of domestic life.

Mousseau, Jean-Paul (Canadian, 1927–1991)

A painter, illustrator, and designer, and a fervent advocate of integrating art into architecture. Mousseau was a favoured protégé of Paul-Émile Borduas and the youngest of the Montreal-based Automatistes. He was a prominent figure of the Montreal arts scene and worked in a range of media, including plastic, neon, and aluminum.

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Founded by the Quebec government in 1964, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal is the oldest institution of contemporary art in Canada. Originally housed at Place Ville-Marie, the museum moved to Château Dufresne in 1965, and then to the Expo 67 International Art Gallery, in the Cité du Havre, before moving again in 1992 to its present site at Place des Arts. Dedicated to the promotion and conservation of contemporary Quebec art, the museum maintains an active exhibition and manages a collection of approximately eight thousand pieces.

National Gallery of Canada

Established in 1880, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa holds the most extensive collection of Canadian art in the country as well as works by prominent international artists. Spearheaded by the Governor General the Marquis of Lorne, the gallery was created to strengthen a specifically Canadian brand of artistic culture and identity and to build a national collection of art that would match the level of other British Empire institutions. Since 1988 the gallery has been located on Sussex Drive in a building designed by Moshe Safdie.

Parizeau, Marcel (Canadian, 1898–1945)

A prominent Québécois architect and teacher who trained at Montreal's École polytechnique and at the École des beaux-arts in Paris, where he lived for ten years. In 1933 Parizeau returned to Montreal, where he designed houses and municipal buildings—notably the huge silos of the city's Old Port—in the stripped down International Style.

Perron, Maurice (Canadian, 1924–1999)

A photographer close to the Automatistes, Perron first met Paul-Émile Borduas when he was a student at Montreal's École du meuble, where Borduas taught until 1948. His elegant and sometimes striking photographs of the group's members, activities, artwork, and performances illustrate most of the Automatistes' publications. Perron was a signatory to the 1948 *Refus global* manifesto.

Picasso, Pablo (Spanish, 1881–1973)

One of the most famous and influential artists of his time, Picasso was a prominent member of the Parisian avant-garde circle that included Henri Matisse and Georges Braque. His painting *Les demoiselles d'Avignon*, 1906–7, is considered by many to be the most important of the twentieth century.

Pollock, Jackson (American, 1912–1956)

Leader of the Abstract Expressionist movement, best known for his drip paintings of the 1940s and 1950s. Pollock is also closely associated with action painting, in which the act of painting is gestural and the artist approaches the canvas with little notion of what he or she will create.

Post-Impressionism

A term coined by the British art critic Roger Fry in 1910 to describe painting produced originally in France between about 1880 and 1905 in response to Impressionism's artistic advances and limitations. Central figures include Paul Cézanne, Paul Gauguin, and Vincent van Gogh.

Poussin, Nicolas (French, 1594–1665)

A leading figure in Baroque-era painting, although his pictures repudiated specifically Baroque stylistics. He arrived in Rome from France in 1624, and would live and work in this capital of Renaissance art for the rest of his life. Poussin is known for his classicizing style, which would influence later artists, including the masterful neoclassicist Jacques Louis David.

Péret, Benjamin (French, 1899–1959)

A Surrealist poet, Péret employed various automatic processes in his compositions, seeking to liberate language by engaging the unconscious. As a soldier in the First World War, he began writing after discovering the work of Guillaume Apollinaire and after the war became part of André Breton's Surrealist circle in Paris. An editor of Surrealist publications as well as a writer, he played an essential role in the movement. Although Péret had joined the Communist Party alongside Breton and other noted Surrealists in 1926 and

remained a Trotskyist until the end of his life, he criticized the way his peers used poetry as a vehicle for their political beliefs, calling it a form of propaganda.

Ravenet, Simon François (French, 1706–1774)

Trained in Paris, Ravenet was an engraver who lived and worked primarily in England after moving to London in 1743. He was brought to England by the British artist William Hogarth, afterwards working with the publishers Robert Sayer, John and Paul Knapton, and John Boydell. Ravenet engraved prints of classical sculpture, historical and contemporary painting, and anatomical drawings, as well as producing plates for editions of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*. His son, Simon François Ravenet the Younger, was also an engraver.

readymade

A "readymade" or "*objet trouvé*" is an artwork composed of an existing, everyday object; it is "art" only by virtue of being presented as such. The most famous readymades are those of Dadaist artist Marcel Duchamp, who created and engaged with the concept as a means of questioning the nature of art and the role of the artist.

realism

A style of art in which subjects are depicted as factually as possible. Realism also refers to a nineteenth-century art movement, led by Gustave Courbet, concerned with the representation of daily modern life, rather than mythological, religious, or historical subjects.

***Refus global* (Total Refusal)**

A manifesto released in 1948 by the Automatistes, a Montreal-based artists' group. Written by Paul-Émile Borduas and signed by fifteen other members, the main text condemned the dominance of Catholic ideology and the social and political status quo in Quebec. *Refus global* influenced the province's period of rapid change that came to be known as the Quiet Revolution. The sixteen signatories of *Refus global* were: Madeleine Arbour, Marcel Barbeau, Paul-Émile Borduas, Bruno Cormier, Marcelle Ferron, Claude Gauvreau, Pierre Gauvreau, Muriel Guilbault, Fernand Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Maurice Perron, Louise Renaud, Thérèse Renaud, Françoise Riopelle, Jean Paul Riopelle, and Françoise Sullivan.

Renoir, Pierre-Auguste (French, 1841–1919)

One of the foremost figures of the Impressionist movement. Renoir's prints, paintings, and sculptures often depict scenes of leisure and domestic ease. He left the Impressionists in 1878 to participate again in the Paris Salon, the city's officially sanctioned annual art exhibition.

representational

A term used to describe art that is derived from references to real objects and images that are recognizable as depictions of what exists in the real world. A representational work may not be entirely realistic.

Rouault, Georges (French, 1871–1958)

Known for his highly personal and expressive style, Rouault first gained notoriety in the early 1900s with his compassionate renderings of prostitutes and other marginalized people. Informed by Christian spiritualism, his work was finally embraced by the church shortly before his death.

Russell, Alfred (American, 1920–2007)

Russell was part of the New York School of Abstract Expressionists. His early work combines elements of the styles that typified abstract paintings from Paris and New York in the 1940s. Russell's consist of planes of colour that grow smaller toward the centre of the image, seeming to splinter and intensify. In the early 1950s, however, he became disillusioned with Abstract Expressionism and with the New York art scene more generally and rejected both to become a figurative painter. As a faculty member in the MFA program at Brooklyn College, Russell became an influential figure for realist artists of the 1950s and 1960s.

Sullivan, Françoise (Canadian, b.1923)

Born in Montreal, Sullivan—an artist, sculptor, dancer, and choreographer—studied at the city's École des beaux-arts (now part of the Université du Québec à Montréal) in the early 1940s, where she met Paul-Émile Borduas. His vision of automatism would become a great influence on her modern dance performances and choreography. (See *Françoise Sullivan: Life & Work* by Annie Gérin.)

Surrealism

An early twentieth-century literary and artistic movement that began in Paris. Surrealism aimed to express the workings of the unconscious, free of convention and reason, and was characterized by fantastic images and incongruous juxtapositions. The movement spread globally, influencing film, theatre, and music.

tessera

A small piece of glass or stone used in a mosaic, a tessera (plural tesserae) takes its name from the Latin for cube or die. Tesserae are arranged in coloured patterns to produce images and designs on floors, ceilings, and walls. The earliest examples were stones; later glass, ceramic, and other materials became common.

Tzara, Tristan (Romanian, 1896–1963)

Born Samuel Rosenstock, Tzara was a founder of the nihilistic revolutionary art movement Dada, as well as a poet and essayist. He was the author of the first Dadaist writings and the movement's manifestos. Around 1930 his aesthetic and intellectual interests shifted from Dada's destruction to the more productive mode of Surrealism. His poetry evolved from the anarchic to the lyrical, although he remained interested in the free association of imagery and linguistic experimentation. Tzara was a member of the French Communist party, and his politics are evident in his poetry and in his work with the French Resistance during the Second World War.

van Gogh, Vincent (Dutch, 1853–1890)

Among the most recognizable and beloved of modernist painters, van Gogh is the creator of *Starry Night* and *Vase with Sunflowers*, both from 1889. He is a nearly mythological figure in Western culture, the archetypal “tortured artist” who achieves posthumous fame after a lifetime of struggle and neglect.

vanitas

Borrowing the Latin word for “vanity,” a vanitas is a style of still life associated with seventeenth-century Dutch art. Combining items symbolic of ephemeral earthly achievements or pleasures (books, musical instruments, and luxurious objects) and items symbolic of death (skulls and rotting food or flowers similar to those featured in the related memento mori still lifes), vanitas paintings called on viewers to contemplate their own mortality, rejecting worldly indulgence and embracing repentance. The style’s popularity was closely associated with the contemporaneous rise of Calvinism and its rigid moral view.

van Velde, Bram (Dutch, 1895–1981)

Born in poverty in Amsterdam, Van Velde trained as a painter, arriving in Paris in 1924. His style evolved from figurative work toward an individualized abstraction that drew on elements of Cubism and Surrealism. Van Velde did not achieve professional success until the years following the Second World War when, supported by the critical assessment of his friend the writer Samuel Beckett, his intensely coloured works began to attract attention.

Viau, Guy (Canadian, 1920–1971)

An art critic, painter, designer, and leader in the Canadian cultural scene from the 1940s until his sudden death, Viau was associated with the Automatistes and studied with Paul-Émile Borduas. He taught at the École du meuble, a furniture design school, and the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. Viau contributed independently to Canadian newspapers and broadcasters in the form of major international stories and art films. He is the author of *Modern Painting in French Canada* (1967). Viau served in many leading cultural positions, including as the deputy director of the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, from 1967 to 1969, and as the founding director of the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris in 1969.

Vieira da Silva, Maria Helena (Portuguese/French, 1908–1992)

Born in Lisbon, Vieira da Silva became a leading figure in the French Abstract Expressionist movement Art Informel. She left Portugal to study in Paris in 1928, where she became immersed in the city’s modernist art scene. She embraced the Futurist emphasis on the representation of speed and velocity but rejected the movement’s Fascist politics, developing her own mosaic-like mixture of figuration and abstraction: cityscapes were one of her most frequent subjects. With her husband, the Hungarian-Jewish painter Arpad Szenes, Vieira da Silva spent the Second World War in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she became involved in the city’s emerging art scene.



Zao Wou-ki (Chinese/French 1921–2013)

Born in Beijing, Zao studied painting at the China Academy of Art in Hongzhu before moving to Paris in 1948. His Lyrical Abstraction paintings draw on Chinese, American, and French influences, especially the work of Paul Klee, the French Impressionists, and traditional Chinese drawing techniques. Zao's large-format, multi-panel canvases are characterized by luminous swaths of colour and abstracted effects of light.

SOURCES & RESOURCES

Before he turned forty in 1962, Jean Paul Riopelle had already exhibited his works several times in Paris, Philadelphia, London, and New York, as well as in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and Australia. This showcase on the international scene has earned him several exhibition catalogues while the artist's growing popularity increased studies on his eclectic practice and numerous influences. Here is an overview of the abundant documentation on Riopelle's work, from his first exhibitions to the latest books devoted to him.



Installation view of *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 155 x 1,424 cm (1st element); 155 x 1,247 cm (2nd element); 155 x 1,368 cm (3rd element). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, in the Pierre Lassonde pavilion of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, c.2016. Photograph by Idra Labrie.

KEY EXHIBITIONS

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| 1946 | April 20–29, <i>Painting Exhibition (Exposition de peinture)</i> , 1257 Amherst Street, Montreal. |
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| 1947 | Summer, <i>Surrealism (Surréalisme en 1947)</i> , 6th International Exhibition of Surrealism, Galerie Maeght, Paris. André Breton and Marcel Duchamp, curators. Catalogue. |
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| 1951 | March 8–31, <i>Confronted Vehemences (Véhémences confrontées)</i> , Galerie Nina Dausset, Paris. Michel Tapié, curator. Catalogue. |
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| 1953–1954 | December 2, 1953 to February 21, 1954, <i>Younger European Painters: A Selection</i> , Guggenheim Museum, New York. Travelling exhibition: Minneapolis, Portland, San Francisco, Dallas, Fayetteville, and Dayton. Catalogue. |
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| 1967 | Summer, <i>Riopelle 67</i> , Musée du Québec, Quebec City. Guy Viau, curator. Catalogue. |
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| 1972 | June 15–October 12, <i>Strings and Other Games (Ficelles et autres jeux)</i> , Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris, and Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. Catalogue. |
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| 1981–1982 | September 1981–November 1981, <i>Jean Paul Riopelle. Painting 1946–1977 (Jean Paul Riopelle. Peinture 1946–1977)</i> , National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; and December 1981–January 1982, Musée du Québec, Quebec City. Travelling exhibition: Mexico, Caracas, and Montreal. Catalogue. |
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| 1996 | Spring, <i>Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)</i> , Musée du Québec, Quebec City. Catalogue. |
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2002June 20–September 22, *Riopelle*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Catalogue.**2018–
2019**October 12, 2018 to April 22, 2019, *Mitchell/Riopelle, Nothing in Moderation* (*Mitchell/Riopelle, un couple dans la démesure*), Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. Travelling exhibition: Toronto and Landerneau. Michel Martin, curator. Catalogue.**2020**June 6–September 20, *The Call of Northern Landscapes and Indigenous Cultures* (*Riopelle: à la rencontre des territoires nordiques et des cultures autochtones*), Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Catalogue.**SELECTED CRITICAL WRITINGS**

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LEFT: Cover of *Catalogue raisonné de Jean Paul Riopelle, tome 1 : 1939-1953, 1999*, edited by Yseult Riopelle. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). RIGHT: Cover of *Jean-Paul Riopelle : des visions d'Amérique*, edited by Robert Bernier. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).

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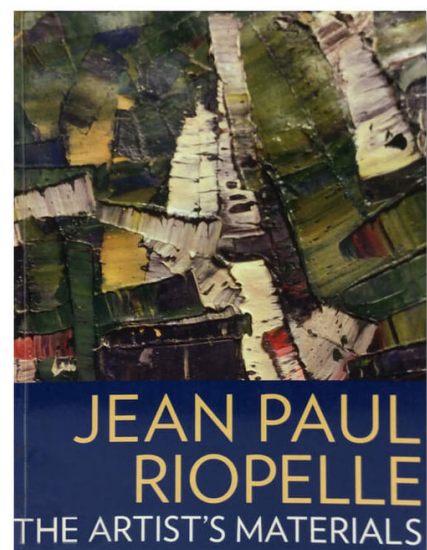
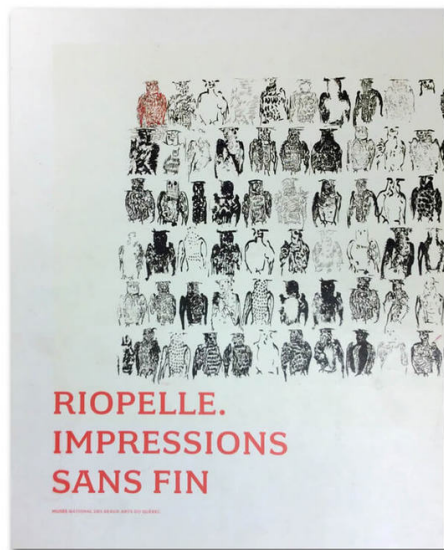
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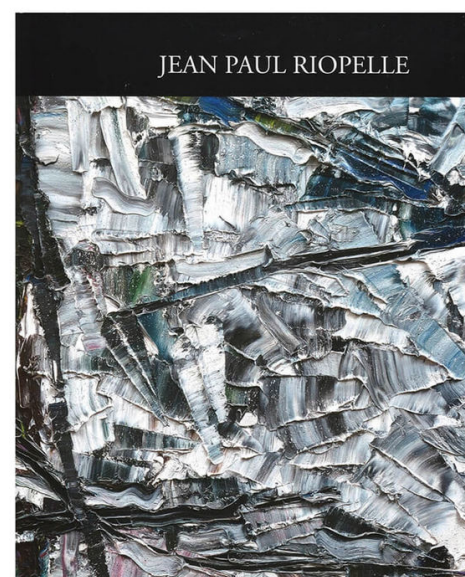
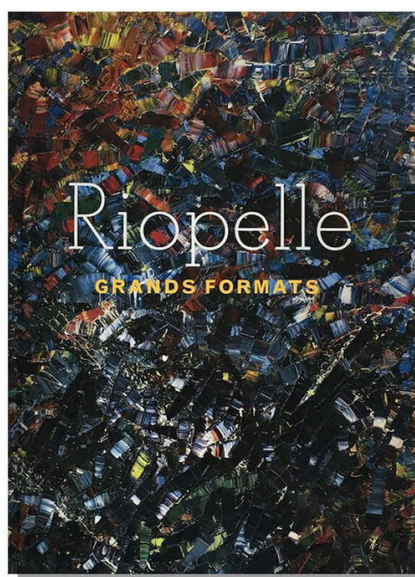
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LEFT: Cover of *Riopelle: Impressions sans fin*, from October 26, 2005–January 8, 2006, at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). RIGHT: Cover of *Jean Paul Riopelle: The Artist's Materials*, 2011, by Marie-Claude Corbeil, Kate Helwig, and Jennifer Poulin. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



LEFT: Cover of the exhibition catalogue for *Riopelle: Grands Formats*, from September 17–October 23, 2009, at Acquavella Galleries, New York. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). RIGHT: Cover of *Catalogue raisonné de Jean Paul Riopelle, tome 4: 1966–1971*, 2014, edited by Yseult Riopelle. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



JEAN PAUL RIOPELLE

Life & Work by François-Marc Gagnon

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

FRANÇOIS-MARC GAGNON

François-Marc Gagnon (1935–2019) was one of Canada's most respected and prolific art historians. He focused on two areas in particular: early Canadian art, especially the painters and sculptors of New France; and the 1940s–50s, writing on Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Guido Molinari, and the automatist movement, among others.

After a long career in art history at the Université de Montréal, Gagnon was the director of the Gail and Stephen A. Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art at Concordia University. In recognition of his contribution to Canadian art, Gagnon has been awarded many prizes, including the Raymond Klibansky Prize (2000), the Prix Gérard-Morisset (2010), and, with Nancy Senior and Réal Ouellet, the Canada Prize in the Humanities (2013). In 1999 he was honoured with the Order of Canada, and in 2015 with the Ordre national du Québec.



“Riopelle’s dedication to his art and his exacting exploration of techniques, which he honed in several mediums over his lifetime, are undeniable. At the heart of his practice was his encounters with the natural world, out of which he created a new one—this is his most enduring leitmotif, even in his most abstract compositions.”



CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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From the Author

First and foremost I owe thanks to my wife, Prina. Thank you to Ersy Contogouris, Christine Poulin, and Annie Champagne. A special thank you to Sara Angel, Bruce V. Walter, and our anonymous sponsor.

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(Pascale Tremblay); Musée d'art de Joliette (Nathalie Galego); Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Linda-Anne d'Anjou and Marie-Claude Saia); National Gallery of Canada (Raven Amiro); McCord Museum (Anne-Frédérique Beaulieu); Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (Véronique Greaves and Nathalie Thibault); Museum Ludwig; Power Corporation of Canada (Paul Maréchal); Rheinisches Bildarchiv (Cathleen Walther and Sabrina Walz); Sam Francis Foundation (Beth Ann Whittaker-Williams); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (Susan Wamsley); Winchester Galleries (Linda Hensellek); and Claude Bergeron, Sophie Bisson, Champlain Charest, Ninon Gauthier, Paul Litherland, Édouard Lombard, Heidi Meister, Line-Sylvie Perron, Yseult Riopelle, Pierre Rochette, and Marie Saint-Pierre.

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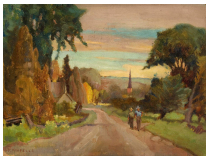


Pavane (Tribute to the Water Lilies) (Pavane [Hommage aux Nymphéas]), 1954, oil on canvas, 300 x 550.2 cm (triptych). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (15038.1-3). Photo credit: National Gallery of Canada.

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First owl (Hibou premier), 1939-41, oil on canvas cardboard, 40.5 x 30 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, gift of the Jean Paul Riopelle Estate (2003.56). Photo credit: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Idra Labrie.



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Mont-Royal, c.1943, oil on canvas mounted on cardboard, 30.4 x 35.7 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gift of Françoise Riopelle (2004.263). Photo credit: MMFA, Brian Merrett.



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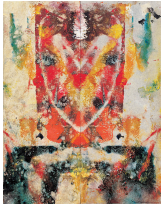
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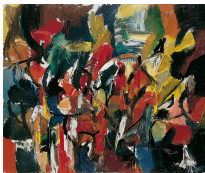
Gypsy (Gitan), 1946, oil on paper, 28 x 21.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Versombreuse, 1946, decalcomania, oil on paper, 28 x 22 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Mother Liquors (Eaux-mères), 1947, ink on paper, 27.5 x 45.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Paul Litherland.



Within the Four Walls of the Wind, I'm Listening–Nadaka (Entre les quatre murs du vent, j'écoute–Nadaka), 1947, oil on canvas, 76 x 92 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Hochelaga, 1947, oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Power Corporation of Canada Art Collection, Montreal. Courtesy of Power Corporation of Canada.



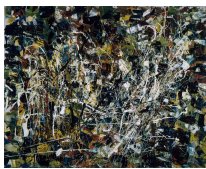
Nature's Parachutes (19.47) (Parachutes végétaux [19.47]), 1947, oil on canvas, 81.8 x 109.7 cm, by Paul-Émile Borduas, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa (4911), purchased in 1948. Photo credit: National Gallery of Canada. © Paul-Émile Borduas Estate.



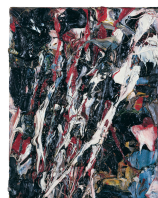
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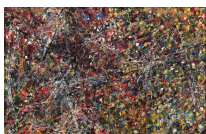
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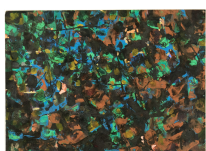
Untitled (Sans titre), 1949-50, oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



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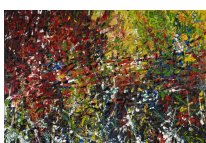
Reproduction of Jean Paul Riopelle's *Sans titre (Untitled)*, 1949-50, on the poster catalogue of the exhibition *Confronted Vehemences (Véhémences confrontées)*, 1951. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle. Photographer unknown.



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Blue Night (La nuit bleue), 1953, oil on canvas, 114 x 194.9 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (53.1374). Photo credit: Courtesy of Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York.



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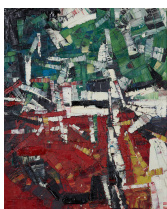
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Saint-Anthon, 1954, oil on canvas, 248 x 388 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection, New York. Courtesy of Acquavella Galleries, New York. Photo credit: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.



The Wheel (Cold Dog-Indian Summer) (La roue [Cold Dog-Indian Summer]), 1954-1955, oil on canvas, 250 x 331 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, with a special grant from the Government of Quebec (2001.163). Photo credit: MMFA, Denis Farley.



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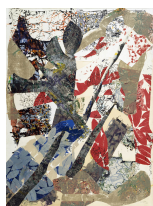
Beyond (Par-delà), 1961, oil on canvas, 89 x 116 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Untitled (Sans titre), 1964, oil on canvas, 276.4 x 214.5 cm (panel A); 275.5 x 214.7 cm (panel B); 275.5 x 214.5 cm (panel C). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966 (66.4268). Photo credit: Courtesy of Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Cathy Carver. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



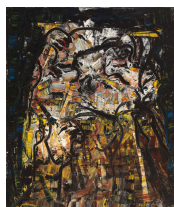
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Untitled (Sans titre), 1969, pastel on paper, 50 x 65.5 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photo credit: Courtesy of Galerie Simon Blais, Montreal.



Owl A (Hibou A), 1969-70 (cast in bronze c.1974), bronze, 1/4, 143 x 93 x 74 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, gift of the Marc Bellemare (2015.900). Photo credit: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Idra Labrie.



Owl-Rock (Hibou-Roc), 1969-70 (cast in bronze 2010), bronze and leftover wax, 2/8, 54.8 x 44 x 27.3 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection, Winnipeg. Photo credit: Courtesy Mayberry Fine Art Gallery, Winnipeg.



The Joust (La Joute), 1969-70 (cast in bronze c.1974), bronze, 380 cm high x 1,240 cm in diameter (approximate dimensions). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, collective gift of doctors Michel Bovo, Champlain Charest, Simon Charlebois, Hubert Grégoire, Michel Lafortune, André G. Légaré, Henri Martin, Halim Mheir, Pierre C. Millette, Alexis Pagacz, and Claude Vallée. Photo credit: Richard-Max Tremblay.



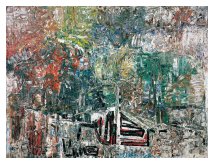
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Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg), 1992, acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 155 x 1,424 cm (1st element); 155 x 1,247 cm (2nd element); 155 x 1,368 cm (3rd element). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, gift of the artist (1996.96). Photo credit: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie.



The Happy Isle (L'Isle heureuse), 1992, mixed technique on two wood panels, 154.3 x 203.2 cm. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Private collection. Photo credit: Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.

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The Virgin and Child with Saint Catherine and a Shepherd, known as *The Madonna of the Rabbit*, c.1525-30, oil on canvas, 71 x 87 cm, by Titian. Musée du Louvre, Paris. Photo credit: Angèle Dequier.



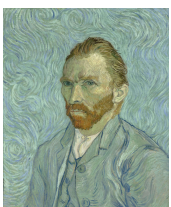
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Cheval arabe blanc-gris (Study of a Dapple Grey), c.1812, oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm, by Théodore Géricault. Musée des beaux-arts de Rouen (850.3.1). Photo credit: Wikicommons.



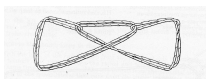
The Third of May 1808 in Madrid, or "The Executions", 1814, oil on canvas, 268 x 347 cm, by Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (P000749). Photo credit: Wikicommons.



Self-Portrait (Portrait de l'artiste), 1889, oil on canvas, 65 x 54.5 cm, by Vincent van Gogh. Musée d'Orsay, Paris. Photo credit: © Musée d'Orsay 2006-2019.



Water Lilies (Les Nymphéas), 1920–26, oil on canvas, 219 x 602 cm, by Claude Monet. Musée de l'Orangerie, Paris. Photo credit: Wikicommons, The Yorck Project.



A figure known as the “little finger” or “anus.” Image from *Report of the Canadian Arctic Expedition 1913–1918, part B: Eskimo String Figures* by Diamond Jenness. Ottawa: F.A.A. Acland, 1924, p. 26.



Jean Paul Riopelle on his return from fishing, c.1928. Photographer unknown. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



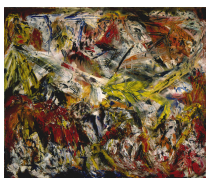
Monument à la gloire des Patriotes (Monument to the Patriots), 1937, granite and bronze, 563.9 x 78.7 cm, by Henri Bisson. MRC de la Vallée du Richelieu, Quebec. Courtesy of Sophie Bisson. Photo credit: Bergeron Gagnon Inc., 2012. © Henri Bisson Estate (2019).



Jean Paul Riopelle painting in Saint-Fabien-sur-Mer, c.1944. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Françoise Riopelle. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Perron, Maurice, *First collective Exhibition of the Automatistes, photo from the layout of the Refus global manifesto*, 1946. Gelatin silver print, 5.9 x 10.2 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.205.02). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.



Tumult with a Tense Jaw (Tumulte à la mâchoire crispée), 1946, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 89.3 cm, by Marcel Barbeau. Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo credit: © Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City. © Courtesy of Ninon Gauthier and Fondation Marcel Barbeau (2019).



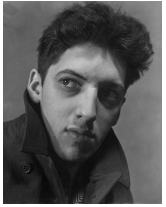
Cover of the Surrealist manifesto *Rupture inaugurale* (1947). Paris: Éditions surréalistes, 1947.



Perron, Maurice, *Mousseau-Riopelle exhibition at Muriel Guilbault's apartment, 1947*. Gelatin silver print, 25.5 x 25.5 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.205.02). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.



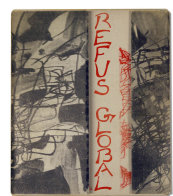
Perron, Maurice, *Françoise Lespérance Riopelle, c.1947*. Gelatin silver print, 34.3 x 23.8 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.145). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.



Perron, Maurice, *Jean Paul Riopelle, c.1947*. Gelatin silver print, 34.3 x 27.3 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (1999.14 2). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.



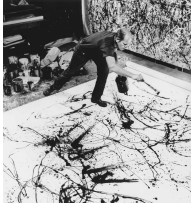
Perron, Maurice, *Second collective Exhibition of the Automatistes at the Gauvreau home, 75 Sherbrooke Street West, February 1947*. Black-and-white negative, 6.5 x 11 cm. Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Maurice Perron fonds (P35.S7.Pd). © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.



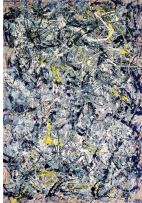
Jean Paul Riopelle and Pierre Gauvreau, cover page of the manifesto *Refus global (Total Refusal)*, 1948, ink on paper, 21.5 x 18.5 cm. Paul-Émile Borduas and other signatories, *Refus global*, Saint-Hilaire, Éditions Mithra-Mythe, 1948. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate and Pierre Gauvreau Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photo credit: Courtesy of Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto.



Number 1A, 1948, oil and enamel on canvas, 172.7 x 264.2 cm, by Jackson Pollock. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / SOCAN (2019).



Jackson Pollock in 1950, working on his painting *Autumn Rhythm*, 1950. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Hans Namuth. Courtesy of Center for Creative Photography, University of Arizona. © Hans Namuth Estate, 1991.



Number 8, 1950, enamel and aluminum painting on canvas mounted on fibreboard, 142.5 x 99 cm, by Jackson Pollock. © Pollock-Krasner Foundation / SOCAN (2019). Private collection.



Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio on rue Durantin, Paris, in 1952. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by John Craven. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



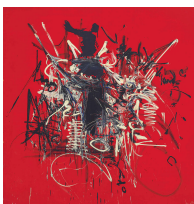
Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio on rue Durantin, Paris, in 1952. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by John Craven.



The Lyrical Abstraction group in 1953. Photograph by Denise Colomb. © Denise Colomb - RMN - Gestion droit d'auteur.



Jean Paul Riopelle and Georges Duthuit in 1954 in front of *Pavane (Tribute to the Water Lilies)* (*Pavane [Hommage aux Nymphéas]*). © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photographer unknown. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



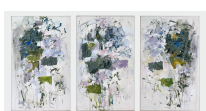
Fourth Avenue, 1957, oil on canvas, 152.4 x 152.4 cm, by Georges Mathieu. © Georges Mathieu Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photo credit: Christie's.



Sam Francis with Jean Paul Riopelle on his Peugeot motorcycle in Paris, 1953. © 2019 Sam Francis Foundation, California / SOCAN, Montreal / Artists Rights Society. Courtesy of Sam Francis Foundation, California. Photograph by Carol Haerer.



Joan Mitchell and Jean Paul Riopelle in their studio / apartment on rue Frémicourt in Paris, in 1963. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Courtesy of Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and Heidi Meister. Photo credit: Heidi Meister, 2019.



Girolata, 1964, oil on canvas, 258.4 x 481.6 cm, by Joan Mitchell. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C., gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1966 (66.3581). Courtesy of Joan Mitchell Foundation. Photo credit: Courtesy of Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Cathy Carver. © Joan Mitchell Estate (2019).



Pierre Matisse and Jean Paul Riopelle on the Côte d'Azur, France, c.1964, photographer unknown. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Exterior staircases on de Lorimier Avenue, between Laurier Avenue and Rachel Street, June 27, 1967, Archives de la Ville de Montréal (VM94-A0454-003).



The Joust (La Joute), 1969-70 (cast c.1974), bronze, 380 cm high, 1,240 cm in diameter (approximate dimensions), © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Installed at the Montreal Stade Olympic, photograph by Claudette Desjardins.



Henri Bisson, c.1973. Private collection. Courtesy of Sophie Bisson. Studio Beaulac, photographie enrg.



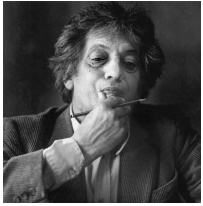
Sketch (Esquisse), 1973, 1973, charcoal, chalk and sanguine on paper, 27.5 x 20.6 cm, by Henri Bisson. Private collection. Courtesy of Sophie Bisson. © Henri Bisson Estate (2019).



Jean Paul Riopelle in the Far North in July 1977. Photograph by Claude Duthuit. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Jean Paul Riopelle on the occasion of the exhibition *Riopelle, paintings, prints (Riopelle, peintures, estampes)* held at the Musée des beaux-arts and at the Hôtel d'Escoville in Caen, France, in 1984. Photograph by P. Victor. Archives of the Catalogue raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle.



Jean Paul Riopelle in Paris, 1985. Photograph by Michel Nguyen. © Michel Nguyen.



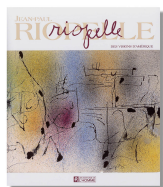
Harpoon model (avataq) made by Nunavimmiut (or Nunavik Inuit), c.1900-09. Photo credit: Musée McCord, Peter Berra, 2006. © Musée McCord, Montréal (L51.30.1-4).



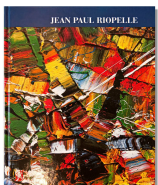
Jean Paul Riopelle and Maurice Richard, March 29, 1990. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph by Pierre McGann (*La Presse*).



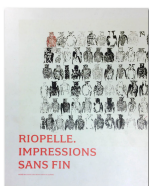
Jean Paul Riopelle in his studio on Île-aux-Oies in 1992, executing a preparatory work for *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Photograph from the catalogue *Jean-Paul Riopelle: Œuvres vives*. Michel Tétrault, ed. Montreal: Michel Tétrault Art International, 1993.



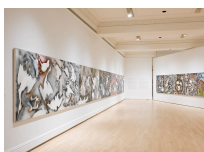
Cover of the catalogue of the exhibition *Jean-Paul Riopelle: des visions d'Amérique* (*Jean-Paul Riopelle: Visions of America*), Robert Bernier, ed. Montreal: Éditions de l'Homme, 1997. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



Cover of the *Catalogue raisonné de Jean Paul Riopelle, vol. 1, 1939-1953*. Yseult Riopelle, ed. Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 1999. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



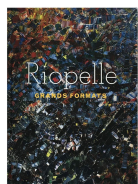
Cover of the catalogue of the exhibition *Riopelle: Impressions sans fin*, Collective, Québec, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, 2005. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



View of *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* (*L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg*), 1992, in the Gérard-Morisset pavilion of the Musée du Québec, Québec City (now the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec), c.2000. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Photo credit: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Idra Labrie.



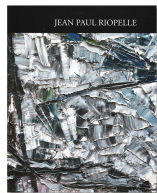
Greater Snow Geese at Cap Tourmente National Wildlife Area, Québec, 2007. © Pierre Rochette (2019).



Cover of the catalogue of the exhibition *Riopelle: Grands Formats* (*Riopelle: Large Formats*) from September 17 to October 23, 2009, Acquavella Galleries, New York. Courtesy of Acquavella Galleries. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



Cover of the catalogue of the exhibition *Jean Paul Riopelle: The Artist's Materials*, Marie-Claude Corbeil, Kate Helwig and Jennifer Poulin, Los Angeles, Getty Conservation Institute, 2011. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



Cover of the *Catalogue raisonné de Jean Paul Riopelle, vol. 4, 1966-1971*. Yseult Riopelle and Tanguy Riopelle, eds. Montreal: Hibou Éditeurs, 2014. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019).



View of *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg (L'Hommage à Rosa Luxemburg)*, 1992, in the Pierre Lassonde pavilion of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Quebec City, c.2016. © Jean Paul Riopelle Estate / SOCAN (2019). Collection of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Photo credit: Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Idra Labrie.

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