



Martin Blanchet

A Free Spirit



STORMY DAY ON THE RIVER oil, 24 x 30 in.

It is true that time waits for no man. In the case of an artist, however, time and unfortunately death, mean reputation and higher prices. Somehow, upon meeting Martin Blanchet, all such commercial notions melt away. An aura of sincerity, serenity and talent surrounds this young yet wise artist, so much so that he exudes

a combination of wholeness and confidence when speaking of his art.

Blanchet gives the impression of one who calmly masters his work while constantly pursuing renewal. A tour of Blanchet's home and studio reveals the artist's ongoing research and incessant search for perfection; in other words, precisely those qualities which make him the remarkable

painter he has become.

The artist enchants as he speaks, just as when he paints. His canvases and words awaken the senses to the point that one hears the fire crackling and experiences the morning mist on the cheeks or actually sees the afternoon light. Blanchet describes in detail how he feels, how he tries to preserve an image in his mind with



CLEARING ON THE RIVER, oil, 24 x 30 in.



THE OLD ROAD TO LAC AU CHEVREUIL, oil, 24 x 30 in.

the help of an easily pocketed sketch pad that accompanies him during forest walks.

Blanchet's skills as an observer of nature have given him an intimate approach to landscapes and especially to animals, which he represents with great rigour. As he works, he draws upon raw emotion, or his initial gut feeling. On foot or aboard an all-terrain vehicle, he seeks out sites that he then outlines with a brush on the canvas. In this connivance of sorts with nature, Martin Blanchet feels a kinship with the Group of Seven. He admires these pioneering Canadian artists for the purity of the wilderness that they conveyed and for the obstacles they faced when painting the north. Martin Blanchet mentions other artists of interest to him. Louis Boeckhout, Blanchet's first teacher, tops the list because of his special way of perceiving light. Suzor-Coté follows for his representations of the countryside

and its atmosphere. James Wilson Morrice is included because of the atmosphere that he could draw out of his paintings.

Martin is obviously a serious nature-lover. The joy of hearing the artist speak of such works as *La Vieille Trail/The Old Trail*, *Le Champ à Ernest/Ernest's Field*, *Le Champ à Rosario/Rosario's Field* or *La Tuque à Pépère/Grandpa's Tuque* is almost equal to seeing them.

The names found in Blanchet's titles often are those of friends and acquaintances. He truly enjoys people, especially rural or authentic folk. Yet he is a self-taught painter who paints alone. He refines his work by visiting museums where he analyzes the means that others employ to recreate reality. Blanchet combats the banal or facile by not resting on his laurels, like a show in France or exhibitions elsewhere in North America. A modest man, he does not advertise the fact that his work is on display not only in Saint-Sauveur, a Laurentian ski and holiday village, but also in New York City.

Martin is a free spirit, an observer, who keeps a quick exit ready in each piece. It may be a meander in the stream, a path that disappears over the horizon. In any event, his work gives viewers access to the 'backstage of the painting'. An independent thinker, Martin Blanchet remains ready to explore further this other world, through his art and research. █

Michel Beauchamp

Martin Blanchet has a solo exhibition from October 10-19 at the Galerie Michel Biqué, 315, Principale, Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts, Québec. He is listed in the Biennial Guide to Canadian Artists in Galleries.



PETITE NATION RIVER IN SPRING, oil, 24 x 30 in.

TERRY ANANNY



"Village au Québec" acrylic 24 x 30 in

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