



ALFRED PELLAN

MUSÉE DU QUÉBEC • MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL



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DE MONTRÉAL
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14 SEP. 1994

ALFRED PELLAN

MICHEL MARTIN • SANDRA GRANT MARCHAND

ALFRED PELLAN

With contributions by
Marie Carani and
Germain Lefebvre

MUSÉE DU QUÉBEC • MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

This work was published for the exhibition *Alfred Pellan: A Retrospective*, presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from June 17 to September 26, 1993, and the Musée du Québec from October 13, 1993 to January 31, 1994.

The exhibition was prepared by Sandra Grant Marchand, curator at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, and Michel Martin, curator at the Musée du Québec, with the assistance of Marie-Josée Latour and Martine Perreault, researchers.

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FOREWORD

The major retrospective of the paintings of Alfred Pellan presented to the Québec and Canadian public in 1993 and 1994 was made possible through close collaboration between the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Musée du Québec. As early as 1940, on Pellan's return from Europe, a considerable number of his still-lives, abstract works and drawings were exhibited at the Musée du Québec, then the Musée de la province de Québec. Later, in 1972, the Musée du Québec and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts jointly organized a major exhibition of Pellan's work.

Alfred Pellan is a landmark artist whose diligence and tenacity shaped the history of art in Québec and contributed to its international exposure. Pellan played a critical role during a decisive era in Québec's cultural development. Artists' groups, such as the Automatistes led by Borduas and Prisme d'yeux of which Pellan was a founder, were revolutionary in challenging the universally accepted foundations of the creative process and artistic expression. In a context of newly obsolete ideologies, Pellan stood out through the force of his polymorphous work, in which painting nonetheless remained the focal point of his artistic experience. He felt that creation should be free, pure and global. In this period of affirmation, Pellan paved the way for many of his contemporaries and future generations of artists.

Those who met Alfred Pellan in his later years recognized in him the wisdom, plenitude and serenity of the truly great. His gaze reflected the route he had chosen, and a few malicious twinkles recalled past struggles and the pride of having remained faithful to himself and chosen not to compromise.

On behalf of all those who will enjoy this retrospective of his paintings, I would like to thank the collectors and lending institutions which agreed to give up their "Pellan" for the duration of the exhibition. I would also like to underline the excellent work of the two curators in charge of the exhibition, Sandra Grant Marchand of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and Michel Martin of the Musée du Québec. My thanks also to Marie Carani and Germain Lefebvre for their valuable assistance, and finally, my grateful acknowledgement to Madeleine Pellan, whose friendly, constant support helped us see this project through successfully. And, of course, my warmest thanks to Marcel Brisebois, director of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, with whom I had the opportunity of cooperating closely in this undertaking.

Marcel Brisebois and I are pleased to present this exhibition not only in our respective museums, but also in various cities throughout Canada.

Andrée Laliberté-Bourque
Director General
Musée du Québec
April 1993

On August 11, 1987, I visited Alfred Pellan in his home to propose an exhibition of his work at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the year after the inauguration of our new facilities downtown. Shortly thereafter, Godefroy Cardinal, then director of the Musée du Québec, made him a similar proposal. Pellan was determined not to favour one institution over the other, and it was quickly agreed that the two museums would pool their resources within a single venture. The exhibition we are presenting is therefore the result of a joint undertaking on the part of our two teams, who were assisted by Marie Carani and Germain Lefebvre.

What is the meaning of such an exhibition? Those visitors who are familiar with Pellan's œuvre will quickly realize that they are not witnessing a retrospective in the truest sense of the word. The scope of his work, the diversity of his style and, frankly speaking, our limited means, precluded such an undertaking. Instead, we confined ourselves to exploring his paintings, since it is first and foremost as a painter that Pellan made his mark with his contemporaries, beginning in the early 1930s. Various commissions as well as his curiosity and playful spirit occasionally drew him to experiment with other forms of expression. But if Pellan had been asked to respond to the famous Kantian questions "Who am I? What can I learn? What should I do?", he would undoubtedly have answered that painting constituted his knowledge and his ethics—indeed, his very being.

Therefore, this exhibition is not really retrospective, or even commemorative, despite the fact that fifty years ago, Pellan began teaching at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. At that time, Jean-Charles Harvey called him the master of Canadian painting; yet Pellan was a master in more than one sense. He possessed that rare vocation which ranked him with the great figures of the French art scene of the era. This meant that his work was exhibited not only in Montréal, but also in New York. At the same time, his dynamism—some would say exuberance—determination, and acute awareness of the demands his artwork made both on himself and on society, enabled him to assume, perhaps more rightfully than anyone else, the role of a genuine liberator.

For us at the Musée d'art contemporain, it is not simply a question of returning to the roots of our modernity, even on the pretext of better grasping our identity. Still less is it our intention to assuage a guilty conscience, revive old quarrels, rehash decisions, or even rewrite history. Our existence and the circumstances surrounding our lives resemble sediment deposits and residues, often carried away by the call of the open sea, to which we cannot but respond. We dare to hope that visitors, in following the route mapped out by the works offered here for their contemplation, will realize that the only veritable art is contemporary. For us, Pellan is not a legendary figure who will fade into the past, but a companion on a modern adventure replete with unforeseen challenges and unfortold promises.

In closing, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of this project.

Marcel Brisebois
 Director General
 Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
 April 1993

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Université de Montréal
Vancouver Art Gallery
Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley
Winnipeg Art Gallery

Many people generously collaborated in organizing the exhibition *Alfred Pellan: A Retrospective*. We would like to warmly thank Madeleine Pellan for her unflagging support for the project, right from our first meeting with the artist in May 1988. Throughout the organization of the exhibition, she provided us with invaluable assistance which enabled us to continue our research, and also agreed to lend us several works from her collection to be displayed in the exhibition. For this, we wish to express our heartfelt gratitude.

We would also like to thank all collectors who were kind enough to receive us, and more particularly the various individuals and lending institutions who agreed to our loan requests for this Pellan retrospective. Without the essential contribution of all public and private collections, this exhibition would not have been possible.

We would particularly like to emphasize the cooperation of Marie Carani and Germain Lefebvre, who both agreed to write a text for this catalogue. Mr. Lefebvre was also in charge of preparing the entries for the 155 works, thereby providing considerable scientific background to the exhibition.

Throughout the various research phases, many people were extremely helpful in the difficult task of tracing works. Special thanks go to Suzanne E. Davis, Brigitte Desroches, Simon Dresdnere, Michel Giroux, Gérard Gorce, Armande Guervin, Geoffrey P. Joyner, Yves Lacasse, Claude Lafitte, Denise Leclerc, Germain Lefebvre, Georges Loranger, Danielle Molinari, Dennis Reid, Judy Scolnik, Christopher Varley, and Mrs. Jack Wildridge. We would also like to thank Alain Cuny, Clare W. Hayes, and her daughter Deborah Gillette.

This exhibition is the result of close cooperation between the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Musée du Québec. Louise Ismert and Michèle Grandbois coordinated the project and we thank them for their attention to even the smallest detail. Thanks also to the different departments of both institutions for their assistance in organizing this exhibition, and to their staff for their expertise and support in organizing this exhibition and publishing the accompanying catalogue.

Finally, we would like to point out the invaluable work of researchers Marie-Josée Latour and Martine Perreault. Their enthusiasm and professionalism provided us with vital support in carrying out this major project. We are profoundly grateful and would like to express our sincere appreciation.

Michel Martin
Sandra Grant Marchand

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ART AS A CELEBRATION

Germain Lefebvre

ALFRED PELLAN defined art as a celebration when he was still very young, living what he found to be a dull, monotonous existence. Of frail health, he was often forced to stay home from school, and consequently fell behind, lost all interest in his studies, and became bored. His first experiences with paintbrushes and pigment were a revelation, changing his life. Moreover, he could paint in complete solitude. Nothing could match the pleasure he experienced when reproducing images from a calendar or attempting to compose a still-life with a plate, a pitcher, or a handful of strawberries.¹ Day-to-day life, which had hitherto been dreary and tedious, suddenly took on new meaning and colour. All Pellan had to do was draw or paint and the celebration began.

Pellan devoted himself to the celebration of art, or better yet, turned art itself into a celebration; and with great magnanimity, shared with us its attractions, surprises and pleasures. I had the memorable privilege of witnessing the preparation, development and flourishing of one of the happiest episodes of this celebration in which Pellan indulged himself throughout his artistic career.

The episode occurred twenty years ago, when the Musée du Québec and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts were jointly preparing a major retrospective of the work of Pellan, already recognized as one of the country's dominant contemporary art figures.² The last large-scale exhibition devoted to the artist dated from some twelve years previous. Sixty-six years young, Pellan must have decided that the time was ripe for a major retrospective, and—why not?—for him to be celebrated.

Right from the first working sessions in the artist's studio, my colleague from the Musée du Québec, André Marchand, and I quickly realized that, although we were not losing control of the undertaking, the exhibition was certainly in the process of becoming a marvellous adventure elaborately organized and staged by the artist himself, a formidable re-creation bearing Pellan's signature.

Pellan allowed us access to his photographic records so that we could examine the many works and achievements of his prolific career. The photographs were black and white, but Pellan's comments

infused them with all their original colour and vibrancy. "That work is magnificent in colour", he would remark. "I'd love to see it again. And that one, and that one too". Obviously, Pellán was revelling in the recapitulation of close to 50 years of artistic effort.

The exhibition, held in September 1972, presented 176 paintings, costumes created for the characters of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, fanciful, multi-coloured masks, and curious little objects created from coloured pebbles, forming a bestiary of creatures as fantastic as they were intriguing.

Pellán moved through the exhibition, occasionally stopping along the way, rather like the father of a huge family who had assembled all his children together for an important event.³ If he regretted having invited a particularly unassuming offspring, who made less of an impact, he did not show it. He was equally discreet with regard to the satisfaction afforded him by the sight of an especially masterful work. He was determined not to "plug his product", [Translation] to quote his own expression. As I strolled through the exhibition galleries, observing the artist's reactions and examining the wide range of works assembled there, I imagined and tried to understand the other celebrations which had preceded this one and marked the career of Alfred Pellán.⁴

Following the celebration constituted by Pellán's discovery of painting came that of its accompanying rules, secrets and magic. In September 1921, still a teenager, Pellán was admitted to the newly inaugurated *École des beaux-arts de Québec*. At first he had trouble believing that the pastime which had bewitched his leisure hours and been of so little merit academically speaking, could be so appreciated by the powers-that-be and even prove a key to the future! If art could be more than a game, Pellán reasoned, it might be worthwhile to learn the rules.

Consequently, with the utmost seriousness and determination, Pellán applied himself to learning to manipulate and master the tools and materials necessary to the practice of art. Every day, from early in the morning to well into the night, he worked diligently. Drawing models, drawing from nature, making plaster casts, learning about the chemistry of colour and architectural concepts, everything interested and fascinated him. Rarely had a school of fine arts seen such an attentive, assiduous, hard-working and gifted student. After years of academic mediocrity, Pellán had finally found a field in which he excelled. He was the top of the class in everything: drawing, painting, sculpture, sketching and anatomy. He was even awarded a special prize for his sketches.

It is no wonder, then, that after five years of devoted effort, Pellán's performance should be crowned by a fabulous and coveted award. A jury formed especially for this purpose granted him a scholarship to study in Paris, the capital of the art world.⁵ At twenty years of age, with boundless energy and ambition, his head filled with dreams, a very confident Pellán struck out to conquer art. He had acquired a solid background, thanks to his diligence, discipline, and almost excessive concern for technical perfection.

The passion, depth and seriousness of his commitment to art never waned. One had only to set foot in Pellán's studio to sense the nature of the relationship which had developed between the man

1. *Les Fraises*, painted in 1920 when Pellán, only 14, was not yet attending the *École de beaux-arts de Québec*. The artist always jealously guarded this small canvas, whose formal qualities heralded his future work. It is No. 1 in the exhibition catalogue.

2. Presented consecutively at the two institutions which organized it, in Québec City and then in Montréal, the exhibition was prolonged so that it could be presented at the National Gallery of Canada.

3. Pellán was as satisfied with this exhibition as he might have been at completing a masterful work. The whole formed an environment which became, in a sense, a work; he had made it into a Pellán, as he had done on a smaller scale with his house.

4. To critic Gilles Daigneault who was questioning him one day on his work, he replied: "Did you see my retrospective in 1972? Then you know everything. I need tell you no more...". [Translation] "Pellán" in *Seize peintres du Québec dans leur milieu*, Montréal, *Vie des Arts*, 1975, p. 127.

5. Pellán shared, with his colleague Omer Parent, the honour of having obtained the first scholarship for artists created by the Secretary of the province of Québec, the Honourable Athanase David.

and his art. His concern for care and efficiency were incomparable: every tool was in its place; each numbered pen corresponded to the colours of ink used—blue, yellow, red, black, etc.; and everything was laid out neatly in the drawers. Each sheet of paper was filed by type, format, and colour, as were the dozens upon dozens of paint-brushes lined up by specialty upon size, so as to facilitate their use. Pellán harboured a deep respect for the demands of the artist's trade, and for the requirements of artistic techniques and practices.

However, here and there, were masks decorated with multi-coloured blossoms, bizarre beasts created directly on stones in the wall, curious inventions resembling spaceships and interstellar vessels, inspired by man's farfetched cosmic ambitions, all forming a striking contrast to the rational, practical order which reigned throughout. The folly and fancy which suddenly manifested themselves, the need to dream, to free himself from the yoke of standards and rules; this, too, was characteristic of Alfred Pellán.

Paris proved "a moveable feast", after the title of a book by Ernest Hemingway in which he describes life in the French capital during the Roaring Twenties.⁶ Pellán arrived late in the summer of 1926, and the celebration continued. Dutifully enrolled in the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts*, Pellán chose the studio of Lucien Simon. This discreet, respectful master reminded him of Jean Bailleul, director of the *École des beaux-arts de Québec* who, despite the strict rules governing academic instruction, allowed his students to take great liberties, providing them with the opportunity to move from one studio to another as they pleased. Pellán's appetite for freedom found a favourable environment in Paris, and he rapidly discovered his affinity with the working conditions of the Colarossi and Grande Chaumière studios, which he attended more frequently than the *École nationale*.⁷

Pellán took the Malaquais metro to Montsouris park, on the outskirts of the university campus where he lived on first arriving in Paris. When he had the time, he preferred to travel on foot, to get to know the Montparnasse district. He subsequently moved from studio to studio, in the vicinity of the Montparnasse cemetery, including Froidevaux, de Vanves, and Vavin streets. Pellán also enjoyed walking in des Saints-Pères, Bonaparte, de Sèvres, and Saint-André-des-Arts streets, stopping to gaze at shop windows and visiting galleries such as those of Georges Petit, Paul Rosenberg, Bernheim Jeune, and Jeanne Bucher.

Nothing was missing! He was introduced to the Paris school: Picasso, Bonnard, Matisse, Modigliani, Miró, Ernst, and others. Awestruck, delighted, and profoundly overwhelmed, Pellán entered another universe. At first, it was a virtual disaster; what he saw challenged all that he had taken such pains to learn and had accepted as infallible. "I had to start from scratch, to completely disregard all that I had learned in school... Naturally, I found this somewhat drastic",⁸ [*Translation*] he would later confess. But he was quickly won over, fired with enthusiasm, and reassured. Insatiable, he devoured the works he admired: Van Goghs, Picassos, Bonnards, and especially Matisses. He absorbed, memorized, analyzed, broke down, and re-created, assimilating everything to create his own personal style, combining a draftsman's virtuosity with a colourist's mastery.

6. Hemingway, Ernest, *A Moveable Feast* (New York: Scribener Classic, Collier Books, 1964), 211 p.

7. These were open studios where, for a daily fee, students could benefit from the facilities and advantages of the premises. Most Canadian painters on study terms in Paris frequented these studios.

8. "Pellán parle", in *Liberté* (March-April 1967), p. 64.

9. As told to André Gladu in 1986 and incorporated into his film *Pellan* (collection "Arts et Cinéma", Les Films Vision 4, Montréal, 1986, 16 mm, colour, 77 min.).

10. André Gladu (see preceding note).

11. This quotation by Jean Chauffrey, a Parisian artist, is also taken from the film by André Gladu.

12. Confessions of Québec poet Marcel Dugas in an article entitled "Parmi ceux que j'ai connus" published in *Liaison*, No. 4 (April 1947).

13. From an interview with Clare Wadleigh Hayes, who attended the École nationale des beaux-arts de Paris at the same time as Pellan, during a visit by the author to her home in New Hampshire in July 1992. Clare Hayes was the model for Pellan's work *Jeune Fille au col blanc*, now part of the Musée du Québec's collection and No. 16 in the exhibition catalogue.

14. The canvas which merited him this honour bears the title *Instruments de musique – A* [Musical Instruments – A] and is No. 10 in the exhibition catalogue.

15. These two canvases, *Nature morte à la lampe* [Still-Life with Lamp] and *Nature morte à la palette* [Still-Life with Palette], are exhibited as Nos. 9 and 25 respectively.

16. The Galerie Jeanne Bucher exhibited works by artists such as Braque, Ernst, Kandinsky, Léger, Picasso, Arp and Giacometti.

Bubbling with activity, Paris was a city where things were happening, and Pellan was caught up in a perpetual whirlwind of events. "The cafés and bistros held some very interesting encounters. All were there, each in their own establishment: the conventionalists met at the Rotonde, the avant-gardists frequented the Dôme, and the well-heeled went to the Coupole",⁹ [Translation] Pellan recounted. He revelled in the city's vitality and nightlife. "We had long discussions, the community was very cosmopolitan, and opinions ranged from one extreme to the other".¹⁰ [Translation] Old friends recall Pellan's Parisian activities:

*"He was the most exciting and innovative element, with a different type of energy ... The trends in his painting were far more adventurous than those of the others who frequented the studio, he ignited sparks ... he was marvellous ... he had quite an eventful life, moving from studio to studio ... spending long evenings in the cafés ..."*¹¹ [Translation] (Jean Chauffrey)

*"The return to divine childhood which Bernanos describes was achieved by Pellan. He was a child illuminated by the spirit of painting ... During his meetings with me at Madame Macle's home, a century ago, he would scandalize his young compatriots with anarchistic statements, which were liberated to the point of licentiousness"*¹² [Translation] (Marcel Dugas)

*"We used to go to the Café Michon on Rue Bonaparte, and Pellan would always come along. He loved a good time, and he was the life of the party. Everyone adored him. He could be comical, but when he was working, the fun was over! Still, all the girls in the class wanted to pose for him"*¹³ [Translation] (Clare Wadleigh Hayes)

Pellan's achievements during his Parisian years were remarkable. In 1935, he was awarded first prize at the first Salon de l'art mural in Paris;¹⁴ the same year, he held his first solo exhibition at the Académie Ranson and participated in a group exhibition of the Forces nouvelles group, led by Henri Héraud. In 1937, Georges Huisman, director general of the Beaux-Arts, accompanied by Robert Rey, curator of the Musée de Fontainebleau, visited Pellan's studio where they purchased two canvases, one of which was later hung in the Musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, and the other in the Musée de Grenoble, where they remain to this day.¹⁵ In 1940, he signed a contract with the prestigious Jeanne Bucher gallery.¹⁶ Although still far from fame and fortune, Pellan was enjoying a measure of success that many of his colleagues in Paris and other active centres of the contemporary art world could only aspire to.

However, these auspicious debuts were to be abruptly cut short. In 1940, war raged. The Germans invaded Sedan, marking the end of Pellan's Parisian adventure.

Pellan was quick to acknowledge that he had been born under a lucky star. Returning to the Québec of the 1940s, which lagged some decades behind Europe in terms of artistic development, could quite justifiably have been perceived as a distressing setback; however, thanks to the first signs of the avant-garde movement, although

almost imperceptible, which stirred the artistic community, the return of this prodigal (and prodigious) son occurred under favourable conditions.

Present on the scene were Maurice Gagnon, Marcel Parizeau, and Paul-Émile Borduas at the École du meuble; others, such as François Hertel, Jean-Charles Harvey, Charles Doyon, Jean Palardy, and Philip Surrey, wrote for newspapers or worked in their studios. There was also John Lyman, founder of the Contemporary Art Society, who recruited young artists eager to tear down the ramparts of the academicism which still reigned in high society and the institutions. Pellán arrived, and exhibited in Québec City and Montréal drawings and canvases which were pure delight to those hungering for living art.¹⁷ He became something of a symbolic figure: the small-town boy from Limoilou who had travelled to Paris and returned crowned with success. What an exemplary role model!

For Léon Bellefleur, like other artists during this era, his meeting with Pellán was a landmark event. "Alfred overflowed with such energy, such passion, which he managed to transmit to all around him! He was like a beacon, someone who shared the secrets of Surrealism and made the joys of daily life accessible even to poor devils such as ourselves... In a way, he was inviting us to a party, a sumptuous celebration of the imagination, the only kind we could afford at the time!"¹⁸ [Translation]

This budding movement of renewal gathered momentum. Naturally, there were still difficult moments, such as the conflict within the École des beaux-arts which pitted Pellán and his young supporters against director Charles Maillard and the establishment;¹⁹ and also the regrettable dispute between Pellán and the other leader of the avant-garde movement, Paul-Émile Borduas, which unfortunately was never resolved.²⁰

But art was ever a faithful companion. Along with his teaching duties at the École des Beaux-Arts, Pellán pursued his career as a painter and was constantly taking up new challenges. In 1944, he illustrated Alain Grandbois' collection of poetry, *Les Îles de la Nuit*, with five original drawings. In 1946, inspired by the poems of Éloi de Grandmont assembled under the title *Le Voyage d'Arlequin*, Pellán continued his exploration of poetic images. When no challenges were forthcoming, he invented his own; temporarily immobilized in a hospital bed in 1948, he drew his inspiration from Paul Éluard's work *Capital of Pain* to create an entire series of surrealist drawings.²¹

Pellán adored this type of relationship with creation as a result of being provoked or challenged. Produce a work or image on this theme; express joy or pain; transform this idea, this emotion, these words into lines and colours! Keep surprising! Pellán responded with enthusiasm to invitations to create costumes and sets for plays, once in 1944, for *Les Trois Princes* [The Three Princes] by playwright André Audet, and again in 1946 for Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, staged by the Compagnons de Saint-Laurent. This latter experience had such an impact that in 1969, when the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde put on this same work under the direction of Jean-Louis Roux, the same costumes, sets and makeup created by Pellán twenty-three years earlier were used again. The result was every bit as innovative and contemporary and, with the psychedelic craze at its height, Pellán was as one of its most vibrant precursors.²²

17. Pellán brought back some 400 canvases and drawings from Paris. The exhibition, held at the Musée de la province in Québec City, included 161 works. Only half as many were displayed in the exhibition held at the Art Association of Montreal (now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts).

18. Robert, Guy, "Léon Bellefleur, autour de quelques propos de l'artiste", *Vie des Arts*, Vol. XXII, No. 128 (Autumn 1987), p. 33. Léon Bellefleur and his wife Rita frequented Pellán's studio on Rue Jeanne-Mance, as did Jean Benoit, Mimi Parent, Jacques de Tonnancour, Albert Dumouchel, Goodridge Roberts, and several others who formed the *Prisme d'yeux* movement in 1948.

19. The Pellán-Maillard conflict resulted in the director's resignation in June 1945.

20. The Pellán-Borduas conflict was analyzed by professor François-Marc Gagnon in his article "Pellán, Borduas and the Automatists. Men and Ideas in Quebec", published in *Artscanada*, Vol. XXIX, No. 5 (December 1972 – January 1973).

21. These illustration projects continued in the production of works based on the themes proposed by these surrealist explorations, especially *Citrons ultra-violet* (Cat. No. 64), *L'Homme A grave* (Cat. No. 66), and *Science fiction* [Science Fiction] (Cat. No. 131, work not reproduced).

22. This incursion into the world of theatre which allowed him to create, "moving canvases", as he called them, was repeated on the occasion of the *Voir Pellán* event, held at the Musée d'art contemporain in 1969, where Pellán projected slides of his works onto the bodies of moving dancers.

Pellan brought the celebration of art with him everywhere, infusing architecture and everyday surroundings with it. He created murals for the Canadian Embassy in Brazil, using the theme of the country's vast spaces, and won the right to create a mosaic depicting the theme of time on a building in downtown Montréal.²³ Later, he produced large-scale paintings for the National Library of Canada in Ottawa, and stained-glass windows for a church in Laval and for one of the lobbies of the Place des Arts in Montréal. For the latter project, which uses light to create kaleidoscopic effects, Pellan drew his inspiration from symphony music from his own personal record collection: Bartok, Debussy, Bach, Vivaldi, and Mozart. What a celebration!

This ritual underwent constant, daily renewal, in the solitude and tranquillity of his studio. Pellan had taken to heart the lessons in technique learned at the École des beaux-arts de Québec, as well as the formal inventions he had observed in the galleries of Paris. He executed each of his works with method and application.

Jacques de Tonnancour recalls Pellan's ambition in the 1940s to produce works which combined the major characteristics of the main schools of modern art. "I saw the progressive stages of canvases where Pellan began with large spots of bright colour in the fauvist style and arranged them in space based on cubist structures...then the narrative or symbolic content, i.e. the surrealist magic, took shape in the form of figures and settings, and finally, in the latter stages, he made the whole surface vibrate with networks of squares and dots of bright colour inspired by the impressionist style".²⁴ [Translation]

But Pellan was not one to confine himself to a rigid system, and he did not hesitate to inverse these different steps to suit his purposes. While completing a mural, he stated that his "first approach was to invent symbols representing the proposed theme".²⁵ [Translation] In fact, many of his compositions are reminiscent of the Surrealists' methods of creation: double images, see-through images, and composite images often inspired by the "cadavres exquis" technique. However, regardless of his methods, the finished canvases show vibrant colours in painstakingly studied formal organizations.

Pellan's basic artistic approach is one of a formalist: for him, every artistic creation is the resolution of a formal problem. The subject may be an interesting point of departure and should be borne in mind, but gradually becomes secondary to the formal work which develops according to its own laws on the surface of the canvas. "This intense concern for purely formal values would surely have guided the artist toward abstraction had he not felt the profound need to humanize his art", [Translation] wrote the critics quite rightly.²⁶

During the last years of Pellan's life, his health no longer allowed him to work long hours on large surfaces. But nothing could have forced him to forego the celebration of art. When he felt well enough, he worked at his drawing table, cutting out coloured paper and leading elegant dancers in lively choreographies. He would also spread glue drippings on a sheet of paper and, as soon as they hardened, use them as inspiration, like the stones in his hearth, to invent a garden or a bestiary with a humorous touch, by using a pen to sketch in stems, leaves, petals, paws, antennae, eyes, fangs, tails, etc.

One evening in 1988, we spent hours examining the fanciful transformations to which he had subjected photos of landscapes

23. Pellan's canvas entitled *Le Temps* (Cat. No. 138, work not reproduced), which was the winning entry in this competition, appears in the exhibition. The City Centre building where the mosaic was done is located at 1450 Rue City Councillors, at the intersection of Rue Mayor.

24. Interview between the author and Jacques de Tonnancour, Tuesday, December 8, 1992.

25. Robert, Guy, *Pellan, sa vie et son oeuvre — His life and his art* (Montréal: Éditions du Centre de psychologie et de pédagogie, 1963), p. 58.

26. Daigneault, Gilles, "Pellan", in *Seize peintres du Québec dans leur milieu*, Montréal, *Vie des Arts*, 1975, p. 128.

taken from magazines, and reproductions of certain canvases by the famous Group of Seven. Any and every excuse was good for diverting lines, reformulating compositions, and inventing new formal wonders to astonish, bewilder, and captivate viewers.

In most of his œuvre, Pellán celebrated life in all its forms in a thousand different ways: by paying homage to the eternal woman, source of life; creating a scene of nature with flowers, plants, and fertile gardens; or portraying beasts both real and imaginary. Through a formal vocabulary impregnated with the magic of colour, Pellán composed a hymn to life.

Pellán's own life drew to a close in late October 1988, but his art lives on and continues to charm us. He would have been curious to see how the significant portion of his œuvre displayed in this exhibition is perceived by those visitors who, at the time of his 1972-1973 retrospective, were too young to know him. He would also have appreciated the pleasure his long-time admirers will undoubtedly experience on seeing those of his works which are being exhibited for the first time. I wish you all a joyous celebration of art in his company and in his memory.

THE ARTIST AND HIS WORK

1906-1940

DISCOVERING MODERN ART

NOTE

This chronology does not cover exhibitions or auctions designed to sell Pellán's work, or mention showings of permanent collections, apart from retrospectives (e.g. *La Collection : tableau inaugural*. Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montréal, 1992).

The lists of Pellán's works shown at the many exhibitions between 1920 and 1988 were prepared using exhibition catalogues (consequently, references refer to catalogue numbers), newspaper articles and periodicals. Exact references are provided in the bibliography. A notebook containing the names of the exhibitions in which Pellán participated and the titles of the works he submitted was found among the artist's personal belongings and was also used to prepare these lists.

CHRONOLOGY

1906 MAY 16: Alfred Pellan, second son of Alfred Pellan and Maria Régina Damphousse, is born in Québec City.

1920 Pellan paints *Les Fraises* [Strawberries] at age 14. Twenty years later, he would recount: "The way I discovered [my vocation for painting] was rather odd. My father had bought some tubes of paint to pass the time when he was ill; however, he had forgotten them in a cigar box. I found this box one day while going through a chest of drawers. I was 14 at the time and hadn't given painting much thought. Although my teachers felt I drew well, they never imagined I'd be anything other than a railway worker or something along those lines. When I discovered that box of paints, I felt an irresistible urge to colour, to bring what I saw around me and in the fields alive with a paintbrush. That's how I discovered my calling".¹ [Translation]



Sculpture class at the École des beaux-arts de Québec in 1922. Pellan is on the far left.



Limoilou Studio, Québec City, 1926

1921 Pellan enrolls in the École des beaux-arts de Québec, which had opened on Rue Saint-Joachim on January 21, 1921.² In 1962, Pellan would recall the atmosphere which prevailed at the school in the early 1920s: "In Paris, and Québec City for that matter, the École des beaux-arts [*sic*] was an open studio. There were no doctrines, rules (as in painting, now, in Montréal) or rigid categories. I used to visit all kinds of studios in Québec, rubbing shoulders with architects, Italian modellers, etc."³ [Translation]

1923 MARCH 16 – APRIL: *Fortieth Spring Exhibition*, Art Association of Montreal. Pellan's *Un coin du Vieux-Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec] (1922), No. 164, is purchased by the National Gallery of Canada shortly thereafter.

1926 MAY 28: Alfred Pellan and Omer Parent receive the first Province of Québec art scholarships.⁴

Clare Hayes
Alfred Pellan, 1929
Graphite sketch
Private Collection



Alfred Pellan
Clare Hayes, 1929
Pen and Ink
Private Collection



Alfred Pellan
Alain Cuny, 1929
Pen and Ink
Private Collection



Alfred Pellan
Villa delle Palme, 1929
Oil on board
Private Collection



AUGUST 4: Pellan and Parent leave for France. Soon after their arrival, Pellan moves into the Canadian building of the Cité Universitaire de Paris. A few weeks later, he rents a studio in the American building.⁵

OCTOBER: As a provincial scholarship holder, Pellan must enrol in an art school. He chooses the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts de Paris (Quai Malaquais), where he works in Lucien Simon's studio. Pellan would later write the following about Simon: "... he was shrewd enough to leave me to my own means. I set out to discover modern art, exploring every corner of Paris, visiting exhibitions, taking in everything that might be of interest".⁶ [Translation]

1928 JUNE 3 – 15: The *Seventh annual exhibition, École des beaux-arts de Québec* is held in Québec City's drill hall.⁷ Pellan ships approximately 170 works (paintings and charcoal, ink and red chalk drawings) done in Paris for the exhibition; most have since been destroyed or lost.⁸

Pellan moves to Montparnasse and opens a studio at 34 Rue de Vanves.

JULY 14 – SEPTEMBER 19: Pellan spends his summer holidays in Québec City, and takes advantage of the occasion to visit New York.

1929 JANUARY: The monthly magazine *Le Terroir* reproduces Alfred Pellan's sculpture *Mon Grand-Père* [My Grandfather] in its frontispiece.⁹

AUGUST 23 – EARLY SEPTEMBER: Pellan and Alain Cuny, a fellow student at the École des beaux-arts, travel from Paris to southern France and Italy by motorcycle. On September 3, they stop to visit Clare Wadleigh, a school friend, and stay with her parents at the Villa delle Palme on the Italian Riviera, more precisely at Alassio.¹⁰ Pellan paints a landscape inspired by the Wadleigh villa, using sand to create a textured effect. He travels in Italy from September 17 to 27, before returning to Paris via Switzerland.

His scholarship having expired, Pellan decides to remain in Paris, although he "hadn't been successful in selling any work".¹¹ [Translation]

During the year, he moves to Rue Julie, in Montrouge.¹²

1930 Alain Grandbois pays tribute to Pellan in *Visages du monde*: "My friend Pellan [in Montparnasse] plunged into painting as if diving into a pool. I still believe that he is one of our greatest and most magnificent painters". [Translation]

WINTER: Lucien Simon organizes a painting contest for his students to mark the end of their studies at the École des beaux-arts. Pellan wins first prize.¹³



42 Rue Julie, Paris, 1932

- 1932 Extremely impressed by the work of Van Gogh, Pellán goes to see his paintings in the Musée du Jeu de paume on several occasions.¹⁴

JUNE 16 – JULY 30: Pellán visits the major retrospective of Picasso's work at the Galerie Georges Petit. He keeps a copy of the special issue of *Cahiers d'art* published for the exhibition among his personal belongings.

AUGUST 11 – SEPTEMBER 11: Pellán takes two trips, one to southern France and one to Brittany.

- 1933 OCTOBER: *Annual student exhibition, École des beaux-arts de Paris*, Galerie des beaux-arts, Paris. Pellán's works are shown with those of Marchand, Rohner, Le Moal, and Gruber.¹⁵

NOVEMBER: *Salon d'automne, Salon de Paris*, Paris. The Salon holds its first poster competition, in which nearly 130 artists participate. Pellán submits a work described as a "Chirico-style design" for the magazine *Beaux-Arts*.¹⁶

- 1934 Two major exhibitions, *Les Peintres de la réalité en France au XVII^e siècle* (French realist painters of the 17th century) and *Le Nain – peintures et dessins* (paintings and drawings), run at the Orangerie and the Petit Palais respectively. Both arouse considerable interest, particularly among the young painters of the Paris school.¹⁷

- 1935 *Salon des Tuileries*, Paris.¹⁸

Pellán "paints the fabric for an evening gown" for the famous fashion designer Schiaparelli; he also paints "women's beachwear" (letter 11-5-66).¹⁹

EARLY IN THE YEAR: "Pellán attends the open studios of the Grande Chaumière, Ranson and Colarossi academies in order to work on large formats".²⁰ [Translation]

JANUARY 5 – 20: Galerie des Quatre-Chemins (99 Boul. Raspail, Paris). Pellán takes part in an exhibition of work by some 30 artists, including Francis Tailleux and Jacques-Émile Blanche.²¹

APRIL 12 – 28: Exhibition by the *Forces nouvelles* group at the Galerie Billiet-Pierre Vorms (30 Rue de la Boétie, Paris). Henri Héraut, the event's organizer, is the leader of the group, composed of Robert Humblot, Georges Rohner, Pierre Tal-Coat (Pierre Jacob), Jean Lasne, Henri Jannot, and Pellán, most of whom are former students of Lucien Simon. During the show, the magazine *Beaux-Arts* reproduces *Femme assise* [Seated Woman] (1935), one of the drawings exhibited by Pellán. Jacques Lassaigne describes the artist as follows: "Along with Tal-Coat and Jean Lasne, he is the most striking personality in this new group".²² [Translation] In concluding his commentary on the exhibition, Henri Héraut states: "These young people have learned the lessons of 'Cubism' and 'Humanism,' the 'only' two interesting movements that have emerged in painting in recent years. Having thoroughly 'assimilated' their basic principles, they have finally managed to produce works that commune with Nature".²³ [Translation]

A second *Forces nouvelles* exhibition runs at the Galerie Billiet in March 1936.²⁴ By this time, Tal-Coat and Pellán have left the group.

APRIL: Pellán holds his first solo exhibition at the Académie Ranson, showing drawings, portraits, some "as rich as frescoes", and "luxuriant, skilfully organized" still-lives in this "small Montparnasse gallery, which caters especially to young artists".²⁵

JUNE 1 – 30: *Exhibition of the Anglo-American artists group of Paris*, Galerie Attica, Paris. Hella Husband and Alfred Pellán are the only two Canadians in the group. Pellán exhibits a stage set designed for a children's theatre.²⁶

JUNE 4 – 30: *First major exhibition, Salon d'art mural de Paris* (64 bis Rue de la Boétie). Under Spanish esthetician and honorary president Eugenio d'Ors, a jury composed of Alfred-Paul Carron, G. Carbonelle, Ossip Zadkine, Saint-Maur, Scheredlein, and Robert Delaunay, awards Pellán first prize for his painting *Composition abstraite en rouge et noir (Instruments de musique – A)* [Abstract Composition in Black and White (Musical Instruments – A)].²⁷

OCTOBER: *L'Almanach des arts*, an art almanac edited by Eugenio d'Ors and Jacques Lassaigne, reproduces *Les Cerises* [Cherries] and a portrait of a young girl, a 1929 drawing dedicated to Geneviève and signed "Pellán".²⁸

- 1936 The Bonnard-Vuillard exhibition comes to the Galerie Paul Rosenberg (21 Rue de la Boétie, Paris).²⁹

Pellán meets Miró: "After a long stay in Catalonia, Miró moved to a private residence on Rue Jules-Chaplain in Montparnasse in 1936. Pellán probably met him there then, since Miró moved to Boulevard Blanqui the following year, after Pellán had returned to Québec for a short visit".³⁰ [Translation]

JANUARY: Henri Héraut organizes the *Salon de la Nouvelle Génération* at the Galerie Charpentier in Montparnasse.³¹ Although Pellan's name does not appear in the catalogue, some of his drawings and paintings, including several still-lives, are apparently shown.³²

MARCH 3 – 31: Pellan visits an exhibition of recent works by Picasso at the Galerie Paul Rosenberg in Paris. He keeps a copy of the exhibition catalogue among his personal belongings, inside Raynal's book (1922).

SPRING: Pellan returns to Québec City.³³ At his father's request, he applies for a teaching position at the École des beaux-arts. He produces several paintings and sculptures to allow the jury to judge the quality of his work. The result: "The jury decided that I was too avant-garde".³⁴ [Translation]

APRIL 15 – 19 OR 29: Back in Paris, Pellan presents a solo exhibition of recent paintings and drawings, entitled *Œuvres récentes. Peintures et dessins de A. Pellan* at the Galerie Joseph-Barra (7 Rue Joseph-Barra, Paris, 6^e).³⁵

JUNE: Pellan participates in the third exhibition of the Anglo-American artists group at the Galerie de Paris in Paris.³⁶

JUNE 24 – JULY 25: Prix Paul-Guillaume competition organized by the Grande Galerie Bernheime-Jeune in Paris. Pellan enters the competition along with about 60 other artists including several *Forces nouvelles* members: Héraut, Jannot, Rohner, and Tal-Coat.

OCTOBER 17 – NOVEMBER 15: *Les Surindépendants, Indépendance discipline (9th exhibition)*, Parc des expositions, Porte de Versailles, Paris. Pellan's *Intérieur* [Interior] (Cat. No. 292) and *Lever du jour* [Daybreak] (Cat. No. 293) are shown in the third gallery, reserved for "non-figurative art".³⁷

Pellan currently resides at 23 Rue Froidevaux, in the 14th *arrondissement*.

1937 JANUARY: Picasso opens a studio on the second floor of 7 Rue des Grands-Augustins.³⁸ Pellan meets him there for the second time and is able to admire the master's work. "He very kindly welcomed me into his studio, where we talked since I had so much to say ... He invited me to return. He later moved to the Quai des Grands-Augustins, where I visited him again; he brought out his paintings, turned on the spots and showed me his work. The experience was extremely stimulating for me—inspiring me to work. Working eliminates the danger of being mesmerized and influenced by other artists".³⁹ [Translation]

FEBRUARY – MARCH: *Premier salon des jeunes artistes*, Galerie des beaux-arts (140 Rue du faubourg Saint-Honoré, Paris).⁴⁰ Pellan exhibits a portrait (Cat. No. 107), two still-lives, including *Les Cerises* [Cherries] (Cat. No. 108), and three drawings (Cat. Nos. 110 to 112).

FEBRUARY 5 – 27: Pellan visits an exhibition of Léger's work at the Galerie Paul Rosenberg in Paris. He would later keep the catalogue in his library.

APRIL 14 – MAY 5: Pellan is invited to participate in the exhibition *Unity of Artists for Peace and Democracy in Support of the First British Artists Congress*, at 41 Grosvenor Square, W.1, London.⁴¹

MAY: Pellan takes part in a group exhibition in The Hague, The Netherlands, along with such artists as Francis Tailleux and Gruber.⁴²

MAY 12 – 25: *Exhibition*. Group exhibition organized by Henri Héraut at the Galerie Carrefour (141 Boul. Raspail, Paris).⁴³

Soon after the exhibition, Georges Huisman, Director General of the Beaux-Arts, and Robert Rey, Curator of the Musée de Fontainebleau, visit Pellan. They purchase *Nature morte à la palette* [Still-Life with Palette] (now in the Musée de Grenoble) and *Nature morte à la lampe* [Still-Life with Lamp] (now in the collection of the Musée national d'art moderne) for the Musée du Jeu de paume.⁴⁴

SUMMER: Pellan goes to see the Van Gogh retrospective during the *Exposition internationale de Paris*.⁴⁵

JUNE 1 – 30: *Fourth exhibition of painting and sculpture*, Anglo-American artists group, Galerie Schola Cantorum (269 Rue Saint-Jacques, Paris, 5^e).⁴⁶

SUMMER: Pellan travels in Greece with Jean Gavini and Robert Renard, two students from Le Corbusier's architecture studio. Le Corbusier helps them prepare their itinerary, planning visits to the main ancient architectural sites. They spend nearly three weeks on the island of Santorini.⁴⁷

OCTOBER 30 – NOVEMBER 28: *Les Surindépendants, Indépendance discipline (10th exhibition)*, Parc des expositions, Porte de Versailles, Paris.⁴⁸ Three paintings by Pellan (Cat. Nos. 285 to 287) are shown.

1938 JANUARY 12 – FEBRUARY: Pellan visits the *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme* at the Galerie des beaux-arts in Paris. He would later share his impressions of this surrealist experience: "The halls and the large gallery were filled with installations, models ... Dali's famous rainy taxi, a hearth in the middle of the room, bags of coal on the ceiling ... it was a transcendent exhibition!"⁴⁹ [Translation] The *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme* is published as an exhibition catalogue.⁵⁰ Pellan keeps a copy.

FEBRUARY 2 – 27: Pellan participates in an exhibition of still-lives from the 17th century to the present at the Galerie Montaigne (58 Avenue Montaigne, Paris), which shows works by 25 artists including Lafresnaye, Renoir, Odilon Redon, Kisling, Lurçat, Balthus, Bogalei, and Moreau.⁵¹

MARCH 27 – APRIL 18: *Pariz 1938. Nekolik clenu salonu "surindépendants" a Hosté, S.V. gallery, Prague.* Pellán participates in this second showing of the 10^e *Salon des Surindépendants* along with 14 other artists: Beaudin, Benno, Borès, Estève, Loevenstein, Mendès-France, Roger, Rykr, Szobel, Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, André Lhote, Lurçat, and André Masson. His works are Nos. 18, 19 and 20: *Elektricky den* [Electric Day], *Malba krajiny* [Painter in Landscape] and *Kulaté predmety*.⁵²

APRIL 8 – 21: Pellán takes part in the 2^e *Salon de la Nouvelle Génération*, organized by Henri Héraut at the Galerie Billiet-Pierre Vorms in Paris. The exhibition includes works by 27 painters (including Jannot, Héraut, Pellán, Rohner, Humblot, Lasne, and Salaman) and 9 sculptors. Héraut writes the manifesto *Rupture* for the occasion. Pellán's signature is not among the 23 that appear on the document. The artist exhibits both paintings and sculptures, including *Tête* [Head].⁵³

MAY: Exhibition at the École des beaux-arts in Québec City. Pellán exhibits three drawings and three still-lives, including *Les Tulipes* [Tulips].⁵⁴

MAY 28 – JUNE 11: Galerie de l'Équipe (79-81 Boul. Montparnasse, Paris). Exhibition of works by Estève, Loevenstein, Pellán, Rykr, and Szobel.⁵⁵

OCTOBER: *Les Surindépendants*, Parc des expositions, Porte de Versailles, Paris.

1939 JANUARY 29 – FEBRUARY 26: *Paris Painters of Today*, Museum of Modern Art, Gallery of Washington (736 17th Street, N.W.). The exhibition presents works by 41 painters, including members of *Forces nouvelles* (Héraut, Tal-Coat, Jannot, Rohner, Fautrier, Humblot, Marchand) and various other artists such as Derain, Dufy, Dali, Maurice Denis, Fautrier, Matisse, Miró, Utrillo, Rouault, Vlaminck, Van Dongen, and Picasso. The jury selects one of Pellán's works.⁵⁶

OCTOBER: *Les Surindépendants*, Parc des expositions, Porte de Versailles, Paris.

JUNE 1 – OCTOBER 1: *Paintings by Chiquita, Mayo, Michonze, A. Pellán, M. Salaman; Drawings by Anne Harvey, Sonia Mossé, Anne Miracle, Gonzalo More, I. Perely; Engravings by Hayter; Gouaches by L. Couteau*, Galerie n^o 14 (formerly the Galerie Clausen), Rue des Beaux-Arts, Paris.⁵⁷

AUGUST: Pellán moves to 5 Rue de Grenelle in Paris.⁵⁸

Pellán illustrates Pierre Dupuy's unpublished play *Les Bûcherons*.⁵⁹

1940 The magazine *Cahiers d'Art* (15th year, Nos. 1 and 2, 1940) publishes an advertisement for the Galerie Jeanne Bûcher indicating that Pellán is one of the painters represented by the gallery.

MAY 16: Pellán returns to Québec.

After a brief stay in Québec City, Pellán moves to Montréal where he shares a studio with Philip Surrey.⁶⁰

SUMMER: Pellán visits Jean Palardy and Jori Smith at their country home in the county of Charlevoix. He produces a series of figurative drawings which he exhibits at the Art Association of Montreal in October.⁶¹

JUNE 12 – JULY 27: *Pellán exhibition*. Solo exhibition at the Musée de la province de Québec, Québec City. Pellán exhibits 161 works (paintings, drawings, gouaches, watercolours, and posters).⁶²

OCTOBER 9 – 27: *Drawings and Paintings by A. Pellán*, Art Association of Montreal. A smaller version (82 works) of the Québec City exhibition,⁶³ which Pellán uses to launch his first attack on academicism and the defenders of moribund art: "Academicism must be killed year in, year out. We need new living proof of the immortality of ideas".⁶⁴ [Translation]

NOVEMBER 22 – DECEMBER 15: *Contemporary Canadian Art*. Exhibition organized by the Contemporary Arts Society and held at the Art Association of Montreal. Works by Pellán include *Tendresse* [Tenderness], *La Visite* [The Visit] and *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players]. A list of the artist's works is published for the occasion.

ENDNOTES

1. Pellan quoted by Juliette Cabana, *La Revue populaire*, November 1939.
2. David Karel, *Horatio Walker*, (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1986, 311 p.), p. 90, 92.
3. Pellan quoted by Claude Jasmin, *La Presse*, July 14, 1962.
4. *Le Soleil*, May 28, 1926; *La Presse*, May 31, 1926.
5. F.-M. Gagnon and A. Gladu, *Vie des Arts*, March 1987, p. 27.
6. Pellan quoted in *Vie des Arts*, Fall 1975, p. 19.
7. *L'Événement*, May 10, 1928; *Le Soleil*, May 26, 1928; *L'Événement*, June 9, 1928; G.D.V., *Journal des Économies*, August 1, 1940.
8. Guy Robert, *Pellan, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*, (Montréal: Éditions du Centre de psychologie et de pédagogie, 1963), p. 30.
9. *Le Terroir*, Vol. IX, January 1929.
10. Interview with Alain Cuny, October 1992.
11. Pellan quoted in *Liberté*, 1967, p. 64.
12. *L'Événement*, May 10, 1928; *Le Soleil*, May 26, 1928; *L'Événement*, June 9, 1928; G.D.V., *Journal des Économies*, August 1, 1940. Pellan's personal archives also contain many photographs of the studio, which were dated by the artist.
13. *Le Soleil*, March 6, 1930.
14. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
15. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
16. *La Semaine à Paris*, October ca. 1933; Jacques de Laprade, *Beaux-Arts*, January 26, 1934 – UQAM archives, Montréal.
17. *Forces nouvelles*, 1980, p. 5.
18. Pellan archives, UQAM.
19. *Culture vivante*, September 1972, p. 9.
20. F.-M. Gagnon and A. Gladu, *op. cit.*
21. *Beaux-Arts*, January 11, 1935; Jacques Lassaigue, *Sept*, February 1935.
22. J.V.L. (J.V. Laprade), *Beaux-Arts*, April 19; Jacques Lassaigue, *Le Magazine d'aujourd'hui*, April 24, 1935, p. 10; Jacques Lassaigue, *Sud Magazine*, May 15, 1935; Charles Fedgal, *La Semaine à Paris*, April 1935; F.-M. Gagnon and A. Gladu, *op. cit.*, p. 27. For further information on the *Forces nouvelles* group, see the exhibition catalogue *Forces nouvelles* published by the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris (February 6 – March 9, 1980).
23. Henri Héraut, *Sud magazine*, May 15, 1935.
24. *Forces nouvelles, 1935-1939*, 1980, [p. 5-6].
25. Jacques Lassaigue, *Sept*, May 1935 (reprinted in *Magazine d'aujourd'hui*); Jacques Lassaigue, *Les Heures de Paris*, April 24, 1935, quoted in the catalogue *Forces nouvelles, 1935-1939, op.cit.*; François-Marc Gagnon and André Gladu, *op. cit.*
26. *Le Soleil*, December 19, 1935.
27. *Beaux-Arts*, June 1935; *Comœdia*, June 30, 1935; *Beaux-Arts*, June 7, 1935; Gérard Morisset, *L'Événement*, July 24, 1935; see also: "Notre compatriote Alfred Pellan, 1^{er} Prix au Salon de l'art mural", June 1935, UQAM archives, Montréal; and *Journal des Économies*, August 1, 1940.
28. *L'Almanach des arts*, 1937. See p. 43, 271, 273, 275 and 278.
29. Germain Lefebvre, *Pellan, sa vie, son art, son temps*, (La Prairie: Éditions Marcel Broquet), p. 23.
30. F.-M. Gagnon, *Vie des Arts*, June 1986, p. 42.
31. Catalogue *Forces nouvelles 1935-1939, op. cit.*, [p. 6].
32. Interview by André Jasmin *L'histoire comme ils l'ont faite*, June 24, 1967 (typewritten text). Based on information provided by an interview with Micheline Beauchemin, Paul Dumas and Léon Bellefleur.
33. See "Sailed on Empress", 1936, UQAM archives, Fonds Alfred Pellan.
34. Pellan quoted in Germain Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
35. Jacques Lassaigue, "Forces nouvelles (Galerie Billiet). A. Pellan (Salle d'exposition Joseph-Barra)"; *La Semaine à Paris*, April 1936.
36. *Beaux-Arts*, June 19, 1936.
37. Exhibition catalogue; Jacques de Laprade, *Beaux-Arts*, October 23, 1936. See also: UQAM archives; *Les Arts*, November 1936; F.-M. Gagnon and A. Gladu, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
38. William Rubin, *Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective*, (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 308.
39. Pellan quoted in *Vie des Arts*, Fall 1975, p. 20.
40. Jacques De Laprade, *Beaux-Arts*, February 19, 1937; Valmy Baysse, *Miroir du monde*, March 6, 1937; René Barotte, *Paris-Soir*, March 8, 1937; *Mercure de France*, March 15, 1937. See also: S. Gille-Delafon, "Le Salon des jeunes artistes présente au public, en un raccourci saisissant, les tendances de la jeune peinture", 1937, UQAM archives; S. Gille-Delafon, February-March 1937.
41. F.-M. Gagnon and A. Gladu, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
42. H. W. Sandberg, "Avondblad-Vierde Blad", May 9, 1937 – *Het Vok*, Amsterdam.
43. Exhibition invitation.

44. Lord Barry, *Nc Press*, 1974, p. 150; *La Presse*, April 23, 1938.

45. Alfred Pellán quoted in Germain Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 23-24.

46. Alfred Pellán's résumé, ca. 1949, UQAM archives; *Le Soleil*, December 19, 1938.

47. *Liberté*, March-April 1967, p. 64. See also Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

48. Exhibition invitation.

49. Pellán quoted in *Vie des Arts*, Fall 1975, p. 19.

50. *Paris-Paris 1937-1957. Créations en France*, (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1981, 527 p.), p. 73 and 502.

51. Alfred Pellán's résumé, ca. 1949, *ibid.*, p. 2.

52. Alfred Pellán's résumé, ca. 1949, *ibid.*, p. 2.

53. F.-M. Gagnon and A. Gladu, *op. cit.*, p. 28; Catalogue *Forces nouvelles, 1935-1939, op. cit.*

54. Jean-Paul Lemieux, *Le Jour*, May 14, 1938.

55. Works by Pellán included *Truculence au village* (Cat. No. 15), *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players] (Cat. No. 16), *Les Fruits* [Fruit] (Cat. No. 17), *Langue au clair de lune* [Talking in the Light of the Moon] (or *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon]) (Cat. No. 18), *Paysage à la femme devinette* [Woman in Landscape Puzzle] (reproduced in the catalogue, Cat. No. 19), *Journée électrique* [Electric Day] (Cat. No. 20), *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape] (Cat. No. 21).

56. Alfred Pellán's résumé, ca. 1949, *ibid.*, p. 2.

57. Exhibition invitation.

58. *Le Canada*, August 12, 1939.

59. Juliette Cabana, *La Revue populaire*, November 1939; Paul Dumas, *L'information médicale et paramédicale*, December 19, 1972.

60. Germain Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

61. Reynald, *La Presse*, October 19, 1940.

62. *Les Légumes* [Vegetables], *Desserte* [Sideboard], *Fruits aux cartes* [Fruit with Cards], *Palette aux fruits* [Palette with Fruit], *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor], *Fruits sur draperie bleue* [Fruit on Blue Drapery], *Nature morte aux pensées* [Still-Life with Pansies], *Tête de femme* [Head of a Woman], *Nature morte au panier* [Still-Life with Basket], *La Table Rouge* [Red Table], *Les Fruits* [Fruit], *Fruits au couteau* [Fruit with Knife], *Jeune Fille aux anémones* [Girl with Anemones], *M^{lle} Tirot, peintre* [M^{lle} Tirot, Artist] (Paris), *Nature-morte, table, chevalet* [Still-Life, Table, Easel], *Femme en gris* [Woman in Grey], *Bol de fruits* [Bowl of Fruit], *Fraises au livre* [Strawberries with

Book], *Les Tulipes* [Tulips] and *La Table verte* [Green Table]. At that time, the Museum acquired *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] and *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes], which were also exhibited. The list of works given to the Museum also included: "Painted at age 16, property of my father" (*Le Port de Québec* [Port of Québec]); "My first painting at age 14" (*Les Fraises* [Strawberries]); "Property of Mrs. Cola, Paris" (*Citron à la tasse* [Lemon with Cup]); "Property of Mr. Capitan, Paris", "Property of Mrs. Bernard, Paris" (*Femme au collier* [Woman with Necklace]); Pellán; "Property of Miss Legendre, Québec" (*Les Œufs* [Eggs]); "Property of Dr. Dandurand" (*Les Cerises* [Cherries]); and "Property of Dr. Dumas, Montréal" (*Panier de fraises* [Basket of Strawberries]). See the list of works drawn up for the exhibition.

63. *Le Port de Québec* [Port of Québec], *Citron à la tasse* [Lemon with Cup], *Fruits et couteau* [Fruit and Knife], *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor], *Les Légumes* [Vegetables], *Tête fantasque* [Fanciful Head] (or *Mascarade* [Masquerade]), *Desserte* [Sideboard], *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar], *Journée électrique* [Electric Day], *Femme en gris* [Woman in Grey], *Jeune Fille aux anémones* [Girl with Anemones], *Les Apis* [Apples], *Catastrophe humaine* [Human Catastrophe], *Tête de femme* [Head of a Woman], *Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow], *Les Fraises* [Strawberries], *Les Œufs* [Eggs], *Palette aux fruits* [Palette with Fruit], *Tête aux boules* [Bubble Head] (or *Pensée de boules* [Bubble Thoughts]), *Fraises au livre* [Strawberries with Book], *Fleurs* [Flowers] (or *Les Tulipes* [Tulips]), *Panier de fraises* [Basket of Strawberries], *Femme au collier* [Woman with Necklace], *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape], *Femme pensive* [Pensive Woman] (or *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe]), *Les Pensées* [The Pansies], *Nature morte au concombre* [Still-Life with Cucumber], *Les Oranges* [Oranges], *Fruits aux cartes* [Fruit with Cards], *Les Cerises* [Cherries], *Désir au clair de lune* [Desire in the Light of the Moon] (or *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon]), *Fruits au compotier* [Fruit in a Fruit Bowl], *Les Poires vertes* [Green Pears], *La Table verte* [Green Table], *Trois Femmes dansant au crépuscule* [Three Women Dancing at Dusk], *Nature morte au cheval* [Still-Life with Easel], *Sous-terre* [Underground], *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes], *Terrasse de café* [Café], *Le Plateau de fruits* [Platter of Fruit], and *Joie de l'aube* [Joy of Dawn]. See the list of works drawn up for the exhibition.

64. J.-C. H., *Le Jour*, October 19, 1940.

WORKS REPRODUCED

- Alpinistes* [Mountains Climbers] (Cat. No. 24)
Au clair de lune [In the Light of the Moon] (Cat. No. 28)
Autoportrait [Self-Portrait] (Cat. No. 5)
Bouche riieuse [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 17)
Femme au peignoir rose [Woman in Pink Robe] (Cat. No. 7)
Fleurs et dominos [Flowers and Dominoes] (Cat. No. 37)
Fruits au compotier [Fruit in a Fruit Bowl] (Cat. No. 14)
Hommes-Rugby [Footballers/Rugby Players] (Cat. No. 19)
Instruments de musique – A [Musical Instruments – A] (Cat. No. 10)
Jeune Comédien [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 23)
Jeune Fille au col blanc [Young Girl with White Collar] (Cat. No. 16)
Jeune Fille aux anémones [Girl with Anemones] (Cat. No. 12)
L'Heure inhumaine [The Inhuman Hour] (Cat. No. 18)
La Fenêtre ouverte [Open Window] (Cat. No. 22)
La Spirale [Spiral] (Cat. No. 34)
La Table verte [Green Table] (Cat. No. 15)
Le Fluide du coudrier [Fluid of the Hazel] (Cat. No. 35)
Le Panier de fraises [Basket of Strawberries] (Cat. No. 20)
Le Port de Québec [Port of Québec] (Cat. No. 2)
Les Fraises [Strawberries] (Cat. No. 1)
Les Oranges [Oranges] (Cat. No. 29)
Les Pommes rouges [Red Apples] (Cat. No. 13)
Mascarade [Masquerade] (Cat. No. 36)
M^{lle} Geneviève Tirot [Mademoiselle Geneviève Tirot] (Cat. No. 8)
Nature morte à l'assiette [Still-Life with Plate] (Cat. No. 4)
Nature morte à la lampe [Still-Life with Lamp] (Cat. No. 9)
Nature morte à la palette [Still-Life with Palette] (Cat. No. 25)
Nature morte à la palette [Still-Life with Palette] (Cat. No. 38)
Peintre au paysage [Artist in Landscape] (Cat. No. 21)
Pensée de boules [Bubble Thoughts] (Cat. No. 27)
Sous-terre [Underground] (Cat. No. 30)
Terrasse de café [Café] (Cat. No. 31)
Tête de femme [Head of a Woman] (Cat. No. 6)
Tête rectangulaire [Rectangular Head] (Cat. No. 11)
Trois Femmes dansant au crépuscule [Three Women Dancing at Dusk] (Cat. No. 32)
Un coin du Vieux Québec [A Corner of Old Quebec] (Cat. No. 3)
Untitled (Cat. No. 26)
Vénus et le Taureau [Venus and the Bull] (Cat. No. 33)



1
Les Fraises [Strawberries], 1920
Private Collection, Montréal



2
Le Port de Québec [Port of Québec], 1922
Private Collection, Montréal

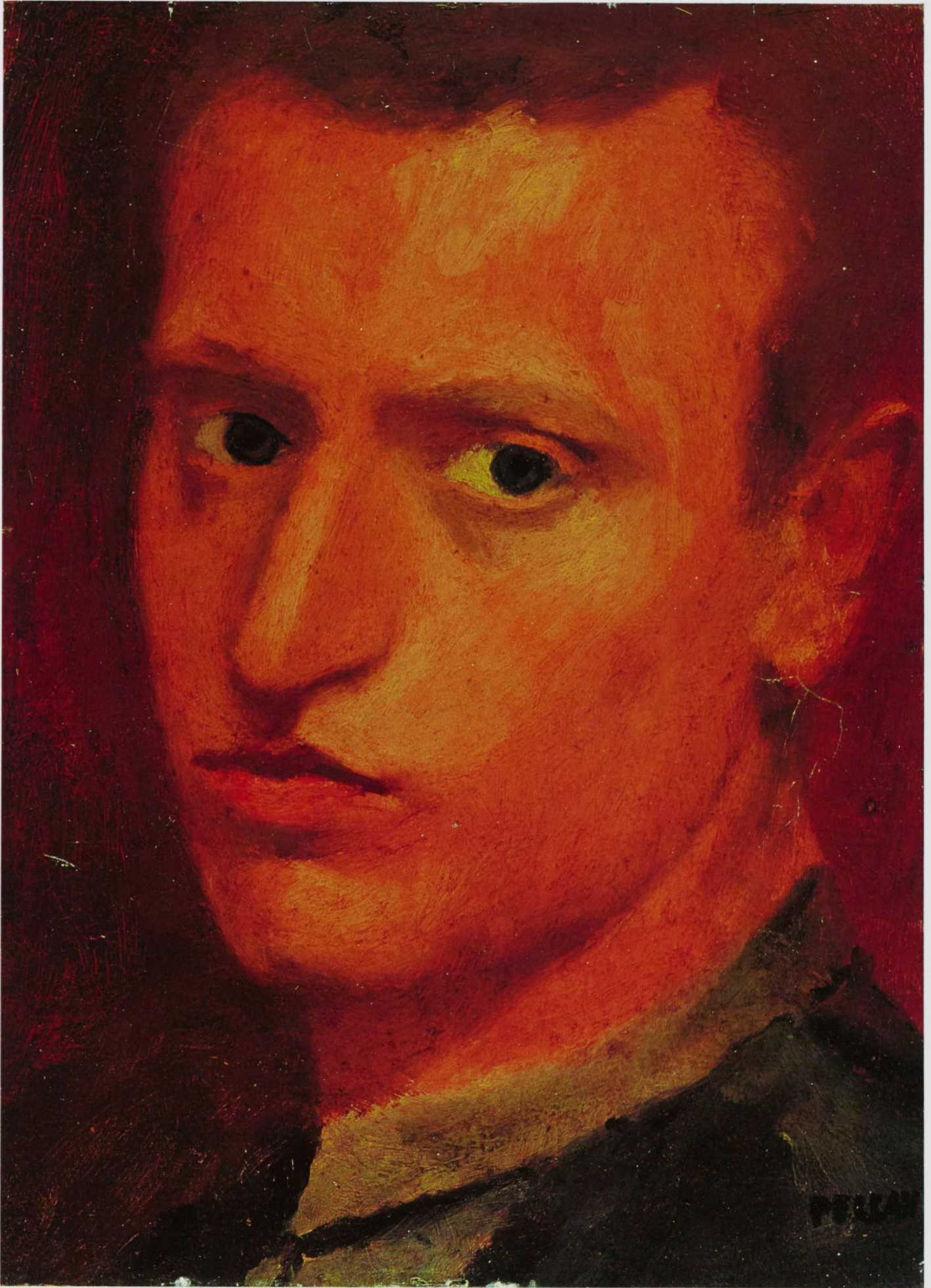
3
Un coin du Vieux Québec [A Corner of Old Québec], 1922
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

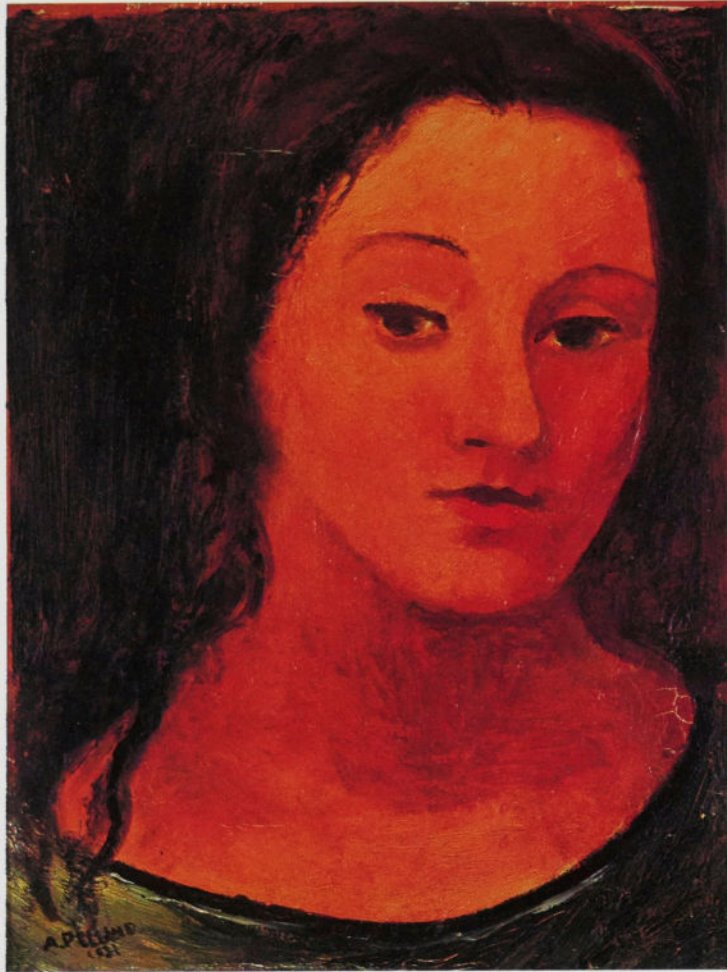




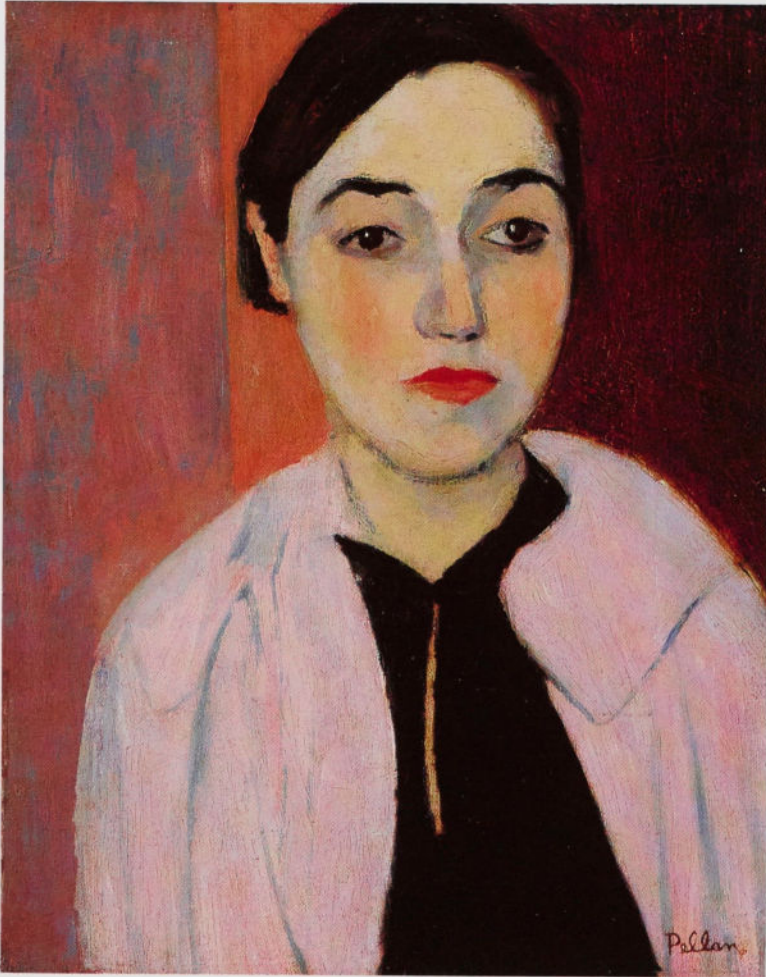
4
Nature morte à l'assiette [Still-Life with Plate], 1922
Pierre Saint-Georges, Verdun

5
Autoportrait [Self-Portrait], 1928
Musée du Québec, Québec City

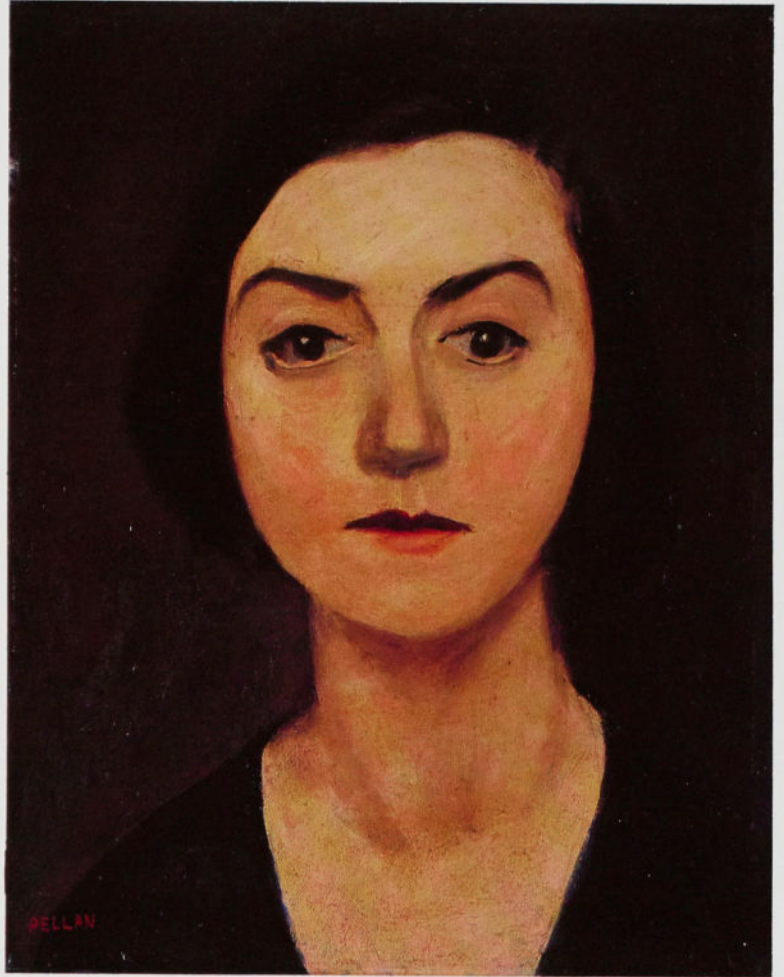




6
Tête de femme [Head of a Woman], 1931
Private Collection, La Macaza



7
Femme au peignoir rose [Woman in Pink Robe], ca. 1931
Private Collection, Montréal



8
M^{lle} Geneviève Tirot [Mademoiselle Geneviève Tirot], 1932
John Bennett, Montréal



9
Nature morte à la lampe [Still-Life with Lamp], 1932
Musée national d'art moderne, Paris



10
Instruments de musique - A [Musical Instruments - A], 1933
Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley, Mass.



11
Tête rectangulaire [Rectangular Head], ca. 1933
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe

12
Jeune Fille aux anémones [Girl with Anemones], ca. 1933
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



ELLAN

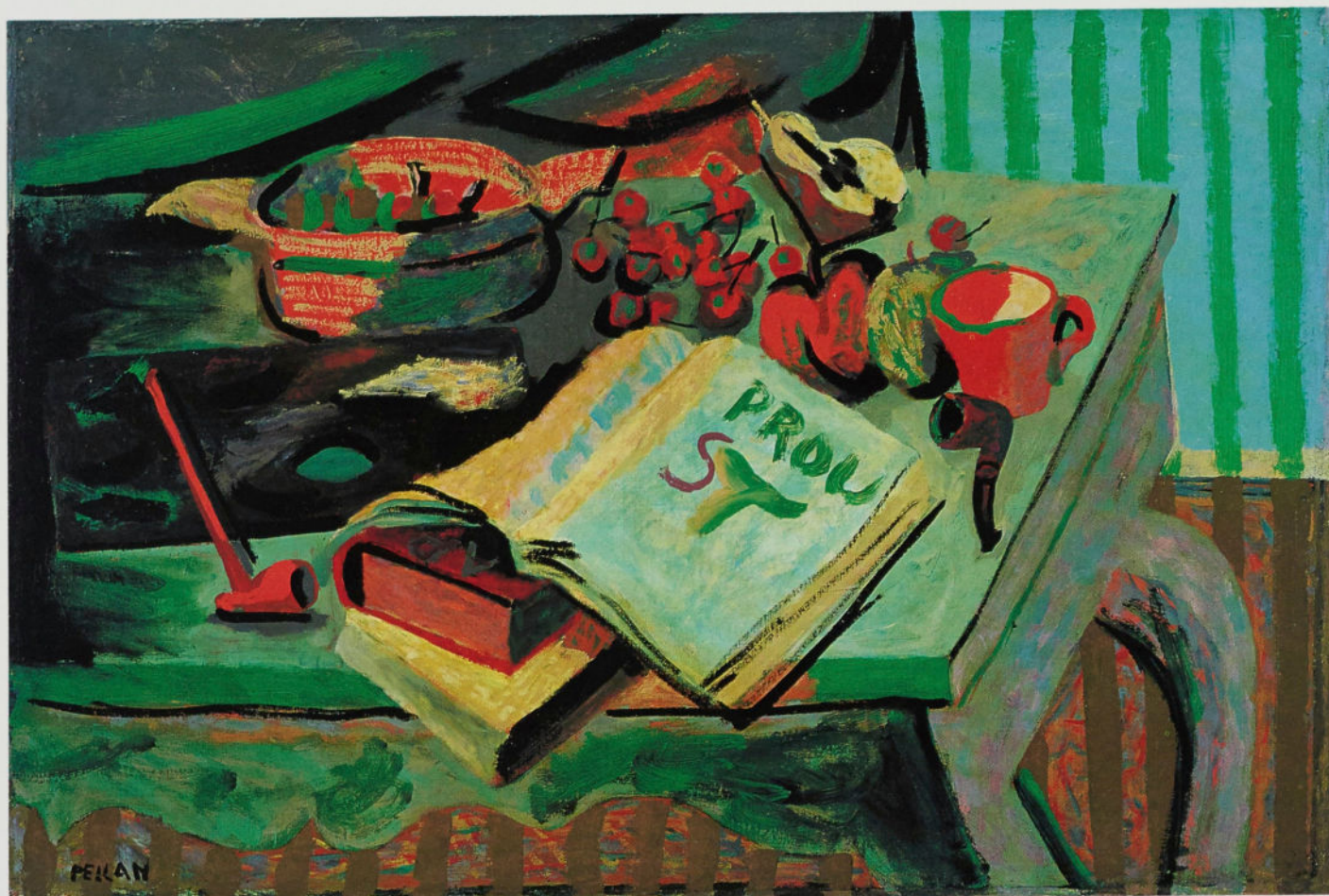


13
Les Pommes rouges [Red Apples], ca. 1933
Private Collection, Markham



14

Fruits au compotier [Fruit in a Fruit Bowl], ca. 1934
Musée du Québec, Québec City



15
La Table verte [Green Table], ca. 1934
Musée du Québec, Québec City



16

Jeune Fille au col blanc [Young Girl with White Collar], ca. 1934
Musée du Québec, Québec City



17
Bouche riuse [Laughing Mouth], 1935
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



18
L'Heure inhumaine [The Inhuman Hour], ca. 1935
F. David Gooding, Vancouver



19
Hommes-Rugby [Footballers/Rugby Players], ca. 1935
CPC Collection, Montréal



20

Le Panier de fraises [Basket of Strawberries], ca. 1935
Private Collection, Montréal



21

Peintre au paysage [Artist in Landscape], ca. 1935
Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor

56





22

La Fenêtre ouverte [Open Window], ca. 1936
Hart House Permanent Collection, University of Toronto
Gift of Charles E. McFadden

58



23
Jeune Comédien [Young Actor], 1935-1948
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



24
Alpinistes
 [Mountains Climbers], ca. 1936
 Private Collection, Chamy



25
Nature morte à la palette [Still-Life with Palette], 1933
 Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la culture – Fonds national d'art contemporain – Paris



26
Untitled, ca. 1936
Private Collection, Montréal



27
Pensée de boules [Bubble Thoughts], ca. 1936
Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto
Gift of Sam and Ayala Zacks



37
15 JUIN
PELLAN



29
Les Oranges [Oranges], ca. 1937. Private Collection, Montréal



30
Sous-terre [Underground], 1938. Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

28
Au clair de lune [In the Light of the Moon], 1937
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



31
Terrasse de café [Café], ca. 1938. Private Collection, Saint-Lambert



32
Trois Femmes dansant au crépuscule [Three Women Dancing at Dusk], 1938. Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



33
Vénus et le Taureau [Venus and the Bull], ca. 1938. Musée du Québec, Québec City



34

La Spirale [Spiral], ca. 1939
Musée du Québec, Québec City

66



35

Le Fluide du coudrier [Fluid of the Hazel], 1939

La Laurentienne Vie inc., Québec City



36
Mascarade [Masquerade], 1939-1942
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



A
PELLAN



37
Flours et dominos [Flowers and Dominoes], ca. 1940
Musée du Québec, Québec City



38
Nature morte à la palette [Still-Life with Palette], 1940
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
Gift of Lord Beaverbrook

1941-1957

FREEDOM IN THE ARTS

CHRONOLOGY

See note on page 26.

1941 Pellan leaves the studio he is sharing with Philip Surrey on Rue Sainte-Famille and moves to 3714 Rue Jeanne-Mance, in the artists' quarter near the École des beaux-arts de Montréal.

APRIL 26 – MAY 3: *First exhibition of the "Indépendants"*, Galerie municipale de Québec, Palais Montcalm, Québec City. Organized by Father Marie-Alain Couturier, this exhibition inaugurates the gallery run by Robert Lapalme, and shows works by Paul-Émile Borduas, Mary Bouchard, Stanley Cosgrove, Louise Gadbois, Eric Goldberg, John Lyman, Louis Muhlstock, Goodridge Roberts, Jori Smith, Philip Surrey and Alfred Pellan.¹ Selected works from the exhibition are subsequently shown at Montréal's Henry Morgan & Co. Ltd. (May 16-28), under the banner *Modern Painting*.²

In the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Father Couturier writes: "I have organized an exhibition of paintings by independent artists in Montréal and Québec City not for propaganda purposes or to provoke a revolt, but because I experienced the value of freedom in the arts in France and would like to see the same phenomenon here... The 'Paris school' has influenced the entire world for the past century, because Paris has become home to truly free talent, thinkers and souls. Free not only from realistic constraints and academic conformity, but also from any political or ideological design". [Translation]

MAY 5: Québec City newspapers publish an article by Charles Maillard, Director of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, claiming, "on behalf of his school and its teaching" the credit for training the artists of the *Indépendants* movement.

In reaction to the article, and refusing to let anyone use their work "to preserve the prestige of outdated academic principles", [Translation] the artists—with the exception of Mary Bouchard and Stanley Cosgrove—write a letter denouncing the school's teaching methods. Father Couturier

reprints the contents in his "Open letter to Mr. Maillard", published in the May 28 edition of *Le Devoir*.

SUMMER: Pellan spends his summer holidays at the country home of Jean Palardy and Jori Smith, where he produces portraits of young girls and landscapes.

DECEMBER 1 – 31: *Dessins, estampe, sculpture*. Annual exhibition (drawings, prints and sculpture) of the Contemporary Arts Society, held at Henry Morgan & Co. Ltd. Includes pen drawings by Pellan.³

DECEMBER 14 – 22: *Pellan*. Maurice Gagnon exhibits works by Pellan in his studio. Included are canvases (*Les Immortelles* [Immortal Women], *Grande Pointe, Maisons de Charlevoix* [Houses in Charlevoix], *Fillette à la robe bleue* [Young Girl in Blue Dress], *Le Jongleur* [The Juggler], *Terrasse de café* [Café] and *Tendresse* [Affection]), sketches for rug designs, stage sets, posters, sculptures and photographs of artworks.⁴

1942 JANUARY 11 – 14: *Exposition des maîtres de la peinture moderne*, Séminaire de Joliette. Exhibition of masters of modern painting organized by Father Wilfrid Corbeil.⁵

FEBRUARY 6 – MARCH 2: *P.-É. Borduas, Marie Bouchard, Denyse Gadbois, Louise Gadbois and Alfred Pellan*.⁶ Exhibition presented in the Print Room of the Art Gallery of Toronto and subsequently showcased at the Art Association of Montreal (March 7-29).

APRIL 6 – 25: *Exhibition of Paintings by Alfred Pellan*, Bignou Gallery (32 East 57th St., New York). The exhibition brochure mentions 25 paintings from the 1930s on.⁷ At the request of Robert Lapalme, the exhibition was subsequently shown at the Galerie municipale de Québec (May 18-31).⁸



3714 Rue Jeanne-Mance, Montréal, September 1942, Studio exhibition.

SEPTEMBER 18 – NOVEMBER 8: *Contemporary Painting in Canada*, Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. Travelling exhibition organized by Bartlett Hayes Jr. in collaboration with Patrick Morgan and Marcel Parizeau. Pellán's works include *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes] (Cat. No. 56), *Nature morte* [Still-Life] (*La Table verte* [Green Table]) (Cat. No. 58) and *Les Fraises* [Strawberries] (1933; Cat. No. 57).

The Canadian Ambassador to Brazil, Jean Désy, commissions Pellán to paint two large murals for the banquet hall of the Canadian Embassy in Rio de Janeiro.⁹

NOVEMBER 8 – 29: *4th annual exhibition, Contemporary Arts Society*. Travelling exhibition presented at the Art Association of Montreal. Pellán shows the two murals painted for the Canadian Embassy in Rio de Janeiro,¹⁰ *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor] and *Les Pensées* [The Pansies].

1943 WINTER: *Pan-American exhibition, Contemporary Arts Society*, organized by Patrick Morgan and shown at the Andover Museum in Boston, Massachusetts.¹¹

BEGINNING FEBRUARY 20: *Pan-Canadian exhibition, Contemporary Arts Society*, organized by H. McCurry, curator of the National Gallery of Canada. Household objects and paintings from Québec shown at the Morse Gallery of Art, Rollings College, Winter Park, Florida. Of special note are paintings by Cornelius Krieghoff, Henri

Masson, H.-Mable May, Kathleen Morris, Alfred Pellán, Sarah Roberson, Albert-H. Robinson, W.-H. Taylor, Adrien Hébert and J.-C. Franchère. The National Gallery exhibits Pellán's *Un coin du Vieux Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec].¹²

MARCH 23: Fernand Léger writes to Pellán, saying: "I see that you are much appreciated in Canada, which is so much the better for Canada! I'd be very happy to see your new pictures ...".¹³ [Translation] On May 28, Léger gives a public lecture at the Ermitage Theatre and presents his film *Le Ballet mécanique*. The next day, an exhibition of his works opens at the Dominion Gallery.¹⁴ On May 10, 1945, he gives a talk on the "liberation of colour" at the Montréal Botanical Garden. His arrival in Québec coincides with the publication of his book *La Forme humaine dans l'espace*, published by Éditions de l'Arbre.¹⁵ Léger stays with Pellán while in Québec.¹⁶

AUGUST 2: Charles Maillard, director of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, writes to Hector Perrier, the Provincial Secretary, saying: "It would give me great pleasure to entrust [Pellán], the first of our scholarship holders and a man of tremendous talent, with the artistic training of our young painters. In doing so, we would be ensuring the artistic development of our country". [Translation]

DECEMBER: Éditions de l'Arbre publishes the first book on Pellán. It is the first in a series of essays devoted to creators of "living" art, as reflected in the title of this collection edited by Maurice Gagnon. A preliminary version of the text was published in the first issue of *Gants du ciel* (September 1943) under the title "Intermittences".

1944 JANUARY: Pellán is appointed full professor of painting at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, where he has been teaching since the beginning of the 1943-1944 school year. He succeeds Charles Maillard.

CA. JANUARY: Pellán produces three posters for the Canada-France campaign, two of which are hung in the Quebec Power building and the former Woolworth building (149 Rue Saint-Joseph),¹⁷ respectively, in Québec City.

APRIL 4 – 14: *Black and White*. Exhibition of works by twenty Canadian artists at the Eaton's Fine Art Gallery in Toronto.

MARCH 11 – APRIL 16: *Canadian Art, 1760-1943*, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut. One of Pellán's still-lives *La Table verte* [Green Table] is shown. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

MAY: Pellán illustrates *Les Îles de la Nuit* by Alain Grandbois.

JUNE: First exhibition, at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, of works by Pellán's art students, including Jean Benoît, Françoise Sullivan and Mimi Parent.¹⁸ At the opening, Pellán explains his

teaching methods as follows: "As you can see by the paintings shown here, I leave my pupils to work freely. Each student chooses a personal means of expression: realistic painting, which is nevertheless alive and human; painting from nature, but in transposition; murals, which open up a whole world of poetry and surrealism. [...] I have not touched up any of the works. My students are free. I am there to offer advice, not arbitrarily, but in accordance with the student's choices. [...] Some students are exhibiting works of fantasy, reflecting a heart-felt need to do so; they have put their soul into their creation and experienced almost every problem one can confront in painting".¹⁹ [Translation]

Pellan would tell his students: "Blindfold yourselves, throw paint at the canvas and then choose: expand on what you've got to create something else, but don't sign it right away. Abstract for abstract's sake takes you nowhere. Taking an abstract splotch of paint and putting a human face to it is the only way you can give your work a universal dimension".²⁰ [Translation]

SUMMER: Pellan travels to Percé in the company of actor François Rozet. There, he meets André Breton, who is holidaying in the Gaspé.

LATE SUMMER: *Eight Quebec Artists*. Exhibition organized by Maurice Gagnon showcasing works by Paul-Émile Borduas, Mary Bouchard, Charles Daudelin, Louise Gadbois, John Lyman, Goodridge Roberts, Jacques G. de Tonnancour and Alfred Pellan.²¹

OCTOBER 29 – NOVEMBER 7: *Exposition d'art canadien*, Canadian artwork from the Collège André-Grasset collection, Montréal. Included are Pellan's *Jardin géométrique* [Geometric Garden], *Paysage canadien* [Canadian Landscape] and an ink drawing for the title page of François Hertel's book *Anatole Laplante, curieux homme*. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

NOVEMBER 25 – DECEMBER 15: *Pintura Canadense Contemporanea*. This first exhibition of Canadian art ever to be held in Latin America opens at the fine arts museum in Rio de Janeiro before moving to the Prestes Maia gallery in São Paulo. Included in the exhibition are eight works by Pellan: three drawings, the two murals painted for the Canadian Embassy in Rio, *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 153), *Les Pensées* [The Pansies] (Cat. No. 154) and *Le Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow] (Cat. No. 155). Pellan also designed the cover illustration for the exhibition catalogue. The exhibition includes 190 works by 75 artists and craftsmen from Ottawa, Montréal and Québec City.²²

DECEMBER AND JANUARY: Presentation of *Les Trois Princes* [The Three Princes], a play by André Audet based on the radio series *Madeleine et Pierre*, at the Monument National in Montréal. Pellan designs the costumes, stage sets and props.



Pellan, Father Marie-Alain Couturier and Éloi de Grandmont welcoming Fernand Léger, 1945.

1945 Pellan introduces his students to *cadavres exquis* drawing, a Surrealist technique in which a small group of artists produce a drawing combining verbal and visual images.

JANUARY 10 – APRIL: *The Development of Painting in Canada, 1665-1945/Le développement de la peinture au Canada, 1665-1945*. Travelling exhibition organized jointly by the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Toronto and the Musée de la province de Québec, shown first in Toronto. The contemporary section includes Pellan's still-life *La Table verte* [Green Table] (No. 227).

APRIL 27 – JUNE 23: *Modern Art in Advertising* (Designs for Container Corporation of America), Art Institute of Chicago. No. 82 in the exhibition, Pellan's *Neighbor*, officially represents Canada at this event, which features artists from some forty countries. The exhibition catalogue includes a short text by Fernand Léger.

MAY 12 – 20: *Theatre Montreal '44-'45*. Retrospective exhibition organized by the Community Players Theatre Library and showcased in the conference hall of the Art Association of Montreal. Pellan submits his costumes and sets from the play *Les Trois Princes* [The Three Princes].²³ A list of works is published for the occasion.

JUNE: Annual exhibition of work by students from the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. Maillard calls Pellan into his office to ask him to remove two of the works, because they are considered too daring and likely to "give the public a bad impression". Pellan refuses, asking the students in question to "reform" those parts which risk offending the moral dictates of the school's director and the Church. Maillard decides to remove the works from the show.

JUNE 13: Demonstration by a group of students—“150 active [protesters] backed by just as many sympathizers”, in Pellan’s words—under the banner ‘Down with academicism’. “A few young people, some students, some not, started yelling ‘Down with Maillard’ and then tried to plaster stickers bearing these words in typeface all over the walls of the school, inside and out”.²⁴

[Translation] The day after the demonstration, when the director is asked to explain the meaning of ‘Down with academicism’, he replies: “The school has never given its professors any ‘official’ guidelines to follow. However, there is a fine line between cliché, parody, audacity and education; it is my job to see that that line is not crossed. Never in the history of this school have we pushed students towards academicism. However, we do feel that beginning painters should become impregnated with their art, familiarize themselves with an artform of Canadian inspiration before borrowing excessively personal styles from international masters that would clearly mar their own inspiration”.

[Translation] The debate continues in public and in the newspapers.²⁵ In early December, Maillard capitulates; the papers announce his resignation: “Charles Maillard, director of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal has submitted his resignation to Québec City, the Honourable Omer Côté informed us this morning [...]. It would seem that Montréal’s art world has been wanting Mr. Maillard to leave for quite some time, so much so that the Minister finally realized that an urgent solution to what had become an unbearable situation was in order”.²⁶ [Translation] Maillard is replaced by Marcel Parizeau.

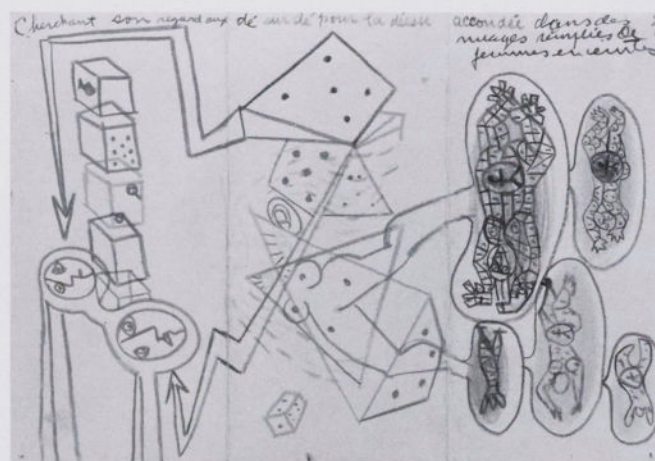
OCTOBER 17 – 24: *Un siècle d’art canadien*. Exhibition of works from the Musée de la province de Québec shown at the Club social du Jeune Commerce in Sherbrooke. Nos. 46 and 47 in the exhibition catalogue are Pellan’s still-life *La Table verte* [Green Table] and *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes].

NOVEMBER 13 – 18: *Women’s International Exhibition of Arts and Industries*. 22nd international exhibition shown at the Québec pavilion in Madison Square Garden, New York City. Two works by Pellan are included: *Sur la plage* [On the Beach] and a charcoal drawing.²⁷

1946 JANUARY: *Quebec Loan Exhibition*, Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor, Ontario. Exhibition of works from the Musée de la province de Québec. *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] is No. 29 on the list of works.

JANUARY 10 – MARCH 10: *Painting in Canada, A Selective Historical Survey*. Exhibition of Canadian paintings at the Albany Institute of History and Art, New York City. No. 71 is a still-life by Pellan, dating from 1944 (Collection Paul Dumas). An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

FEBRUARY: *Cinquante dessins d’Alfred Pellan*, a book on Alfred Pellan’s drawings, with a preface by Éloi de Grandmont.



Jean Benoît, Mimi Parent, Alfred Pellan
Cadavre exquis, 1947
Coloured pencil on paper
16.5 × 23.5 cm
Collection: Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal

MARCH: Presentation of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* in French. [Translation by François-Victor Hugo] Pellan designs the sets, costumes and makeup, which he would later compare to the Peking Opera and Balinese theatre.²⁸

APRIL: Publication of Éloi de Grandmont’s *Le Voyage d’Arlequin*, illustrated by Pellan, who receives a copy signed by the author: “To my dear Alfred, the great inventor of painted Harlequins, magician of three-dimensional words, and something of the Satan or Antichrist of the academic world! Your spiritual son, Éloi, June 11, the year of the atom”. [Translation]

MAY – JUNE: *Artes Gráficas do Canadá/Exhibition of Graphic Arts from Canada*, São Paulo. As a follow-up to the exhibition of contemporary Canadian art presented in 1944-1945, this travelling exhibition includes 201 drawings, engravings, etchings, monotypes, drypoints, and a hundred or so Canadian books, magazines and periodicals. Works by Pellan include “a few charcoal and India ink drawings, some xylographs done as book illustrations”, including an “enormous seated female”, a small “nun in hospital”, a “woman with her arms raised”, his *Model dans l’atelier* [Model in Studio] and a landscape entitled *La Petite Rivière* [Little River].²⁹

JULY 19 – AUGUST 18: *Premier salon des réalités nouvelles*, Palais de New York, Paris. Included are two paintings by Pellan.³⁰

OCTOBER 18 – 28: *Un siècle d’art canadien*. Exhibition of works from the Musée de la province de Québec collection at the Centre d’arts et métiers in Arvida. Pellan’s still-life *La Table verte* [Green Table] and *Petite Rivière, cté de Charlevoix* [Little River, Charlevoix County] (or *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Sainte-François]) are Nos. 48 and 49 in the exhibition catalogue.

NOVEMBER 18 – DECEMBER 28: *UNESCO. International exhibition of modern art*, Musée d’art moderne, Paris. Included are Pellan’s *Fleurs*

et dominos [Flowers and Dominoes]. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

- 1947 MID-FEBRUARY: Exhibition of Canadian paintings at the Cercle universitaire (515 Rue Sherbrooke Est, Montréal), with works by Adrien Hébert, Ozias Leduc, Cécile and Mary Bouchard, Goodridge Roberts, Jori Smith, W.H. Armstrong, Madame Gadbois, Fritz Brandtner, Anne Simard, James Wilson Morrice, Paul-Émile Borduas and Pellan.³¹

NOVEMBER 3 – 30: *French Canadian Art 1850-1947*. Exhibition sponsored by the Windsor Art Association and shown at the Willistead Art Gallery, Windsor. Included is Pellan's still-life *La Table verte* [Green Table].

- 1948 FEBRUARY 4: *Prisme d'yeux*. First exhibition of works by this group, held at the Art Association of Montreal. The *Prisme d'yeux* manifesto, written by Jacques de Tonnancour, bears the signature of fourteen artists: Pellan, Louis Archambault, Léon Bellefleur, Albert Dumouchel, Gabriel Fillion, Pierre Carneau, Arthur Gladu, Jean Benoît, Lucien Morin, Mimi Parent, Jeanne Rhéaume, Goodridge Roberts, Roland Truchon and Gordon Weber.³² The exhibition subsequently runs at Galerie Henri Tranquille, from May 15 to 29. Pellan shows *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple].

FEBRUARY 27 – JULY 22: *UNESCO – L'Appel pour la jeunesse/Canadian Appeal for Children. Paintings and Sculptures*, travelling exhibition and sale, Art Association of Montreal. Pellan exhibits a still-life.

MARCH 4 – 31: *65th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Art Association of Montreal. Pellan shows *3 êtres* [Three Persons] (Cat. No. 41), *Créophagie omnicolore* (or *Fauconnerie* [Falconry]) (Cat. No. 85) and *Pot à tabac automatique* [Automatic Tobacco Pot] (1942, Cat. No. 42). The latter wins him first prize in the painting category.³³

MARCH 27 – APRIL 3: *Painting exhibition*, École technique de Trois-Rivières. Pellan exhibits his first version of *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 106), as well as *Nature morte à la cuillère* [Still-Life with Spoon] (Cat. No. 107) and *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] (Cat. No. 108).³⁴

APRIL 8 – 25: *Concours artistique de la province de Québec*, Musée de la province de Québec. Pellan wins first prize in the "Decorative Arts" category with a rug hooked by Mademoiselle Irène Auger.³⁵

SPRING: Confined to a hospital bed following surgery, Pellan produces 44 graphite drawings inspired by the poetry of Paul Éluard. Given the prevailing sociopolitical context and the anticommunist stand of the Duplessis government, Pellan decides to change the titles of his works in an attempt to disguise their source, Surrealism being associated with Communism in Québec and in France. Some drawings are dedicated to artists whose work was an inspiration to Pellan: *Nature morte* [Still-

Life] (Georges Braque), *Grise-ailles* [Grey Wings] (Joan Miró), *Goétie* [Goéty] (André Masson), *Trois Lettres* [Three Letters] (Arp), *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron] (Pablo Picasso), *L'Arme de joie* [Weapon of Joy] (Paul Klee), *Armuré* [Armoured] (Giorgio de Chirico).³⁶

- 1949 JANUARY 29: The newspaper *Le Canada* announces the publication of an anthology of poems by Éloi de Grandmont entitled *La Jeune Fille constellée*, to be illustrated by Pellan.

FEBRUARY 16 – MARCH 20: *Painters of Canada: Exhibition of Canadian Painting 1668-1948*. Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia. Exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. Pellan's *Pot à tabac* [Tobacco Pot] is shown. A list of works is published for the occasion.

FEBRUARY 19 – MARCH 2: West End Art Gallery, Montréal (thirty artists represented).

APRIL 20 – MAY 15: *66th Annual Spring Exhibition*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Pellan shows *Le Petit Avion* [Small Plane] (Cat. No. 80), for which he receives honourable mention.

APRIL 23 – 30: *Expo of Stage Sets Design from Quebec*, organized by the Dominion Drama Festival and shown at the Royal Alexandra Theatre. Included are Pellan's sets for *Twelfth Night*.³⁷

JUNE 10 – 17: *Un siècle d'art canadien*. Exhibition of works from the Musée de la province de Québec, Rimouski town hall. *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] and *Petite Rivière, cté Charlevoix* [Little River, Charlevoix County] (or *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Saint-François]) are Nos. 49 and 50 in the exhibition catalogue.³⁸

JULY 4 – 30: London Public Library and Art Museum, London, Ontario. Travelling exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art, New York. In a room of their own are 44 works by Pellan, including drawings, costumes and the stage sets for *Twelfth Night*.³⁹

JULY 14 – SEPTEMBER 25: *Forty Years of Canadian Painting; from Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven to the Present Day*, Boston Museum of the Fine Arts. Works by Pellan include *À la minute* (poem by Paul Éluard, Cat. No. 76), *Fleurs* [Flowers] (or *Les Tulipes* [Tulips]) (Cat. No. 79), *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] (Cat. No. 77) and *Fillette brune et rouge en rouge* [Young Girl in Brown and Red on a Red Backdrop] (or *Fillette en rouge* [Young Girl in Red]) (Cat. No. 78).

JULY 23: Pellan weds Madeleine Polisen, whom he met during the summer of 1947 at a party given by Jacques de Tonnancour. The couple honeymoon in the Gaspé and Pellan comes home with several postcards of Percé Rock, which he enhances with black pencil.



Alfred and Madeleine.

AUGUST 26 – SEPTEMBER 10: *Canadian National Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Toronto. Included in the exhibition is *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 44).

OCTOBER 1 – NOVEMBER 6: *Fifty Years of Canadian Painting, 1900-1950*, Art Gallery of Toronto. Pellan's *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] (Cat. No. 104) is shown.

1950 FALL: The Pellans move into a century-old house in Auteuil, near the Thousand Islands River.⁴⁰

OCTOBER 1 – APRIL 1951: *Un siècle de peinture du Québec/One Hundred Years of Painting in Québec*. Travelling exhibition of works from the Musée de la province de Québec collection, shown in nine art galleries in Western Canada under the auspices of the Western Canada Art Circuit. Works by Pellan include *Fleurs* [Flowers] (or *Les Tulipes* [Tulips]) (No. 29) and *Petite Rivière, cté de Charlevoix* [Little River, Charlevoix County] (or *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Saint-François]) (No. 30).

OCTOBER 29 – JUNE 11, 1951: *Canadian Painting: An Exhibition Arranged by the National Gallery of Canada*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery for the United States. Works by Pellan include his still-life *La Table verte* [Green Table] (Cat. No. 67), *Surprise académique* [Academic Surprise] (Cat. No. 68), and *Une bouche qui dit des paroles rieuses* [A Mouth That Says Funny Things] (or *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth]) (Cat. No. 69).

1951 MAY – JUNE: Group exhibition at the Musée d'art de Granby.⁴¹

AUGUST 29, 30 AND 31: *A Century and a Half of Canadian Art*. Exhibition of works from the Musée

de la province de Québec collection shown in the gymnasium of the sports complex in Baie-Comeau. Works by Pellan include *Fleurs* [Flowers] (or *Les Tulipes* [Tulips]) (Cat. No. 37) and *Petite Rivière, cté de Charlevoix* [Little River, Charlevoix County] (or *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Saint-François]) (Cat. No. 38).

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 4: *Recent Quebec Painting*. Travelling exhibition organized jointly by the Vancouver Art Gallery and the National Gallery of Canada. No. 29 is Pellan's *Une bouche qui dit des paroles rieuses* [A Mouth That Says Funny Things] (or *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth]).

NOVEMBER 2 – 11: *Fifth Annual Sale of Paintings and Sculptures by Contemporary Canadian Artists* organized by the Women's Committee of the Art Gallery of Toronto. Pellan proffers *Visiteurs* [Visitors], *Jazz* and *Mascarade* [Masquerade].

NOVEMBER 28 – DECEMBER 10: *Concours artistiques de la province de Québec*, Musée de la province de Québec. Pellan wins third prize in this provincial contest for his work *Évasion* [Escape].⁴²

DECEMBER 10 – 25: *Art Exhibit of 20 Distinguished Montreal Artists*, organized by The Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Association, in Montréal's Snowdon Building. Artists showcasing their work include Pellan, Paul-Émile Borduas, Stanley Cosgrove, Eric Goldberg, Agnès Lefort, Arthur Lismer, Ernst Neumann, Jeanne Rhéaume, Goodridge Roberts, Marian Scott and Betty Suthfort. Pellan exhibits *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] and *Poème* [Poem] (or *Tes bras étendus* [Your Arms Outstretched]).⁴³

1952 APRIL 25 – JUNE 1: *Archambault and Pellan*, Art Gallery of Toronto. Exhibition including 37 works by Pellan.⁴⁴

APRIL 10 – JUNE 2: *II Mostra Internazionale di Bianco e Nero*, Lugano, Suisse. Exhibition with four drawings by Pellan: *Ephemere* [Ephemera], *Siesta* [Siesta], *Ritratto di Denise Prêcheur* [M^{lle} Denise Prêcheur] and *Donna con collana* [Woman with Necklace].

APRIL 19 – 25: Exhibition of works from the Musée de la province de Québec collection, presented as part of the *Eighth annual exhibition* in Arvida, Québec. Included is Pellan's *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Saint-François].

MAY 1 – 31: Mini-retrospective by Simone Beaulieu in her gallery, L'Atelier, in Ottawa. Twenty-four works (oils, inks and drawings) are shown, including *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor], a "woman with two faces painted in magnificent hues of emerald green, brown and blue" and several still-lives.⁴⁵ [Translation]

MAY 28 – SEPTEMBER 28: *The Arts in French Canada*, organized for the 100th anniversary of Université Laval and shown at the Musée de la province de Québec. Pellan's works include his still-life *La Table verte* [Green Table]

(Cat. No. 394), *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Woman with White Collar] (Cat. No. 395) and *Femme à la causeuse* [Woman in an Armchair] (Cat. No. 396), a drawing.

JUNE 14 – OCTOBER 19: *26th Venice Biennale*. Pellán shows five works: *Al Chiaro di luna* [In the Light of the Moon], 1937 (Cat. No. 18), *Donna con perla* [Woman with a Pearl], 1938 (Cat. No. 19); *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players], 1942 (Cat. No. 20); *Sorpresa accademica* [Academic Surprise], 1947 (Cat. No. 21); and *Le isole della notte* [The Islands of the Night], 1945 (Cat. No. 22).

AUGUST 18 – SEPTEMBER 7: *The Arts of Quebec. Les Arts du Québec*. Exhibition held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for the Festival de Montréal. Works by Pellán are *Les Pensées* [The Pansies], *Les Deux Granges* [Two Barns], and *Nature morte à la croix* [Still-Life with Cross].

AUGUST 22 – SEPTEMBER 6: *Canadian National Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Toronto. Pellán shows *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape] (Cat. No. 106).

OCTOBER 13: At the recommendation of the Massey Commission, the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs awards research and study bursaries to 21 Canadians, including Pellán, who receives \$4000 from the Royal Society of Canada. Pellán resigns from his position at the *École des beaux-arts* and leaves for France: "In Paris, he is hoping to study mural art techniques through contact with Matisse, Léger, Lurçat and Father Couturier as well as new techniques in book illustration, theatre design and costumes, mural and religious art, and craft work".⁴⁶ [Translation]

1953 SUMMER: *Canadian Art for Israel*. Travelling exhibition presented in Western Canada and at the Bezalel Museum in Jerusalem, where it becomes part of the permanent collection.⁴⁷

JUNE 2 – SEPTEMBER 13: *Exhibition of Canadian Painting to Celebrate the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II*, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. *Une bouche qui dit des paroles rieuses* [A Mouth That Says Funny Things] (or *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth]) (Cat. No. 57), *Les Îles de la Nuit* [The Islands of the Night] (Cat. No. 58), and *Portrait* (or *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe]) (Cat. No. 59) appear in the exhibition catalogue.

AUGUST 18 – SEPTEMBER 7: *Some Modern Canadians/Quelques peintres canadiens contemporains*. Exhibition presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts for the Festival de Montréal. Works by Pellán include *Composition* [Composition], *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players], and *Le Compotier* [Fruit Bowl] (or *Fruits au compotier* [Fruit in a Fruit Bowl]).

NOVEMBER – JUNE 1954: *Canadian Drawings*. Exhibition travelling through Ontario organized by the Willistead Art Gallery in Windsor and including Pellán's *Femme à la causeuse* [Woman in an Armchair].



Pellán Retrospective, Musée national d'art moderne, Paris, 1955.

1954 JANUARY 29 – APRIL 29:⁴⁸ *Pellán*. Solo exhibition organized by Maurice Hajje at the Galerie Coq Liban (9 Rue Saint-Marc, Paris). In addition to three recent large-scale paintings, Pellán shows a series of small studies, some of which were previously shown in Montréal. At the time, he states that his work is tending towards "controlled automatism". "I don't believe", he says, "in pure abstraction or pure automatism. On the contrary, I attempt to create a synthesis of the two, to mix realism with very fractured representational art. I rely on chance and take it wherever it happens to lead me".⁴⁹ [Translation] In visiting the show at Coq Liban, André Breton writes the following in the guest book: "Toutes les lampes intérieures au pouvoir de mon ami Pellán" (The power of my friend Pellán is from the interior lamps of the spirit). [Translation by George Lach in *Pellán, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*]

FEBRUARY: *Jeune Peinture* exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris. Pellán, Mimi Parent and Jean Benoît represent Canada.⁵⁰

MAY 7 – 30: *Dixième Salon de mai*, Musée d'art moderne, Paris (Quai de New York). Chagall, Léger, Manessier, Picasso, Hartung and Soulages all exhibit their work. Pellán shows *La Chouette* [The Owl]. Jury members include Bazin, Jean Cassou, Dupont, René Huyghe, Thibout, Bernard Dorival, Florisoone and Ladoue. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

JUNE 15 – 30: *Alfred Pellán*. Solo exhibition at the Cercle d'études Paul-Valéry, Paris.⁵¹

NOVEMBER: *Les artistes canadiens en Europe*, Dominion Gallery, Montréal. Included in this exhibition on Canadian artists in Europe are works by Paul Beaulieu, Goodridge Roberts, Stanley Cosgrove, Petley-Jones and Pellán. Pellán submits a dozen works including *La Pariade* [The Pairing], *L'Heure H* [H-Hour], *Séance de psychanalyse* [Psychoanalysis Appointment], *La Magie de la chaussure* [Magic of Shoes], *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor], along with large-scale paintings from his Charlevoix series.⁵²



Omer and Évangéline Parent at the Pellan's home in Sainte-Rose, 1957. Photo: Omer Parent.



Opening of the Galerie Denyse Delrue, 1957. From left to right: Albert Dumouchel, Pellan, Lucien Morin, Jean-Paul Mousseau, André Jasmin, Léon Bellefleur, Guido Molinari, Claude Beaulieu; front: Jacques de Tonnancour, Denyse Delrue.

1955 JANUARY – FEBRUARY 4: Exhibition of Canadian paintings organized under the auspices of the Government of Ontario and shown in Great Britain. Ninety-seven canvases are from British collections and the remaining forty-five, from Toronto's Laing Galleries. All works are hung in Fortnum and Mason's department store in London. The local newspapers mention a still-life by Pellan.⁵³

FEBRUARY 8 – MARCH 13: *Pellan*. First true retrospective exhibition of works by Pellan at the Musée national d'art moderne in Paris. Exhibition curator Jean Cassou shows 181 paintings, drawings, sketches for theatre costumes, stage sets and tapestries. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

The Pellans return to Québec and move into their house in Sainte-Rose.

NOVEMBER 11 – 30: Exhibition of Canadian painting at the École des hautes études commerciales

(Rue de La Gauchetière, Montréal), presenting more than 150 works by 85 painters, 5 sculptors and several ceramic artists. Among the artists showing their work are Léon Bellefleur, Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean McEwen, Jean-Paul Jérôme, Fernand Leduc, Monique Voyer, Gordon Webber, Marian Scott, Jori Smith, Jean-Paul Mousseau and Pellan.⁵⁴

1956 MARCH 9 – NOVEMBER 28: *Canadian Artists Abroad*. Exhibition organized jointly by the London Public Library and Art Museum and the National Gallery of Canada. Works by Pellan include *Un coin du Vieux Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec] (Cat. No. 36), *Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow] (Cat. No. 37), *Pot à tabac* [Tobacco Pot] (Cat. No. 38) and a more recent painting (Cat. No. 39).

JUNE 4 – SEPTEMBER 3: *Panorama de la peinture montréalaise*, Hélène-de-Champlain Restaurant, municipal parks service, Montréal. Among the 78 works by 41 painters are Pellan's *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 53) and *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 54).

AUGUST 24: R. H. Charlebois, director of the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, refuses to reinstate Pellan as a professor.⁵⁵

OCTOBER 1 – MARCH 21, 1957: *Some French Canadian Painters. Quelques peintres canadiens-français*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. Works by Pellan include *Jeune Fille à la robe bleue* [Young Girl in Blue Dress] (Cat. No. 27), *La Veuve Bergère* [The Widow Shepherdess] (Cat. No. 28) and *Le Front A catastrophe* [The Frontline of Catastrophe] (or [Scene from the Spanish Civil War]) (Cat. No. 29).

Maquettes for stage sets and costumes. Solo exhibition at the London Public Library and Art Museum, Ontario.

NOVEMBER 6 – 30: *Pellan*. Retrospective shown in the Montréal City Hall's Hall of Honour. In the introduction to the exhibition catalogue, Pellan writes: "The current trend in art, kitsch excluded, tends to rely on escapism, which too often results in formalist abstraction or restrained automatism, both of which run the risk of degenerating into academicism. On their own, these techniques can be excellent; the danger lies in making them an end in themselves. While avant-garde artists have long used these means of exploration, it is time to develop painting and give it a human face. Today's art will degenerate if it continues to revel in facility. We must try to create works that will stand the test of time, like the masters of the golden ages". [Translation]

A lively debate is triggered by Antoine Tremblay, alderman and former chairman of the Public Morality Committee who, disgusted by Pellan's *Le Satyre* [Satyr] (or *Sur la plage* [On the Beach]), *Les Nymphomanes* [The Nymphomaniacs] (or *Quatre Femmes* [Four Women]) and *Deux Suzanne et le Jeune Âge* [Two Suzannes and Youth] (or *Trois Personnes* [Three Persons]), nudes which he qualifies as obscene, accuses Mayor

Drapeau of turning the lounge of city hall into a "piggery".⁵⁶

To appease his councillors' protests, the Mayor forms a committee to study the issue. On November 16, Monseigneur Olivier Maurault, acting as mediator, concludes that one would need to have "a terribly twisted mind to be scandalized". He nevertheless recommends that two drawings be withdrawn from the exhibition. Certain journalists see this as no more than an unskilful political manoeuvre to degrade the mayor in the eyes of the public. The incident nevertheless garners much attention.

1957 JANUARY 19 – FEBRUARY 3: *35 Painters of Today*. Exhibition organized by Université de Montréal and McGill students and presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Pellán shows *L'Affût* [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 42) and *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron] (Cat. No. 43).

FEBRUARY – DECEMBER: *Contemporary Canadian Painters*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada for presentation in Australia.⁵⁷

APRIL 3 – MAY 14: *Second Biennial of Canadian Art*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. First shown in Ottawa. Pellán's *L'Affût* [The Stalker] is No. 25.⁵⁸

MAY 15 – 20: Exhibition of 71 mural projects submitted for the Montréal City Centre Building (corner of Mayor and City Councillors streets, Montréal) by 31 Canadian artists, shown at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The jury, composed of Jacques de Tonnancour, Arthur Lismer and Harry Mayerovitch, award first prize to Alfred Pellán in the Sternhal Realty Company competition. Pellán's 13 × 11 foot mural would be completed by December by Joseph Iliu, painter and ceramic artist who won third prize.⁵⁹

The night of the inauguration, December 18, Pellán would say: "My conception of mural art is made up of four elements which are indissoluble: the plastic, the aesthetic, the poetic, and the magic of colour. When the subject of the composition is prescribed, as in this case, the title of the project being 'Le Temps', [Time], my first approach is to design symbols capable of re-creating the theme proposed. The design of these symbols is studied both in their plastic and aesthetic aspects; the expression must rest upon the projection of the human. And it is in the fairylike strangeness, that is to say in a certain transposition of reality, that I try to achieve the poetry that should emerge from the work, helped in this through the magic of colour. Mural art must be conceived in a spirit which is in harmony with the architecture of our age".⁶⁰

JUNE 22 – SEPTEMBER 3: *Les peintres de Montréal*. Group exhibition shown at the Hélène-de-Champlain Restaurant, Île Ste-Hélène, Montréal. Works by Pellán include *Rideau de verre* [Glass Curtain] (Cat. No. 26), *Maison de verre* [Glass House] (Cat. No. 27), *Fleur du mal* [Flower of

Pain] (Cat. No. 28) and *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron] (Cat. No. 29).

JULY 8 – AUGUST 17: Pellán teaches painting at the Centre d'art de Sainte-Adèle (Laurentides, Québec).

SEPTEMBER 18 – OCTOBER 5: Inaugural exhibition at the Galerie Denyse Delrue (1520 Rue Crescent, Montréal), presenting works by Beaulieu, Bellefleur, Borduas, Dallaire, Daudelin, de Tonnancour, Dumouchel, Edmond, Ewen, Fillion, Giguère, Jackson, Jasmin, Juneau, Kahane, Leduc, McEwen, Rousseau, Riopelle and Tremblay. Pellán's notebook mentions *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron] and *Rideau de verre* [Glass Curtain].

OCTOBER 8 – JULY 1958: *Some Contemporary Painters from Quebec – Quelques peintres contemporains de Québec*. Exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. Works by Pellán include *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 23) and *Jardin-Étang* [Pond Garden] (Cat. No. 24).

NOVEMBER 16 – 30: *Pellán, Recent Paintings*, Laing Galleries (194 Bloor St. W., Toronto). Pellán's notebook mentions shipping 25 paintings and 6 recent drawings.

DECEMBER: *Christmas exhibition*, Galerie Denyse Delrue. Pellán exhibits *La Brise* [Breeze] and *Fée d'eau* [Water Fairy].

In 1958, he produces a sketch for the Montreal Theatre Ballet house curtain, and a mosaic for St. Patrick's school in Granby.⁶¹

ENDNOTES

1. Works by Pellán: *Femme pensive* [Pensive Woman] (or *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe]) (Cat. No. 34), *Femme au collier* [Woman with Necklace] (or *Portrait de madame Bernard* [Mme Bernard]) (Cat. No. 35), *Fraises au livre* [Strawberries with Book] (1933, Cat. No. 39), *Les Poires vertes* [Green Pears] (Cat. No. 36), *Citrons et tasse* [Lemons and Cup] (Cat. No. 37), *Les Oranges* [Oranges] (Cat. No. 38), *Sous-terre* [Underground] (1938, Cat. No. 40) and *Et le soleil continue* [And the Sun Shines On] (Cat. No. 40 bis).
2. *Le Devoir*, May 19, 1941; *La Presse*, May 17, 1941; Maurice Gagnon, *Le Devoir*, May 26, 1941; *Le Jour*, June 14, 1941; Marcel Parizeau, *Le Canada*, May 28, 1941; Simone Aubry, *La Relève*, June 1941.
3. *Deux paysages de Saint-Louis-de-Courville* [Two scenes of St. Louis de Courville] (Cat. No. 49), *Saint-Louis-de-Courville* [St. Louis de Courville] (Cat. No. 50), *Jeune Fille* [Young Girl] (Cat. No. 51), *Paysage, Lavardin, France* [Countryside in Lavardin, France] (Cat. No. 52). See Pierre Daniel, *La Presse*, December 6, 1941; R.D., *Le Canada*, December 15, 1941; Marcel Parizeau, *Le Canada*, December 18, 1941.
4. L. Le Marchand, *Photo-Journal*, December 18, 1941.
5. Works by Pellán: *La Grange* [Barn] (Cat. No. 20), *Coin de village, rive nord* [Part of a Village, North Shore] (Cat. No. 21), *Le Vieux Four* [Old Oven] (Cat. No. 22), *Petite Fille en rouge* [Young Girl in Red] (Cat. No. 23), *Nature morte au litre de vin* [Still-Life with Wine Bottle] (Cat. No. 24). A list of works was published.
6. Works by Pellán: *Nature morte au litre de vin* [Still-Life with Wine Bottle], *Fillette aux lunettes* [Young Girl with Glasses], *Femme pensive* [Pensive Woman] (or *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe]), *Les Hangars* [Toolsheds], *Le Vieux Four* [Old Oven], *Fillette en rouge* [Young Girl in Red], *La Grange* [Barn], *Les Immortelles* [Immortal Women], *Femme en gris* [Woman in Grey], *Chemin de village* [Village Road], *Sur le perron* [On the Porch], *Cordée de bois* [Cord of Wood], *Usine à Montréal* [Montreal Factory]. A list of artworks is published for the exhibition.
7. *Les Pensées* [The Pansies], *Fruits et légumes* [Fruit and Vegetables], *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe], *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players] and *Sous-terre* [Underground] (*Les Hangars* [Toolsheds] – Charlevoix, *Le Vieux Four* [Charlevoix, Old Oven] – Charlevoix, *Sur le perron* [Charlevoix, On the Porch] – Charlevoix, *Chemin de village* [Charlevoix, Village Road] – Charlevoix, *Fillette à la robe bleue* [Charlevoix, Young Girl in Blue Dress], *Fillette aux lunettes* [Young Girl with Glasses], *Fillette brune à la chaise bleue* [Brown Girl in Blue Chair], *Femme à la chemisette rayée* [Woman in Striped Blouse], *Femme diable* [Devil Woman], *Le Crieur* [The Town Crier], *Les Immortelles* [Immortal Women], *Panier de fraises au fond jaune* [Basket of Strawberries on Yellow Background], *Lampe à pétrole* [Oil Lamp], *Le Couteau à pain ondulé* [Warped Bread Knife], *Nature morte au gant* [Still-Life with Glove], *Fleurs au vase jaune* [Yellow Vase with Flowers], *Nature morte « Nappe Carrelée »* [Still-Life—Checked Tablecloth], *Nature morte « Croix de Chiniqui »* [Still-Life “Cross of Chiniqui”], *Nature morte aux deux couteaux* [Still-Life with Two Knives], *Trois Personnes* [Three Persons]).
8. *L’Action Catholique*, May 9, 1942; *Le Soleil*, May 9, 1942; *L’Événement-Journal*, May 9, 1942; *Le Temps*, May 15, 1942; *Le Soleil*, May 16, 1942; *L’Action Catholique*, May 16, 1942; *L’Événement-Journal*, May 19, 1942; *Le Soleil*, May 19, 1942; *L’Action Catholique*, May 19, 1942; *L’Événement-Journal*, May 20, 1942; *L’Action catholique*, May 22, 1942; *Le Soleil*, May 26, 1942; *L’Action Catholique*, May 27, 1942; *L’Événement-Journal*, May 29, 1942; *Le Soleil*, May 29, 1942; *L’Action Catholique*, May 29, 1942.
9. Both murals are now in Ottawa. *L’information médicale et paramédicale*, December 19, 1972. See also Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
10. *Le Soleil*, April 9, 1943; *L’Événement-Journal*, April 9, 1943; *L’Action Catholique*, April 10, 1943; *Le Soleil*, April 13, 1943; *L’Action Catholique*, April 13, 1943; Pierre Daniel, *La Presse*, November 14, 1942; *L’Action Catholique*, November 17, 1942; Henri Girard, *Le Canada*, November 20, 1942; François-Marc Gagnon, *op. cit.*, 1978, p. 147.
11. *La Presse*, November 5, 1955; *La Patrie*, November 13, 1955; Marie Sénécal, *Le Quartier Latin*, November 17, 1955; Fernande Saint-Martin, *Le Quartier Latin*, November 17, 1955; Robert Blair, *Le Quartier Latin*, November 17, 1955; Noël Lajoie, *Le Devoir*, November 9, 1955; R. de Repentigny, *La Presse*, November 22, 1955.
12. *La Presse*, February 27, 1943. According to this article: “The demonstrations made front-page headlines in Florida newspapers”. [Translation]
13. Letter cited in Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
14. May 29 to June 9. François-Marc Gagnon, *op. cit.*, 1978, p. 151.

15. *Le Canada*, May 7, 1945; *La Presse*, May 11, 1945; François Gagnon, *La Presse*, June 9, 1945.
16. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
17. *La Revue populaire*, January 1944; *Le Soleil*, April 22, 1944; *L'Action Catholique*, April 22, 1944.
18. Éloi de Grandmont, *Le Devoir*, June 12, 1944; E.G., *The Standard*, June 17, 1944; Henri Girard, *La Patrie*, June 19, 1944; Pierre Gélinas, *Le Canada*, June 20, 1944; *La Presse*, June 20, 1944.
19. Quoted in *La Patrie*, June 19, 1944. See also *Le Devoir*, June 13, 1944.
20. Quoted in *Vie des Arts*, Fall 1975, p. 20.
21. *Mayfair*, November 1944; F.-M. Gagnon, *op. cit.*
22. Reviews and articles on the exhibition were reprinted in *Canadian Art in Brazil, Press Review. Art canadien au Brésil, Revue de la presse*, 1944-1945.
23. François Gagnon (Rinfret), *La Presse*, May 12, 1945; Herbert Whittaker, *The Gazette*, May 19, 1945.
24. Alfred Pellan, *La Presse*, June 14, 1945.
25. For further reading on the Pellan-Maillard affair, see in particular: *Le Canada*, June 13, 1945; *La Presse*, June 13, 1945; *La Patrie*, June 13, 1945; *Le Canada*, June 14, 1945; *La Presse*, June 14, 1945; *La Presse*, June 14, 1945; Charles Doyon, *Le Jour*, June 16, 1945; *Le Canada*, June 19, 1945; Henri Letondal, *Radiomonde*, June 23, 1945; *La Presse*, June 23, 1945; J.-Ch. H., *Le Jour*, June 23, 1945; Jean Léonard, Mimi Parent and Jean Benoit, *Le Petit Journal*, June 24, 1945; *Photo-Journal*, June 28, 1945; Charles Doyon, *Le Jour*, June 30, 1945; Henri Letondal, *Radiomonde*, June 30, 1945; *The Standard*, June 30, 1945; François Gagnon, *La Presse*, July 14, 1945; Roger Duhamel, *La Patrie*, July 15, 1945; Charles Doyon, *Le Jour*, August 4, 1945.
26. *Le Canada*, December 4, 1945. With respect to Maillard's resignation, see also: Charles Hamel, *Le Jour*, July 21, 1945; *La Patrie*, September 21, 1945; *La Patrie*, September 22, 1945; *La Presse*, December 4, 1945; Edmond Turcotte, "Blessante contradiction de l'U.N.", *Le Canada*, December 5, 1945.
27. *La Presse*, November 20, 1945; *Le Canada*, November 23, 1945; *La Presse*, November 24, 1945.
28. Martial Dassylva, *La Presse*, December 14, 1968; Lawrence Sabbath, *The Montreal Star*, November 16, 1968.
29. Reviews of and articles on the showings in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were reprinted in *Canadian Graphic Arts in Brazil, Press Review. Arts graphiques du Canada au Brésil, Revue de la Presse*.
30. Michel Florisson, "Le Premier Salon des réalités nouvelles au Palais de New York anciennement, Palais de Tokyo", July 26, 1946, UQAM archives, Fonds Alfred Pellan.
31. François Gagnon, *La Presse*, February 15, 1947.
32. *Le Canada*, February 5, 1948; M.H., *La Patrie*, February 5, 1948; *La Presse*, February 6, 1948; *Le Canada*, February 6, 1948; *The Gazette*, February 7, 1948; Jacques Déglise, *Montréal-Matin*, February 7, 1948; Jacques Déglise, *Montréal-Matin*, February 9, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, Montréal, February 10, 1948; Jacques G. de Tonnancour, *Montréal-Matin*, February 12, 1948; Renée Normand, *Le Devoir*, February 12, 1948; Jacques G. Daoust, *Le Devoir*, February 13, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 14, 1948; Jean Simard, *Notre Temps*, February 14, 1948; Michael Gibson, *Le Devoir*, February 16, 1948; Plasse LeCaisne, *Le Devoir*, February 16, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 18, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 18, 1948; Renée Normand, *Le Devoir*, February 18, 1948; Georges Bergeron, *Le Devoir*, February 20, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 20, 1948; Charles Doyon, *Le Clairon*, February 20, 1948; Louis Renaud, *Le Devoir*, February 23, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 24, 1948; Julien Labedan, *Le Canada*, February 27, 1948.
33. *La Presse*, March 4, 1948; Renée Normand, *Le Devoir*, March 12, 1948; Madeleine Gariépy, *Notre Temps*, March 20, 1948; *Le Soleil*, April 1, 1948. See also F.-M. Gagnon, *op. cit.*, p. 481. Exhibition catalogue.
34. Hervé Biron, *Le Nouvelliste*, March 27, 1948; *Le Nouvelliste*, March 29, 1948; *Le Devoir*, March 31, 1948.
35. Renée Normand, *Le Canada*, May 27, 1948; *Le Soleil*, March 31, 1948; *La Patrie*, April 1, 1948.
36. Reesa Greenberg, *The Drawings of Alfred Pellan*, 1980, p. 66, 144-145.
37. Alfred Pellan's résumé, around 1949, p. 2, Fonds Alfred Pellan, UQAM archives, Montréal.
38. *La Presse*, June 2, 1949; *Le Canada*, June 3, 1949.
39. *London Eve Free Press*, May 9, 1949.
40. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

15. *Le Canada*, May 7, 1945; *La Presse*, May 11, 1945; François Gagnon, *La Presse*, June 9, 1945.
16. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
17. *La Revue populaire*, January 1944; *Le Soleil*, April 22, 1944; *L'Action Catholique*, April 22, 1944.
18. Éloi de Grandmont, *Le Devoir*, June 12, 1944; E.G., *The Standard*, June 17, 1944; Henri Girard, *La Patrie*, June 19, 1944; Pierre Gélinas, *Le Canada*, June 20, 1944; *La Presse*, June 20, 1944.
19. Quoted in *La Patrie*, June 19, 1944. See also *Le Devoir*, June 13, 1944.
20. Quoted in *Vie des Arts*, Fall 1975, p. 20.
21. *Mayfair*, November 1944; F.-M. Gagnon, *op. cit.*
22. Reviews and articles on the exhibition were reprinted in *Canadian Art in Brazil, Press Review. Art canadien au Brésil, Revue de la presse, 1944-1945*.
23. François Gagnon (Rinfret), *La Presse*, May 12, 1945; Herbert Whittaker, *The Gazette*, May 19, 1945.
24. Alfred Pellan, *La Presse*, June 14, 1945.
25. For further reading on the Pellan-Maillard affair, see in particular: *Le Canada*, June 13, 1945; *La Presse*, June 13, 1945; *La Patrie*, June 13, 1945; *Le Canada*, June 14, 1945; *La Presse*, June 14, 1945; *La Presse*, June 14, 1945; Charles Doyon, *Le Jour*, June 16, 1945; *Le Canada*, June 19, 1945; Henri Letondal, *Radiomonde*, June 23, 1945; *La Presse*, June 23, 1945; J.-Ch. H., *Le Jour*, June 23, 1945; Jean Léonard, Mimi Parent and Jean Benoît, *Le Petit Journal*, June 24, 1945; *Photo-Journal*, June 28, 1945; Charles Doyon, *Le Jour*, June 30, 1945; Henri Letondal, *Radiomonde*, June 30, 1945; *The Standard*, June 30, 1945; François Gagnon, *La Presse*, July 14, 1945; Roger Duhamel, *La Patrie*, July 15, 1945; Charles Doyon, *Le Jour*, August 4, 1945.
26. *Le Canada*, December 4, 1945. With respect to Maillard's resignation, see also: Charles Hamel, *Le Jour*, July 21, 1945; *La Patrie*, September 21, 1945; *La Patrie*, September 22, 1945; *La Presse*, December 4, 1945; Edmond Turcotte, "Blessante contradiction de l'U.N.", *Le Canada*, December 5, 1945.
27. *La Presse*, November 20, 1945; *Le Canada*, November 23, 1945; *La Presse*, November 24, 1945.
28. Martial Dassylva, *La Presse*, December 14, 1968; Lawrence Sabbath, *The Montreal Star*, November 16, 1968.
29. Reviews of and articles on the showings in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were reprinted in *Canadian Graphic Arts in Brazil, Press Review. Arts graphiques du Canada au Brésil, Revue de la Presse*.
30. Michel Florisson, "Le Premier Salon des réalités nouvelles au Palais de New York anciennement, Palais de Tokyo", July 26, 1946, UQAM archives, Fonds Alfred Pellan.
31. François Gagnon, *La Presse*, February 15, 1947.
32. *Le Canada*, February 5, 1948; M.H., *La Patrie*, February 5, 1948; *La Presse*, February 6, 1948; *Le Canada*, February 6, 1948; *The Gazette*, February 7, 1948; Jacques Déglise, *Montréal-Matin*, February 7, 1948; Jacques Déglise, *Montréal-Matin*, February 9, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, Montréal, February 10, 1948; Jacques G. de Tonnancour, *Montréal-Matin*, February 12, 1948; Renée Normand, *Le Devoir*, February 12, 1948; Jacques G. Daoust, *Le Devoir*, February 13, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 14, 1948; Jean Simard, *Notre Temps*, February 14, 1948; Michael Gibson, *Le Devoir*, February 16, 1948; Plasse LeCaisne, *Le Devoir*, February 16, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 18, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 18, 1948; Renée Normand, *Le Devoir*, February 18, 1948; Georges Bergeron, *Le Devoir*, February 20, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 20, 1948; Charles Doyon, *Le Clairon*, February 20, 1948; Louis Renaud, *Le Devoir*, February 23, 1948; J.-G. Demombynes, *Le Devoir*, February 24, 1948; Julien Labedan, *Le Canada*, February 27, 1948.
33. *La Presse*, March 4, 1948; Renée Normand, *Le Devoir*, March 12, 1948; Madeleine Gariépy, *Notre Temps*, March 20, 1948; *Le Soleil*, April 1, 1948. See also F.-M. Gagnon, *op. cit.*, p. 481. Exhibition catalogue.
34. Hervé Biron, *Le Nouvelliste*, March 27, 1948; *Le Nouvelliste*, March 29, 1948; *Le Devoir*, March 31, 1948.
35. Renée Normand, *Le Canada*, May 27, 1948; *Le Soleil*, March 31, 1948; *La Patrie*, April 1, 1948.
36. Reesa Greenberg, *The Drawings of Alfred Pellan*, 1980, p. 66, 144-145.
37. Alfred Pellan's résumé, around 1949, p. 2, Fonds Alfred Pellan, UQAM archives, Montréal.
38. *La Presse*, June 2, 1949; *Le Canada*, June 3, 1949.
39. *London Eve Free Press*, May 9, 1949.
40. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

WORKS REPRODUCED

- À vol d'oiseau* [As the Crow Flies] (Cat. No. 69)
Calme obscur [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 55)
Citrons ultra-violets [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 64)
Conciliabule [Secret Conversation] (Cat. No. 56)
Cordée de bois [Cord of Wood] (Cat. No. 43)
Évasion [Escape] (Cat. No. 67)
Fabrique de fleurs magiques [Magic Flower Factory] (Cat. No. 68)
Fauconnerie [Falconry] (Cat. No. 60)
Fées d'eau [Water Fairies] (Cat. No. 76)
Femme d'une pomme [Lady with Apple] (Cat. No. 62)
Fillette aux lunettes [Young Girl with Glasses] (Cat. No. 41)
Fillette en rouge [Young Girl in Red] (Cat. No. 40)
Fleur du mal [Flower of Pain] (Cat. No. 72)
Fruits, cuillère, verre [Fruit, Spoon and Glass] (Cat. No. 58)
Homme et femme [petit] [Man and Woman (small)] (Cat. No. 49)
Icare [Icarus] (Cat. No. 73)
L'Affût [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 74)
L'Amour fou [Mad Love] (Cat. No. 71)
L'Homme A grave [Man Engraving] (Cat. No. 66)
La Brise [Breeze] (Cat. No. 79)
La Chouette [The Owl] (Cat. No. 70)
La Femme usine [Factory Woman] (Cat. No. 75)
La Veuve Bergère [The Widow Shepherdess] (Cat. No. 61)
Lampe à pétrole [Oil Lamp] (Cat. No. 44)
Le Couteau à pain [Bread Knife] (Cat. No. 46)
Le Petit Avion [Small Plane] (Cat. No. 59)
Le Sablier [The Hourglass] (Cat. No. 78)
Les Nymphomanes [The Nymphomaniacs] (Cat. No. 54)
Magie de la chaussure [Magic of Shoes] (Cat. No. 63)
Maisons de Charlevoix [Houses in Charlevoix] (Cat. No. 42)
Nature morte au verre de cristal [Still-Life with Crystal Glass] (Cat. No. 51)
Nature morte aux deux couteaux [Still-Life with Two Knives] (Cat. No. 45)
Nu à la catalogne [Nude on Rag Rug] (Cat. No. 39)
Panier de fraises [Basket of Strawberries] (Cat. No. 47)
Portrait de Nanette [Portrait of Nanette] (Cat. No. 65)
Quatre Femmes [Four Women] (Cat. No. 53)
Sur la plage [On the Beach] (Cat. No. 57)
Surprise académique [Academic Surprise] (Cat. No. 50)
Symphonie [Symphony] (Cat. No. 52)
Tête de femme sur fond fleuri [Head of a Woman on Flowered Background] (Cat. No. 48)
Vertige du temps [Temporal Vertigo] (Cat. No. 77)



39
Nu à la catalogne [Nude on Rag Rug], 1941
Roy L. Heenan, Montréal



40
Fillette en rouge [Young Girl in Red], 1941
Private Collection, Laval



41
Fillette aux lunettes [Young Girl with Glasses], 1941
Private Collection, Ottawa





43
Cordée de bois [Cord of Wood], 1941
Private Collection, Montréal



44
Lampe à pétrole [Oil Lamp], 1942
P. Gauvreau, Sainte-Foy



45
Nature morte aux deux couteaux [Still-Life with Two Knives], 1942
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



46
Le Couteau à pain [Bread Knife], 1942
The Hiram Walker Group, Windsor



47
Panier de fraises [Basket of Strawberries], 1942
Private Collection, Montréal



48
Tête de femme sur fond fleuri [Head of a Woman on Flowered Background], 1942
Hélène and Jean-Marie Roy, Québec City



49
Homme et femme [petit] [Man and Woman (small)], ca. 1943
Private Collection, Charny



50
Surprise académique [Academic Surprise], ca. 1943
 Private Collection, Montréal



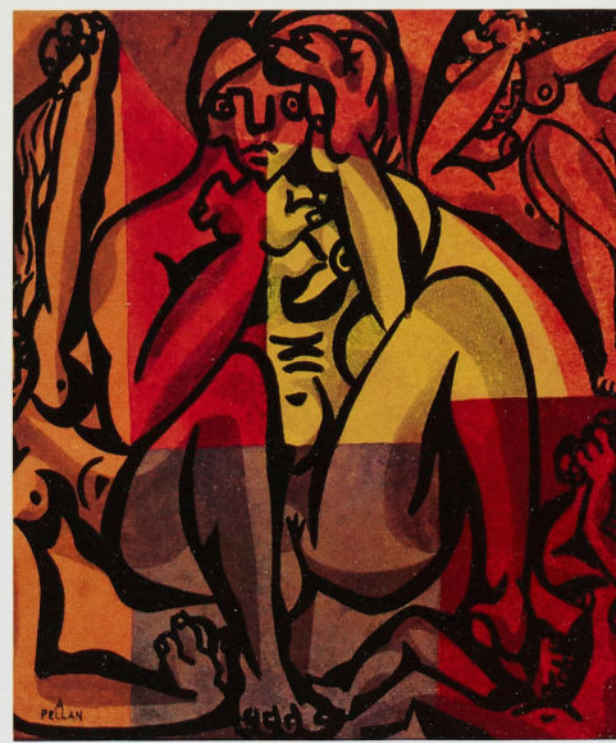
51
Nature morte au verre de cristal
 [Still-Life with Crystal Glass], ca. 1943
 Private Collection, Outremont



52
Symphonie [Symphony], ca. 1943
Private Collection, Westmount



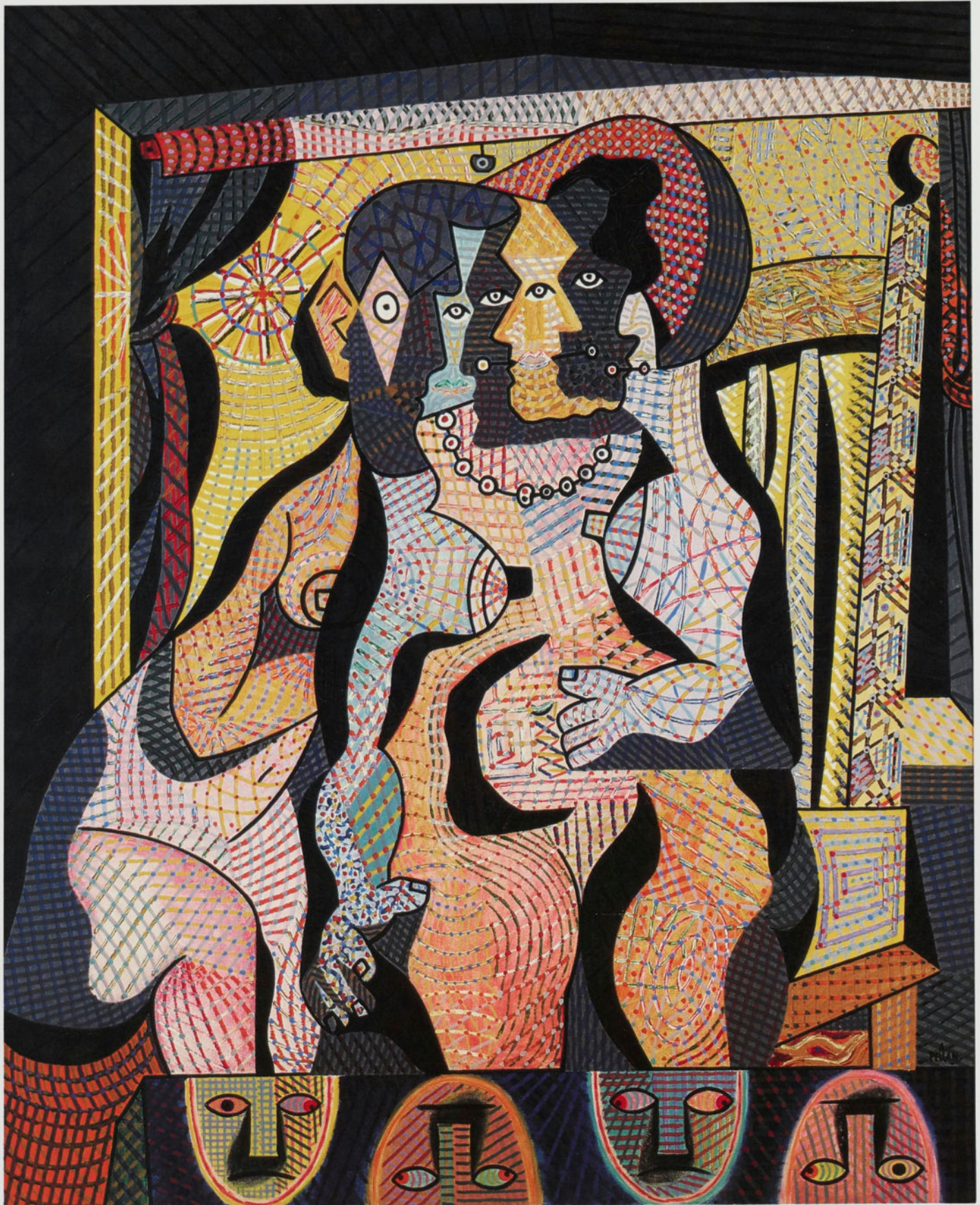
53
Quatre Femmes [Four Women], 1944 -1947
 Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



54
Les Nymphomanes
 [The Nymphomaniacs], ca. 1945
 Private Collection, Westmount



55
Calme obscur [Dark Calm], 1944-1947
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



56
Concillabule [Secret Conversation], ca. 1945
Musée du Québec, Québec City

57
Sur la plage [On the Beach], 1945
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa





58
Fruits, cuillère, verre [Fruit, Spoon and Glass], ca. 1945
Private Collection, Hampstead



59

Le Petit Avion [Small Plane], ca. 1945

Winnipeg Art Gallery

Acquired through the assistance of the Winnipeg Foundation and the Canada Council



60
Fauconnerie [Falconry], ca. 1946
Private Collection, Montréal



61
La Veuve Bergère [The Widow Shepherdess], ca. 1946
Private Collection, Montréal



62

Femme d'une pomme [Lady with Apple], ca. 1946

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles S. Band



63

Magie de la chaussure

[Magic of Shoes], 1946

Private Collection, Montréal



64

Citrons ultra-violets [Ultraviolet Lemons], 1947
Musée du Québec, Québec City

112



65
Portrait de Nanette [Portrait of Nanette], 1947
Mr. and Mrs. Jules Loeb Collection, Toronto



66
L'Homme A grave
 [Man Engraving], ca. 1948
 Musée du Québec, Québec City



67
Évasion [Escape], ca. 1950
 Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton
 Gift of the Women's Committee



68

Fabrique de fleurs magiques [Magic Flower Factory], ca. 1950
Toronto Dominion Bank/Banque Toronto-Dominion, Toronto



69
À vol d'oiseau [As the Crow Flies], 1952
Private Collection, Westmount



70
La Chouette [The Owl], ca. 1954
Musée national d'art moderne, Paris



71

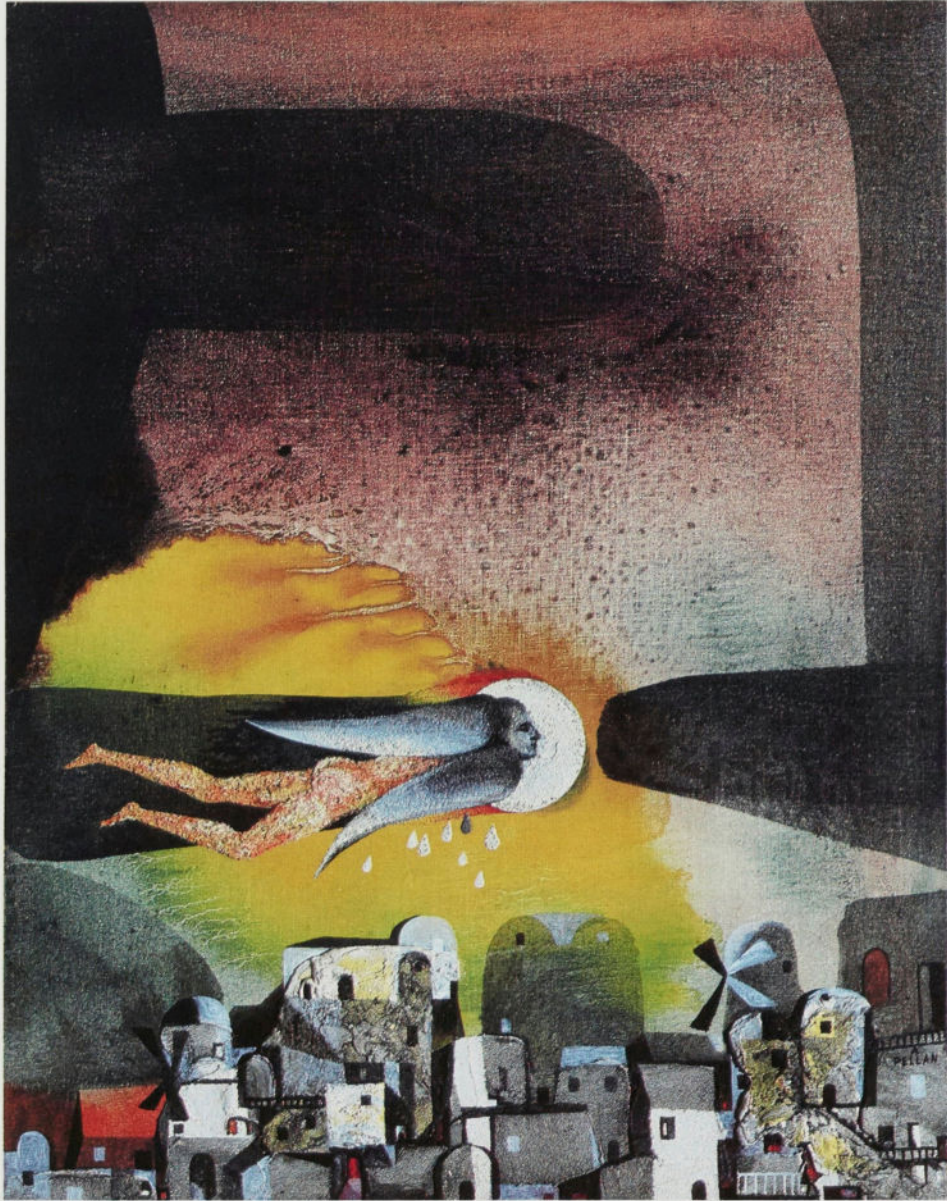
L'Amour fou [Mad Love], 1954

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montréal

Purchase, Horsley and Annie Townsend Bequest



72
Fleur du mal [Flower of Pain], ca. 1956
Private Collection, Monaco



73
Icare [Icarus], ca. 1956
Private Collection, Westmount



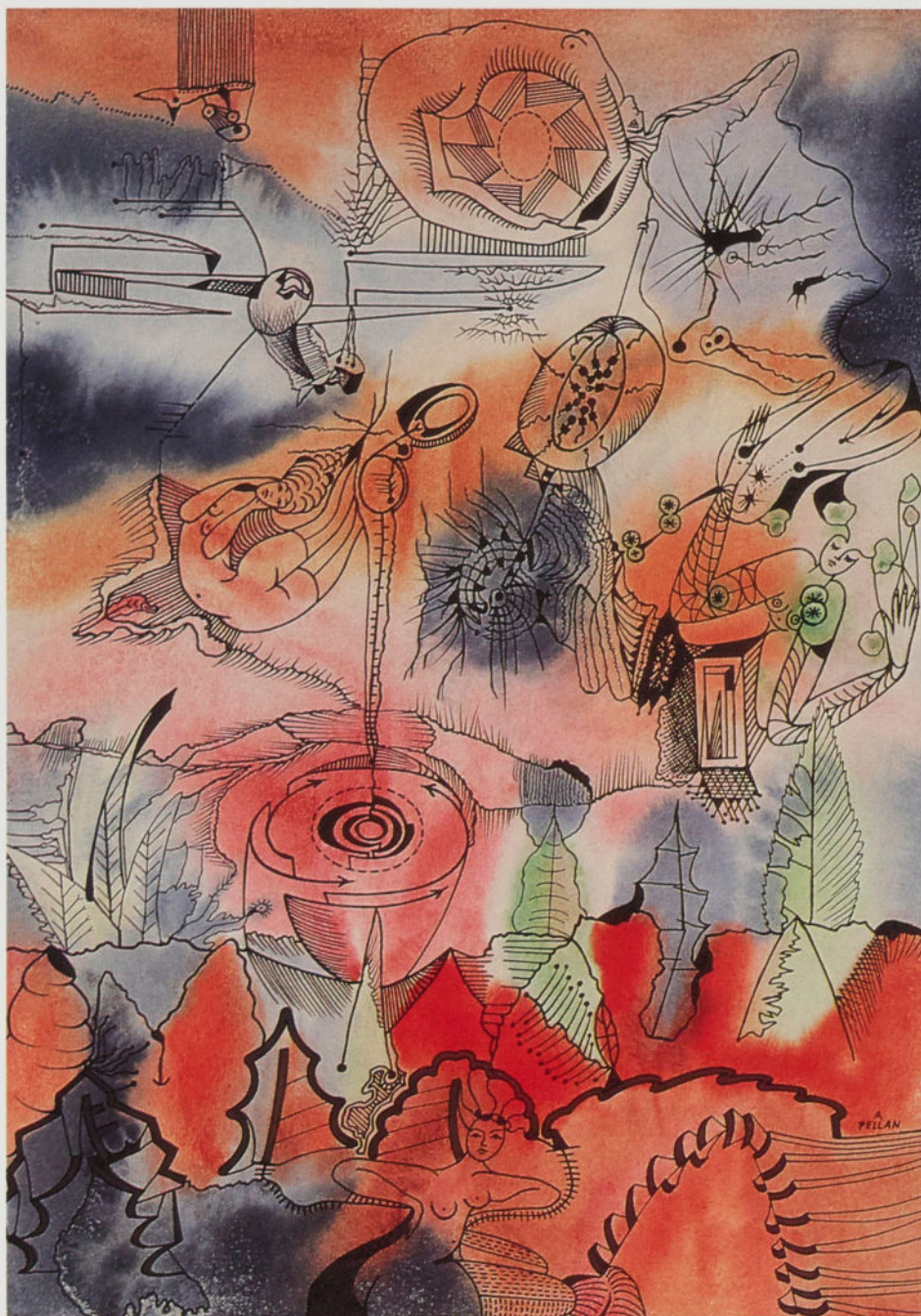
74

L'Affût [The Stalker], ca. 1956

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa



75
La Femme usine [Factory Woman], ca. 1956
Gaétane and Jean Mathieu, Verdun



76
Fées d'eau [Water Fairies], 1957
Richard Grenier, Sillery



77
Vertige du temps
 [Temporal Vertigo], 1957
 Private Collection, Westmount



78
Le Sablier [The Hourglass], 1957
 Private Collection, Montréal

79
La Brise [Breeze], 1957
 Martha and
 Peter Duffield,
 Westmount



1958-1973

SIXTY YEARS YOUNG

CHRONOLOGY

See note on page 26.

1958 FEBRUARY 10: Pellan enters the Gander Competition. His notebook mentions shipping two paintings: *Ouverture de l'espace* [Openness of Space] and *Zodiaque* [Zodiac].

JANUARY 17 – FEBRUARY 22: *Exposition de la Province de Québec (Visages du Canada — La Vallée du Saint-Laurent)*. Commercial and cultural exhibition organized by the Province of Québec and held in the Hall of Honour of the Grands magasins du Louvre in Paris. Works by Pellan include *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] and a drawing entitled *Tête de jeune fille* [Head of a Young Girl].¹

MARCH 15 – 29: *Salon of Canadian Artists*, Jordan Galleries (438 Russel Hill Road, Toronto). Pellan exhibits *Fontaine de Jouvence* [Fountain of Youth] (watercolour, Cat. No. 34), *Le Pont suspendu* [Suspension Bridge] (oil, Cat. No. 35), *Redoute* [Redoubt] (watercolour, Cat. No. 33) and *Soucoupe volante* [Flying Saucer]. The latter does not appear in the catalogue but is mentioned in Pellan's notebook.

APRIL 14 – 27: Pellan's first *Jardins* [Garden] series and some small paintings are shown at the Galerie Denyse Delrue in Montréal.²

MAY 13 – JUNE 1: *Art contemporain au Canada*. Exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada and held at the Palais des beaux-arts (10 Rue Royale) in Brussels. Works by Pellan include *Les Îles de la Nuit* [The Islands of the Night] (large), *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple], *L'Affût* [The Stalker], *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm], and *La Chouette* [The Owl].³ Certain traditional artists criticize the choice of the 23 painters selected to represent Canada.

JUNE 6 – AUGUST 20: *Primera Bienal Interamericana De Pintura Y Grabado*, Instituto nacional de Bellas Artes, Secretaría de Educación pública, Mexico. Pellan's notebook mentions shipping *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron] and *Rideau de verre* [Glass Curtain].

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER: Group exhibition organized by the Art Gallery of Toronto and held at the Albright Gallery in Buffalo, New York. Pellan's notebook mentions shipping *Sur la plage* [On the Beach].

SEPTEMBER 4 – NOVEMBER 2: *Art in Canada. A Canadian Portfolio*, Dallas Museum for Contemporary Arts. *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon] appears in the exhibition catalogue.

SEPTEMBER 9 – OCTOBER 5: *Canadian Group of Painters*, Vancouver Art Gallery. *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron] (ink, Cat. No. 78) and *Détente* [Relaxation] (Cat. No. 79) are shown in this exhibition organized by Marian Scott and the Canadian Group of Painters. According to Pellan's notebook, the painting *Nystagmus* was rejected by the jury.

SEPTEMBER 16 – 28: *Œuvres récentes*. Group show of recent works held at the Galerie Denyse Delrue to kick off the season.⁴

OCTOBER 14 – 25: *21 peintres contemporains*. Inaugural exhibition featuring 21 contemporary painters, Galerie Artek (2020 Rue Union, Montréal). Pellan's notebook mentions shipping *Feu follet* [Will-o'-the-Wisp].

NOVEMBER 7 – DECEMBER 7, 1959: *Moderne Canadese Schilderkunst*, Utrecht Centraal Museum. Exhibition based on the show *Art contemporain au Canada* at the Palais des beaux-arts in Brussels (May 13 – June 1, 1958). Four works by Pellan grace the catalogue: *De eilanden van de nacht* [The Islands of the Night] (Cat. No. 25), *De hinderlaag* [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 26), *Duistere rust* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 27), and *Lachende mond* [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 28).

Pellan receives a special Canada Council scholarship. According to his notebook, he enters *Jardin jaune* [Yellow Garden] in the Guggenheim Competition (national section).

1959 JANUARY – APRIL: *Canadian art exhibition*. Imperial Oil building (111 St. Clair Ave. West, Toronto).⁵

JANUARY 27 – FEBRUARY 8: *One Hundred Years of Canadian Painting*. Benefit exhibition for the Ontario Heart Foundation, Laing Galleries, Toronto. Pellán exhibits *Les Pensées* [The Pansies] (Cat. No. 38).

FEBRUARY 7 – MARCH 1: *Contemporary Canadian Art*, Musée Rath, Geneva. Travelling exhibition previously held at the Utrecht Centraal Museum (November 7 – December 7, 1958). The Geneva show includes a sculpture and second graphic arts section. In addition to the four paintings already mentioned, five other works by Pellán are presented. The exhibition later moves to the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne (March 14 – April 12), under the name *Zeitgenössische Kunst in Kanada*.⁶

MAY 25 – JUNE 5: Exhibition of Canadian art at the Roberts Gallery (759 Yonge Street, Toronto). Nine small paintings by Pellán are shown.⁷

APRIL – MAY: Exhibition organized by Peter Duffield and held in the annex of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Pellán's notebook mentions shipping *Interprétation des formes et des couleurs* [Interpretation of Form and Colour].

LATE APRIL – MAY 15: *Winnipeg Art Gallery Association*. Group show at the Winnipeg Civic Auditorium (Manitoba).⁸

JUNE 5 – 28: *The Third Biennial of Canadian Art, 1959*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada and initially held in Ottawa. *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden] (Cat. No. 43) and *Nystagmus* (Cat. No. 84) appear in the catalogue. Pellán's notebook also mentions shipping *Radar de l'aveugle* [Blindman's Radar], *Jardin vert* [Green Garden], *Les Tréteaux* [The Stage], and *La Maison hantée* [Haunted House].

JULY 12 – AUGUST 23: *The Arts in French Canada. Les Arts au Canada français*. Travelling exhibition organized by the Musée de la Province de Québec and first held at the Vancouver Art Gallery during the Vancouver International Festival. Works by Pellán include *L'homme A grave* [Man Engraving] (Cat. No. 193), *Floraison* [Blossoming] (drawing, Cat. No. 194), *Le Front à catastrophe* [Scene from the Spanish Civil War (or The Frontline of Catastrophe)] (Cat. No. 468) and two tapestries: *Tapis pour chambre d'enfant* [Rug for Child's Room] (1948), hooked by Irène Auger (Cat. No. 469), and *Le Jongleur* [The Juggler] 1941 (Cat. No. 470), hooked by Jeanne d'Arc Corriveau.

JULY 27: The *Edmonton Journal* announces the winners of the 1959 National Awards in Letters, Music and Painting and the Related Arts. These prizes had been granted since 1951 by the University of Alberta. Pellán wins top honours in the painting category.

SEPTEMBER: *L'École canadienne* publishes a lengthy interview of Alfred Pellán by Marcel Séguin during which the artist discusses certain features of his work and the elements which influenced him.

NOVEMBER – DECEMBER: Travelling exhibition first held at the Art Gallery of Hamilton, Ontario.

Pellán's notebook mentions shipping *Evasion* [Escape] and *Jardin jaune* [Yellow Garden].

The Fifth Winnipeg Show, The Art Student's Club, Winnipeg Art Gallery, University of Manitoba. Pellán's *S'abstenir* [Abstention] (Cat. No. 48) is shown.

1960 Pellán designs a mural for Immaculée-Conception High School in Granby, Québec.

FEBRUARY 2 – 28: *11th Annual Winter Exhibition*, Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton. Works by Pellán include *Un rêve au village blanc* [Dream of White Village] (Cat. No. 68) and *Phytographie* [Phytography] (Cat. No. 67). An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

MARCH 26 – APRIL 24: *88th Annual Exhibition of the Ontario Society of Artists*, Toronto. Pellán's notebook mentions shipping *Le Rideau de verre* [Glass Curtain] and *Maison de verre* [Glass House].

APRIL 25 – MAY 7: *Hommage à Pellán*. Exhibition at the Galerie Denyse Delrue. Pellán exhibits some 60 works, including his new "Women and the Moon" series.⁹

SEPTEMBER: *Cent ans de peinture canadienne*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Pellán's *Jardin volcanique* [Volcanic Garden] is shown.

OCTOBER 13 – NOVEMBER 6: *Alfred Pellán*. Travelling exhibition organized jointly by the National Gallery of Canada, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Art Gallery of Ontario; first held in Ottawa. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

NOVEMBER 1 – 18: *Alfred Pellán*, Robertson Galleries, Ottawa. About two dozen of Pellán's recent works are shown.¹⁰

NOVEMBER 1: Pellán gives a talk entitled "Projections et libres discussions" in the auditorium of the National Gallery of Canada in conjunction with the retrospective exhibition of his work.¹¹

NOVEMBER 22 – FEBRUARY 1961: *Arte Canadiense*. Exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada and held at the Museo Nacional de Arte Moderno, Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, Mexico. Pellán's *Bourgade* [The Three Disgraces] (Cat. No. 187) is shown.

1961 MARCH 4: Lawrence Sabbath publishes an article entitled "Alfred Pellán: Lyric Abstractionist" in *Saturday Night*, in which Pellán explains his perception of the artist's role in society.

APRIL 13 – 25: *Alfred Pellán*. Exhibition at the Roberts Gallery in Toronto.¹²

MAY 31 – JUNE 10: *8 artistes canadiens/8 Canadian Artists or Seven Canadian Painters, One Sculptor*. Exhibition of works by Harold Town, Jean Paul Lemieux, Edmund Alleyne, Léon Bellefleur, Jean Dallaire, Robert Roussil, Gecin, and Alfred Pellán at the Dresdner Gallery (2170 Rue Crescent, Montréal). Pellán's notebook mentions shipping

L'Aube magique [Magic Dawn], *Le Monde invisible* [The Invisible World] and *Enracinement* [Taking Root].

JUNE 19 – SEPTEMBER 23: *25 Québec Painters*, Stratford Festival Art Exhibition, Ontario. Since artists may submit a maximum of two paintings, Pellan decides to show *Le Modèle* [The Model] and *Phosphorescence* [Phosphorescence]. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.¹³

1962 JANUARY 28: First meeting of the Conseil des arts du Québec, the provincial arts council affiliated with the Ministère des Affaires culturelles and mandated “to guide and stimulate the special efforts which the defence and maintenance of a dynamic spirit will inevitably generate given the circumstances in which history has placed our people”.¹⁴ [Translation] Jean-Charles Falardeau chairs the Conseil, whose 27 members include Guy Viau (Vice-Chairman) and Alfred Pellan.

FEBRUARY: *La Nouvelle École de Montréal*. Exhibition at the Galerie Namher in Paris. Roger Cathelin, who wrote the foreword for the exhibition catalogue, speaks of “the present father of the Montréal school, a man sixty years young, Alfred Pellan [...] and his uncle, Paul-Émile Borduas”.¹⁵ [Translation] Jean McEwen, Tobie Steinhouse, Marcelle Maltais, Richard Lacroix, Réal Arsenault, and Danielle Bonin also show works.¹⁶

JANUARY 5 – APRIL: *Nowoczesne Malarstwo Kanadyjskie* (Recent Canadian Painting), Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, Poland. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada in Poland. Works by Pellan include *Floraison* [Blossoming] (Cat. No. 29, reproduced in the catalogue), *L'Affût* [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 30), *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden] (Cat. No. 31), and *Musicomanie* [Love of Music] (Cat. No. 32, reproduced in the catalogue).

APRIL: Pellan resigns from the provincial arts council, despite the fact that he “firmly believes in the work of this type of agency”. In an article published on May 29, “a high-ranking government official” declares that “Pellan is not criticizing the Conseil des arts. [However] he has very clear, representational leanings which he has very deftly defined and which cannot be reconciled with the non-representational leanings of certain members of the Conseil des arts. He therefore prefers to resign than sit with people who do not share his views on painting”.¹⁷ [Translation]

MAY 11 – JULY 31: *L'Art au Canada*, Festival de Bordeaux. The “contemporary” section of this exhibition includes works by Alfred Pellan, Ozias Leduc, James Wilson Morrice, Emily Carr, Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean-Paul Riopelle, and Jacques de Tonnancour. *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 53) and *Le Panier au nœuds* [The Basket with Bows] (or *Le Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow]) (Cat. No. 54) appear in the catalogue.

SUMMER: Pellan supervises the execution of three mural compositions (ceramic and mosaic) by

Carol Grenon of the Atelier de la lune¹⁸ in private homes designed by architect Jacques Vincent in the Montréal region.

JUNE 26 – AUGUST 23: *La Peinture canadienne moderne, 25 années de peinture au Canada français*, 5th Festival of Two Worlds, Collicola Palace, Spoleto, Italy. The exhibition is organized by the Délégation générale du Québec in Paris under the patronage of the Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec.¹⁹

1963 JANUARY: *Master Canadian Painters and Sculptors*, London Public Library and Art Museum, Sarnia Public Library and Art Gallery, Ontario. *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon] (Cat. No. 39) appears in the exhibition catalogue.

June 11 – 24: Group exhibition held on the 41st floor of Place Ville Marie. Jean Desmarais, the event’s organizer, tries to present an overview of Québec painting (figurative, non-figurative and abstract art; work by professional and amateur artists); some 520 painters and 50 sculptors participate in the event.²⁰

SEPTEMBER 21: Inauguration of Place des Arts and its new concert and opera hall and the unveiling of *Scherzo*, the glass mural in the main bar. This is Pellan’s first glass mural, based on a new technique that enables him to eliminate the framework. The mural, which measures 50’ long × 5’ high, was made in the Atelier Art Kaleiry.²¹

OCTOBER 2 – 22: *Présence de Pellan*. Exhibition of drawings at the Galerie Libre (2100 Rue Crescent, Montréal). The event coincides with the publication of Guy Robert’s book, *Pellan, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*, launched on December 2, 1963 at the Centre de Psychologie et de Pédagogie (CPP).²²

OCTOBER – OCTOBER 1965: *Fifteen Canadian Artists*. Travelling exhibition organized by the Canadian Advisory Committee, the Canada Council and the Museum of Modern Art in New York, under the auspices of the International Council of the Museum of Modern Art (New York). Works by Pellan include *Fabrique de fleurs magiques* [Magic Flower Factory], *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden] and *Phosphorescence* [Phosphorescence]. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

DECEMBER 17 – JANUARY 5, 1964: *York Wilson•Toronto, Alfred Pellan•Montréal, Jean Paul Lemieux•Québec, Jean McEwen•Montréal, Joe Plaskett•Vancouver*. Musée Galliera in Paris. A total of 110 works are shown in this exhibition, organized by the Délégation générale du Québec in Paris and the Canadian Embassy. The catalogue includes 24 paintings by Pellan.

Pellan creates a mural for the Winnipeg airport.²³

1964 Pellan designs the stained-glass windows for Saint-Théophile Church in Laval-Ouest, Québec.²⁴

FEBRUARY 7 – MARCH 22: *Canadian Painting 1939-1963*, The Tate Gallery, London. This exhibition, organized by the National Gallery of Canada,

includes some 100 works by 11 artists: Goodridge Roberts, Alex Colville, Jean McEwen, Harold Town, Graham Coughtry, Jean Paul Lemieux, Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Jack Shadbolt, Ronald Bloore, and Alfred Pellán, who exhibits *Les Îles de la Nuit* [The Islands of the Night] (Cat. No. 38).²⁵

FEBRUARY 7 – MARCH 1: Eighteen works by Pellán are shown at the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, in Kitchener, Ontario.²⁶

MAY: Pellán creates a stained-glass window for Sainte-Rose School in Québec.

JUNE 12 – 17: *1914-1964. Un demi-siècle de peinture*, Centre d'art de Shawinigan. *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes] is shown.

OCTOBER 12: Launching of the art review and exhibition *50 Peintres du Québec*, Versailles Room, Windsor Hotel, Montréal.

NOVEMBER: Rodman Hall, St. Catharine's and District Arts Council, St. Catharine's, Ontario.²⁷

NOVEMBER 10 – 21: Solo exhibition at the Roberts Gallery in Toronto. Pellán's notebook mentions shipping *Tête rectangulaire* [Rectangular Head], *Végétaux marins* [Aquatic Plants], *Le Champ* [Field], *Le Grand Champ* [Large Field], *Fines tiges* [Slender Stems], *Le Sixième Sens* [Sixth Sense] (or *Radar de l'aveugle* [Blindman's Radar]), *Jeune Fille constellée* [Young Girl in the Stars], *Escale (a)* [Stopover (a)], *Fleurs d'invention* [Flowers of Invention], *Plante touffue* [Bushy Plant], *La Mer rose* [Pink Sea], *Les Fleuristes* [The Florists], *Escale (B)* [Stopover (B)], *Jeune Femme* [Young Woman] (charcoal), *Coin de ville* [A Corner of Town], *Le Bateau* [Boat], plus several drawings.

1965 JANUARY 23 – 30: Exhibition at the Student Union Building, University of Alberta. *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes] is shown.

MARCH 22 – APRIL: *Cinquante peintres québécois*. Exhibition of around 60 paintings organized by "50 artistes inc." at the Caisse populaire Saint-Alphonse d'Youville. Works by Pellán, Mousseau, Ayotte, Gaboriau (son of Robert Lapalme), and Normand Hudon are shown.²⁸

APRIL 17 – 30: *50 artistes inc.* Exhibition at the Université de Montréal. Pellán exhibits *Au soleil noir*, [Under the Black Sun] *La Chiromancienne*, [The Fortune-Teller], *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players] and *Paysage à la femme devinette* [Woman in Landscape Puzzle].²⁹

JUNE 4 – AUGUST 22: *The Sixth Biennial Exhibition of Canadian Painting, 1965*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada and initially held in Ottawa. *Adam et Ève* [Adam and Eve] (1962) appears in the catalogue.

JULY 12 – AUGUST 22: *Artistes de Montréal*. Exhibition of paintings, prints, sculpture, and tapestries organized for the inauguration of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. *Jardin mécanique* [Mechanical Garden] appears in the catalogue (No. 27).

JULY 17 – 25: *Un demi-siècle de peinture au Canada*. Exhibition of works from the Musée du Québec, organized by the Rivière-du-Loup women's guild. *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes] and *Et le soleil continue* [And the Sun Shines On] are included in the list of works exhibited.

AUGUST 21 – 27: *Les Artistes du Québec*, Université Laval, Québec, Pavillon Mgr Lemieux. Works by Pellán include *Fontaine de Jouvence* [Fountain of Youth] (Cat. No. 71), *Saint-Louis de Courville* [St. Louis de Courville] (drawing, Cat. No. 71b), *Question d'optique* [Question of Sight] (drawing, Cat. No. 71c), and *Animaux baroques* [Wild Animals] (drawing, Cat. No. 71d). An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

SEPTEMBER 8 – NOVEMBER 3: *4^e Biennale de Paris*, Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris. Pellán is one of the 800 artists to exhibit works in the show.

SEPTEMBER 15 – NOVEMBER 13: *Commonwealth Art Treasures*. Exhibition at Burlington House in London during the Commonwealth Arts Festival. Pellán's *Les Îles de la Nuit* [The Islands of the Night] is shown.

DECEMBER 17 – MARCH 14, 1966: *Un demi-siècle de peinture au Canada français*. Québec-based travelling exhibition of works from the Musée du Québec collection, organized by the Ministère des Affaires culturelles. *Et le soleil continue* [And the Sun Shines On] is mentioned in the folder published for the event. According to the file on *La Table verte* [Green Table], this work also seems to have been shown.

OCTOBER 15 – NOVEMBER 7: *Focus on Drawings: Canada, Great Britain, Italy, Spain*, Art Gallery of Toronto. *Quatre Femmes signes D* [Four Women Signs D] (Cat. No. 80) and *Cinq Femmes signes C* [Five Women Signs C] (Cat. No. 79) appear in the exhibition catalogue.

Pellán receives the Canada Council medal and is appointed a member of the international jury for the Quatrième Biennale de Paris.

1966 JUNE 13 – 19: *French Week in Toronto*, Art Gallery of Toronto. Exhibition of works from the Musée du Québec collection. *Fleurs* [Flowers] (or *Les Tulipes* [Tulips]) and *Et le soleil continue* [And the Sun Shines On] are among the works exhibited.

JUNE 14 – JULY 17: *Dons: collection permanente*, Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal. Pellán's work *Trois Yeux* [Three Eyes], 1944 (Cat. No. 65) is shown.

JULY 31 – AUGUST 6: *French Canada Week*, Confederation Centre, Charlottetown (PEI). Exhibition of works from the collections of the Musée du Québec and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. *La Pariade* [The Pairing], is included in the list of works exhibited.

SUMMER: Pellán creates a mural for the National Library of Canada in Ottawa. Murals by Charles Comfort and British artist John Hutton are also chosen by the Department of Public Works.³⁰

Dating from 1967-1968, these murals decorate the west and east walls of the reference room and are based respectively on *La Connaissance/Knowledge* and *Les Alphabets/Alphabets* (completed in 1971).³¹

SEPTEMBER 23 – OCTOBER 30: *Images for a Canadian Heritage*, Vancouver Art Gallery Association. Works by Pellán include *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden] (Cat. No. 100) and *Fabrique de fleurs magiques* [Magic Flower Factory] (Cat. No. 101).

DECEMBER 1 – 18: *Montreal Collects: The Last Decade – Montréal collectionne: dernière décennie*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. An exhibition catalogue published for the occasion includes *Jardins mauves* [Mauve Gardens] (or *Jardin mauve* [Mauve Garden]).

1967 JANUARY 8 – APRIL 14, 1968: *Canadian Painting, 1850-1950*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. *Jeune Comédien* (Young Actor) (Cat. No. 59) appears in the catalogue.

FEBRUARY 22 – MARCH 27: *Peinture vivante du Québec, 1966: vingt-cinq ans de libération de l'œil et du geste*. Exhibition organized by the Musée du Québec for the 25th anniversary of the *Indépendants*. *Sous-terre* [Underground] (Cat. No. 15), *Les Fraises au livre* [Strawberries with Book] (Cat. No. 16) and *L'Aube masquée* [Masked Dawn] (Cat. No. 25) are shown.

SPRING: *One Hundred Years of Canadian Theatre*, Rothmans Gallery, Stratford, Ontario. Jean-Louis Roux obtains the sketches for the costumes and stage sets from *Twelfth Night*.³²

MARCH 30 – APRIL 30: *Prize Award Winners 1908-1965*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. *Pot à tabac* [Tobacco Pot] (Cat. No. 51) is included in the show. Pellán had won first prize for this painting during the *65th Annual Spring Exhibition* in 1948.

MAY 12 – SEPTEMBER 17: *Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art – Trois cents ans d'art canadien*, National Gallery of Canada. *Type de la rue Saint-Laurent* [Man – Rue Saint-Laurent] (Cat. No. 260), *Surprise académique* [Academic Surprise] (Cat. No. 265), *Floraison* [Blossoming] (Cat. No. 280), and *Jardin jaune* [Yellow Garden] (Cat. No. 307) appear in the exhibition catalogue.

MAY 26 – AUGUST 20: *Panorama de la peinture au Québec, 1940-1966*, Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal. *Quatre Femmes* [Four Women] (Cat. No. 52), *La Mascarade* [Masquerade] (Cat. No. 54), *La Magie de la chaussure* [Magic of Shoes] (Cat. No. 54), *Jardin rouge* [Red Garden] (Cat. No. 89), *Les Voltigeuses* [The Acrobats] (Cat. No. 90), *Architecture molle et poilue* [Soft, Furry Architecture] (Cat. No. 91), and *L'Aube magique* [Magic Dawn] (Cat. No. 92) appear in the exhibition catalogue.

SUMMER: *La Peinture au Canada*. Exhibition of Canadian art held at the Canadian Pavilion during Montréal's Expo 67. Pellán's *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] is No. 16 in the catalogue.

JUNE 22 – AUGUST 31: *Canadian Art of Our Time*. Exhibition organized by the Winnipeg Art Gallery and held in Eaton's Assembly Hall. *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape] (Cat. No. 45) appears in the catalogue.

AUGUST 4 – SEPTEMBER 3: *Ten Decades, 1867-1967, Ten Painters*. Rothmans Gallery, Stratford, and New Brunswick Museum (October 8 – November 12, 1967). *La Fenêtre ouverte* [Open Window] (Cat. No. 35), *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon] (Cat. No. 36), *Les Pensées* [The Pansies] (Cat. No. 37), *Pot à tabac* [Tobacco Pot] (Cat. No. 38), *Portrait de Nanette* [Portrait of Nanette] (Cat. No. 39), and *Le Crieur* [The Town Crier] (Cat. No. 40) appear in the catalogue.

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 1: *Trésors d'art*, Centre d'art de Lachute, Québec. *Météore sept* [Meteor Seven] is one of the works exhibited by Pellán.

NOVEMBER 24: Pellán is named Companion of the Order of Canada. He also receives the Canadian Centennial Medal this year.

Pellán participates in the exhibition *Modern Art in Advertising*, at the Art Institute of Chicago.

1968 MARCH 20 – APRIL 14: *Dix peintres du Québec*. Exhibition first held at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and later at the Musée du Québec (April 18 – May 12). It includes works by Edmund Alleyn, Charles Gagnon, Yves Gaucher, Jacques Hurtubise, Guido Molinari, Jean McEwen, Jean Paul Lemieux, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Jacques de Tonnancour, and Pellán.³³

APRIL 4 – 28: *Alfred Pellán*. Small retrospective at the Winnipeg Art Gallery. Nineteen paintings are shown.³⁴

JUNE 21 – 24: Sculpture symposium and painting exhibition during the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations in Acton Vale. Pellán participates in the event.³⁵

DECEMBER 15 – JANUARY 19: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, translated and directed by Jean-Louis Roux, is restaged at Place des Arts. Pellán uses the sets and costumes from the original performance, but adds three (or four) new costumes for the extras. He also improves some of the backdrops, particularly *Jardin d'Olivia* [Olivia's Garden].³⁶

1969 APRIL 29 – JUNE 1: Solo exhibition at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and, on the night of the opening, launching of the National Film Board film *Voir Pellán*. The exhibition includes 120 colour drawings [26 from the Polychrome series (1937-1969), 24 from the *Madeleine et Pierre* [Madeleine and Pierre] series (1944), 77 from the *La Nuit des rois* [Twelfth Night] series (1946 and 1968), and 2 drawings marked *Hors-série* (1943)], as well as two original stage sets and eight costumes from the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde production of *Twelfth Night* in 1968.³⁷

- MAY 25: Pellan receives an honorary doctorate in philosophy (fine arts) from the University of Ottawa.³⁸
- OCTOBER 5 – NOVEMBER 12: *Things: Still-Life Painting from the 17th to the 20th Century*, Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor (Ont.). *Les Pensées* [The Pansies] and *Nature morte à la palette* [Still-Life with Palette] are Nos. 36 and 37 in the exhibition.
- The Hart House Collection of Canadian Paintings*, The Art Committee of Hart House, Toronto. *La Fenêtre ouverte* [Open Window] (Cat. No. 113) appears in the exhibition catalogue.
- 1970 MARCH: With architect Jacques Vincent, Pellan creates the interior and exterior decor of the Vermont Construction Company building in the industrial park in Laval, Québec.³⁹
- MARCH 15 – SEPTEMBER 13: *Expo 70*, Osaka, Japan. Québec Pavillon.
- OCTOBER: Painting, sculpture and caricature exhibition organized by the Association des Anciens de Laval. Salon des professeurs, Pavillon Pollack, Université Laval, Québec.⁴⁰
- OCTOBER 1 – 15, 1971: *La Collection de monsieur et madame Jules Loeb – The Mr. and Mrs. Jules Loeb Collection*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. *L'Heure inhumaine* [The Inhuman Hour] (Cat. No. 37) appears in the catalogue.
- 1971 FEBRUARY 24 – MARCH 6: *Pellan. Creations for the Theatre, Costumes and Decors of "Twelfth Night", "The Three Princes"*. Solo exhibition at the Roberts Gallery in Toronto.
- MARCH 25 – MAY 15: *Costumes d'Alfred Pellan pour La Nuit des rois de Shakespeare*. This exhibition, described as a "psychedelic masquerade from the Elizabethan Era",⁴¹ [Translation] and held at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, includes 27 costumes as well as a slide show of fitting sessions, make-up trials and the artist's studio. Pellan re-creates the make-up for some of the characters in *Twelfth Night* using 26 plastic masks.⁴² An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.
- SPRING: La Guilde Graphique prints approximately 100 copies of a series of plates illustrating seven costumes and a stage set from *Twelfth Night*.⁴³
- JUNE 11 – SEPTEMBER 6: *Quinze facettes de la peinture canadienne*, Palais des arts, Man and His World, Montréal. Organized by Paul Gladu as an overview of Canadian painting, the exhibition includes 300 works grouped under 15 different themes. Pellan's works appear under the themes: *La réalité des légendes* [The Reality of Legends] (Henri Julien, Robert Laplame, Alfred Pellan), *Constructions de l'esprit* [Constructions of the Spirit] (Jacques Hurtubise, Claude Tousignant, Guido Molinari, Gordon Webber, Lawrence Harris, Kenneth Lockhead, Alfred Pellan, etc.) and *Explorateurs du rêve* [Explorers of Dreams] (Alfred Pellan, Arthur Guindon, Jean Dallaire, Shirley Wales, Harold Town, etc.).⁴⁴
- JUNE 5 – 6: Université Laval awards Pellan an honorary doctorate in fine arts. The next day, he receives an honorary doctorate in law from Sir George Williams University.
- Pellan is named a member of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and honorary president of La Guilde Graphique de Montréal.
- 1972 MARCH 2 – 16: *Quinzaine québécoise*. Exhibition of works from the Musée du Québec collection at Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, Nfld. *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] and *S'abstenir* [Abstention] are included in the list of works shown.
- MAY 23: Pellan receives the Prix Philippe-Hébert from the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal. This prize, created the previous year, "marks the skill and influence of a French Canadian artist in the field of visual arts".⁴⁵ [Translation]
- SEPTEMBER 12 – 24: École des arts visuels, Université Laval, Québec. Solo exhibition of stage sets, theatre costumes and gouaches.⁴⁶
- OCTOBER 20 – NOVEMBER 26: *Pellan*. First major retrospective of Pellan's work in Canada. Pellan designs the catalogue cover. This travelling exhibition, organized by Germain Lefebvre of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and André Marchand of the Musée du Québec, encompasses 176 paintings, 16 theatre costumes and 75 masks, including the artist's first series of 26 masks shown in Paris the previous year. Pellan would later pursue this type of work, making 49 other masks. The retrospective includes another original piece: the first version of a mini-beastie created by the artist shortly before the exhibition using stones and agates gathered on the beach in Percé in the company of French surrealist André Breton near the end of the war.⁴⁷
- OCTOBER 28 – NOVEMBER 26: Galerie de Montréal, Montréal. Pellan exhibits 43 gouaches as well as stage sets and theatre costumes.
- 1973 MARCH 30 – APRIL 29: *Painters of Quebec: Maurice and Andrée Corbeil Collection*. Exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada and initially held at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe] (Cat. No. 73), *Mascarade* [Masquerade] (Cat. No. 74), *Sujet de peinture* [Painting Subject] (or *Surprise académique* [Academic Surprise]) (Cat. No. 75), and *Symphonie* [Symphony] (Cat. No. 76) appear in the catalogue.
- JUNE 11: Pellan receives the Canada Council Molson Prize, which was instituted in 1963 to reward and encourage outstanding contributions to the arts, humanities, social sciences, and national unity.⁴⁸
- NOVEMBER 12: Germain Lefebvre's book, *Pellan*, is launched at the Éditions de L'Homme in Montréal.⁴⁹

ENDNOTES

1. François-Marc Gagnon, *op. cit.*, 1978, p. 499.
2. Pellan listed the following works in his notebook: *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden], *Jardin mauve* [Mauve Garden], *Jardin vert* [Green Garden], *Jardin jaune* [Yellow Garden], *Jardin bleu* [Blue Garden], *Jardin rouge* [Red Garden], *Maison de verre* [Glass House], *Tempo* [Tempo], *Vertige du temps* [Temporal Vertigo], *Fées d'eau* [Water Fairies], *La Brise* [Breeze], *Éphémère* [Ephemera], *Cousu main* [Handsewn], *L'Homme A grave* [Man Engraving], and *Printemps* [Spring]. See also: Rodolphe de Repentigny, *La Presse*, April 19, 1958; Dorothy Pfeiffer, *The Gazette*, April 19, 1958; Robert Ayre, *The Montreal Star*, April 19, 1958; René Chicoine, *Le Devoir*, April 19, 1958; Paul Gladu, *Le Petit Journal*, April 20, 1958; Paul Gladu, *Notre Temps*, May 3, 1958.
3. In his notebook, Pellan also mentioned *Floraison* [Blossoming], *Jeune Fille constellée* [Young Girl in the Stars] (Cat. No. 34) and a sketch for the "Canada" mural. Exhibition catalogue.
4. Dorothy Pfeiffer, *The Gazette*, September 20, 1958; René Chicoine, *Le Devoir*, September 20, 1958; see also the exhibition invitation.
5. Pellan mentioned the shipment of six works in his notebook: *Le Crieur* [The Town Crier], *Jardin étang* [Pond Garden], *Maison de verre* [Glass House], *Chasse sous-marine* [Underwater Hunt], *Phytographie* [Phytography], and *S'abstenir* [Abstention].
6. *Les Îles de la Nuit* [The Islands of the Night] (Cat. No. 34), *L'Affût* [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 35), *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 36), and *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 37) are mentioned in the catalogue prepared for the museum in Geneva. Pellan exhibited the following works in the graphic arts section: *La Bourgade* [The Three Disgraces] (Cat. No. 72), *Armuré* [Armoured] (Cat. No. 73), *Fragments* [Fragments] (Cat. No. 74), *Portrait de femme* [Portrait of a Woman] (Cat. No. 75), and *Portrait de jeune fille au chapeau* [Portrait of a Young Girl in a Hat] (Cat. No. 76). The following works were mentioned in the catalogue prepared for the exhibition in the Wallraf-Ritchartz Museum: *Die Inseln der Nacht* [The Islands of the Night] (Cat. No. 34), *Der Anstand* [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 35), *Dunkle Stille* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 36), and *Ein lachender Mund* [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 37). The graphics section included: *Das Dorf* [Village] (Cat. No. 71), *Die Rüstung* [Armoured] (Cat. No. 72), *Fragmente* [Fragments] (Cat. No. 73), *Bildnis-Frauenkopf* [Head of a Woman] (Cat. No. 74), and *Bildnis-Junges Mädchen mit Hut* [Portrait of a Young Girl in a Hat] (Cat. No. 75).
7. *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 1959.
8. Pellan's notebook mentions shipping: *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron], *Jardin jaune* [Yellow Garden], *Rideau de verre* [Glass Curtain], *Évasion* [Escape], *Rêve au village blanc* [Dream of White Village], *S'abstenir* [Abstention], and *Le Bûcheron* [The Woodcutter].
9. See the list of works exhibited, Pellan file, Musée du Québec; *La Presse*, April 21, 1960; *Le Devoir*, April 23, 1960; *La Patrie*, April 24, 1960; Françoise de Repentigny, *Le Devoir*, April 28, 1960; Robert Ayre, *The Montreal Star*, April 30, 1960; Dorothy Pfeiffer, *The Gazette*, April 30, 1960; Michelle Tisseyre, *Photo-Journal*, week of April 30 – May 7, 1960; Paul Gladu, *Le Petit Journal*, week of May 1-8, 1960; Jean-Charles Harvey, *Le Petit Journal*, May 8, 1960; *L'information médicale et paramédicale*, June 7, 1960; Herbert Steinhouse, *ibid.*
10. Pellan listed the following works in his notebook: *À l'orée de la nuit* [Nightfall], *Croissant de lune* [Crescent Moon], *Printemps* [Spring], *Bailler l'infini* [Yawning Infinity], *Correspondance* [Correspondence], *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron], *Ensemencement* [The Daredevils], *Récréation lunaire* [Lunar Recreation], *Mirage* [Mirage], *Grimpants* [The Climbers], *Joyeuses joaillières* [The Happy Jewellers], *Danseuses en coulisse* [Dancers in the Wings], *Café-tabac* [Café], *Cryptographie* [Cryptography], *Vitrine* [Window], *Fées nocturnes* [Night Fairies], *Naissance de Vénus* [Birth of Venus], *Cupidon* [Cupid], *Les Masques* [Masks], *Reflets* [Reflections], *Zone interdite* [No Entry] *La Boîte à surprise* [Surprise Package], and *Musicomanie* [Love of Music].
11. *Le Devoir*, October 11, 1960; *Le Droit*, October 29, 1960; J. M., *The Ottawa Journal*, November 2, 1960; *Le Droit*, Ottawa, November 2, 1960.
12. The exhibition included the following works, in particular: *Tête rectangulaire* [Rectangular Head], *L'Heure rapace* [The Rapacious Hour], *Les Ondoyantes*, *Mirage* [Mirage], *Joie de vivre* [Joy of Living], *Rococomagie* [Rococo Magic], *La Chasse au papillons* [Chasing Butterflies], *Germination* [Germination], *Pyrotechnie* [Pyrotechny], *Intérieur de serre* [Greenhouse Interior], *Miroitement* [Shimmering], and *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden].
13. *La Presse*, June 5, 1961; Lise Gagné, *La Presse*, September 11, 1961.

14. Jacques Girard, *La Presse*, January 29, 1962.
15. *Le Nouveau Journal* printed long excerpts from Jean Cathelin's text in its March 17, 1962 edition.
16. *La Presse*, February 22, 1962; Jean Basile, *Le Devoir*, March 23, 1962.
17. Quoted by Jacques Trépanier, *Le Droit*, May 29, 1962.
18. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 60; Germain Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 183.
19. *Fleurs* [Flowers], *La Table verte* [Green Table], *Les Trois Danseuses* [The Three Dancers], (or *Femmes dansant à la falaise* [Women Dancing on a Cliff]), *Sous-terre* [Underground], Painting (MQ), *Nature morte au verre de cristal* [Still-Life with Crystal Glass], *Icare* [Icarus], and *Fabrique de fleurs magiques* [Magic Flower Factory] appear in the catalogue.
20. Michelle Tisseyre, *Photo-Journal*, week of June 22-29, 1963.
21. Paul Gladu, *Le Petit Journal*, week of February 17, 1963; *La Presse*, April 13, 1963; *Dimanche-Matin*, June 2, 1963; *Le Devoir*, June 4, 1963; *The Gazette*, June 5, 1963; *The Montreal Star*, June 15, 1963; Virginia Boulanger, *Le Petit Journal*, June 16, 1963; Carl Weiselberger, *Ottawa Citizen*, August 13, 1963; Renaude Lapointe, *La Presse*, September 21, 1963; Laurent Lamy, *Le Devoir*, September 28, 1963; Robert Ayre, *The Montreal Star*, October 5, 1963; Claude Jasmin, *La Presse*, October 5, 1963; Robert Ayre, *The Montreal Star*, October 5, 1963.
22. *Le Devoir*, December 4, 1963.
23. Frank Rasky, *Canadian Weekly*, May 9-15, 1964.
24. Jean Bédard, *Culture vivante*, September 1972.
25. Eric Newton, *Manchester Guardian*, February 7, 1964; *Perspective*, February 8, 1964. Works by Pellán included *La Table verte* [Green Table] (Cat. No. 34), *La Fillette aux lunettes* (or *Fillette aux lunettes*) [Young Girl with Glasses] (Cat. No. 35), *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 36), *Floraison* [Blossoming] (Cat. No. 37), *Les Îles de la Nuit* [The Islands of the Night] (Cat. No. 38), *Symphonie* [Symphony] (Cat. No. 39), *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 40), *La Chouette* [The Owl] (Cat. No. 41), *L'Affût* [The Stalker] (Cat. No. 42), *Jardin jaune* [Yellow Garden] (Cat. No. 43) and *Jardin mauve* [Mauve Garden] (Cat. No. 44).
26. *Un coin du Vieux Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec], *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor], *L'Heure inhumaine* [The Inhuman Hour], *Le Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow], *Portrait de Nanette* [Portrait of Nanette], *Luna-Parc* [Luna Park], *Rococomagie* [Rococo Magic], *Jardin volcanique* [Volcanic Garden], *Le Pot à tabac* [Tobacco Pot], *Chasse aux papillons* [Chasing Butterflies], *Le Crieur* [The Town Crier], *Iconoclastie* [Iconoclasm], *Les Vigies* [The Lookouts], *Équateur magnétique* [Magnetic Equator], *Pyrotechniques* [Pyrotechnics], *Face au polyèdre* [Face with Polyhedron], *Bailler l'infini* [Yawning Infinity], and *Par ricochet* [By Ricochet]. Exhibition catalogue.
27. UQAM archives, Montréal.
28. *La Presse*, March 23, 1965; *Le Devoir*, March 27, 1965.
29. Fonds Alfred Pellán, UQAM archives, Montréal.
30. *La Presse*, July 22, 1966; *Le Petit Journal*, August 7, 1966.
31. *Nouvelles de la bibliothèque nationale*, February 1988; Jean Bédard, *Culture vivante*, September 1972.
32. Germain Lefebvre, p. 120.
33. *La Mer rose* [Pink Sea] (1964, Cat. No. 36), *Végétaux marins* [Marine Plants] (1964, Cat. No. 37), *Fleurs d'invention* [Flowers of Invention] (1964, Cat. No. 38), *Plante touffue* [Bushy Plant] (1964, Cat. No. 39), and *Jardin mécanique* [Mechanical Garden] (1965, Cat. No. 40) appear in the exhibition catalogue (brochure). See Jean-Noël Bilodeau, *Le Soleil*, April 27, 1968.
34. Works by Pellán included the paintings *Le Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow], *Les Tulipes* [Tulips], *La Fenêtre ouverte* [Open Window], *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon], *Femme à la perle* [Woman with a Pearl], *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes], *Les Pensées* [The Pansies], *Fillette aux lunettes* [Young Girl with Glasses] (1941), *Symphonie* [Symphony], *Fauconnerie* [Falconry], *Nature morte au verre de cristal* [Still-Life with Crystal Glass], *Bailler l'infini* [Yawning Infinity], *Évasion* [Escape], *S'abstenir* [Abstention], *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden], *Et le soleil continue* [And the Sun Shines On], *Germination* [Germination], *Le Champ* [Field], *Les Carnivores* [The Carnivores], and seven drawings: *Tête de femme* [Head of a Woman], *Jeune Fille au chapeau* [Young Girl in Hat], *Armuré* [Armoured], *Fragments* [Fragments], *Le Tiroir de l'orfèvre* [The Goldsmith's Drawer], *Science fiction* [Science Fiction], and *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm]. Exhibition catalogue.
35. *La Presse*, June 4, 1968.
36. Martial Dassylva, *La Presse*, December 14, 1968; Jacques de Roussan, *Perspective. Le Soleil*, December 14, 1968.
37. Jacques Thériault, *Le Devoir*, May 1, 1969.
38. *La Presse*, May 9, 1969; *Le Soleil*, May 10, 1969.
39. Luc Benoît, *Perspectives*, April 4, 1970.
40. Works by Pellán included *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar], *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes], *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons], and *Jardin vert* [Green Garden]; Monique Duval, *Le Soleil*, October 2, 1970.
41. Excerpt from *Le Figaro*, April 15, 1971.
42. *La Presse*, March 29, 1971; *Le Droit*, March 29, 1971.
43. Normand Thériault, *La Presse*, June 12, 1971.
44. Normand Thériault, *La Presse*, July 3, 1971.
45. *La Presse*, May 15, 1972; *Le Devoir*, May 25, 1972.
46. *Au fil des Événements*, September 14, 1972.
47. Gilles Toupin, *La Presse*, November 23, 1972.
48. *Le Devoir*, May 15, 1973; *The Gazette*, May 15, 1973; *The Montreal Star*, May 15, 1973; *La Presse*, May 15, 1973; *Dimanche-Matin*, June 10, 1973.
49. Jacques Thériault, *Le Devoir*, November 13, 1973; Michel Sabourin, *Québec-Presse*, November 18, 1973; Lenore Crawford, *London Free Press*, December 15, 1973. The revised edition was published in 1986.

WORKS REPRODUCED

- Adam et Ève et les diables** [Adam, Eve and the Devils] (Cat. No. 97)
Baroquerie [Baroquerie] (Cat. No. 111)
Chez le fermier [At the Farmer's] (Cat. No. 83)
Croissant de lune [Crescent Moon] (Cat. No. 90)
Danseuses en coulisse [Dancers in the Wings] (Cat. No. 87)
Environnement [Environment] (Cat. No. 104)
Et le soleil continue [And the Sun Shines On] (Cat. No. 84)
Germination [Germination] (Cat. No. 93)
J'herborise [I Herbalize] (Cat. No. 105)
Jardin mécanique [Mechanical Garden] (Cat. No. 100)
Jardin rouge [Red Garden] (Cat. No. 81)
Jardin vert [Green Garden] (Cat. No. 82)
Jeunesse [Youth] (Cat. No. 86)
Joie de vivre – B [Joy of Living – B] (Cat. No. 91)
Joyaux aquatiques [Aquatic Gems] (Cat. No. 96)
L'Aube magique [Magic Dawn] (Cat. No. 94)
La Maison hantée [Haunted House] (Cat. No. 80)
Le Buisson ardent [Firethorn] (Cat. No. 101)
Le Champ [Field], (Cat. No. 98)
Les Carnivores [The Carnivores] (Cat. No. 102)
Luna Park [Luna Park] (Cat. No. 89)
Mirage [Mirage] (Cat. No. 85)
Miroitement [Shimmering] (Cat. No. 95)
Naissance de Vénus – B [Birth of Venus – B] (Cat. No. 107)
Oniromancie [Oneiromancy] (Cat. No. 108)
Phosphorescence [Phosphorescence] (Cat. No. 92)
Pop Shop (Cat. No. 110)
Repos [Resting] (Cat. No. 88)
Ripolinade [Ripolinade] (Cat. No. 109)
Série noire – B [Black Series – B] (Cat. No. 106)
Série noire – C [Black Series – C] (Cat. No. 112)
Sioux! Sioux! [Sioux! Sioux!] (Cat. No. 103)
Végétaux marins [Aquatic Plants] (Cat. No. 99)



80

La Maison hantée [Haunted House], 1958
Private Collection, Montréal



81

Jardin rouge [Red Garden], 1958
Private Collection, Westmount

140



82
Jardin vert [Green Garden], 1958
Musée du Québec, Québec City



83
Chez le fermier [At the Farmer's], 1959
 Private Collection, Westmount



84
Et le soleil continue [And the Sun Shines On], ca. 1938-1959
 Musée du Québec, Québec City



85
Mirage [Mirage], 1959
John and Molly Pollock, Toronto



86

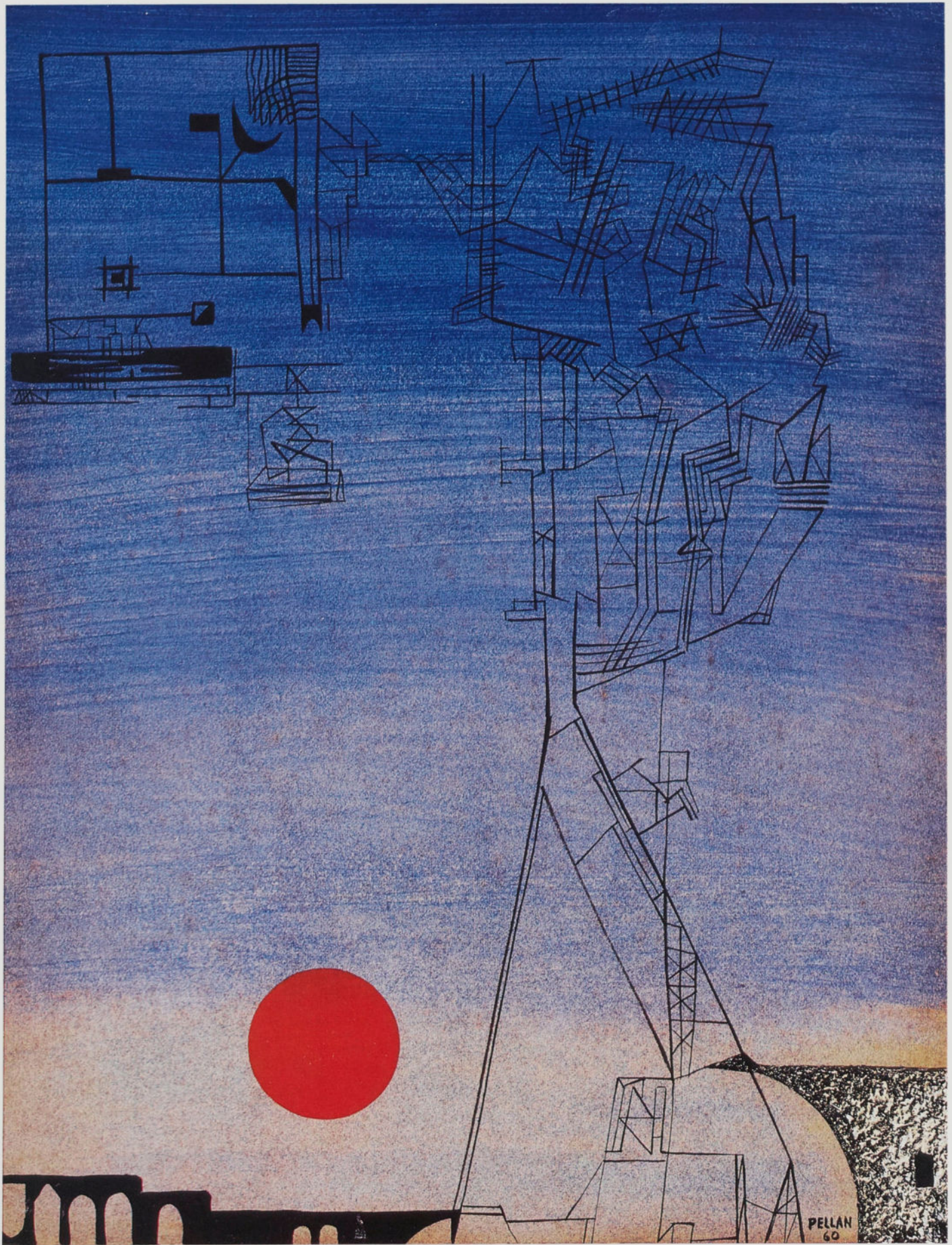
Jeunesse [Youth], 1960

Mr. and Mrs. Louis-Jacques Beaulieu, Montréal



87

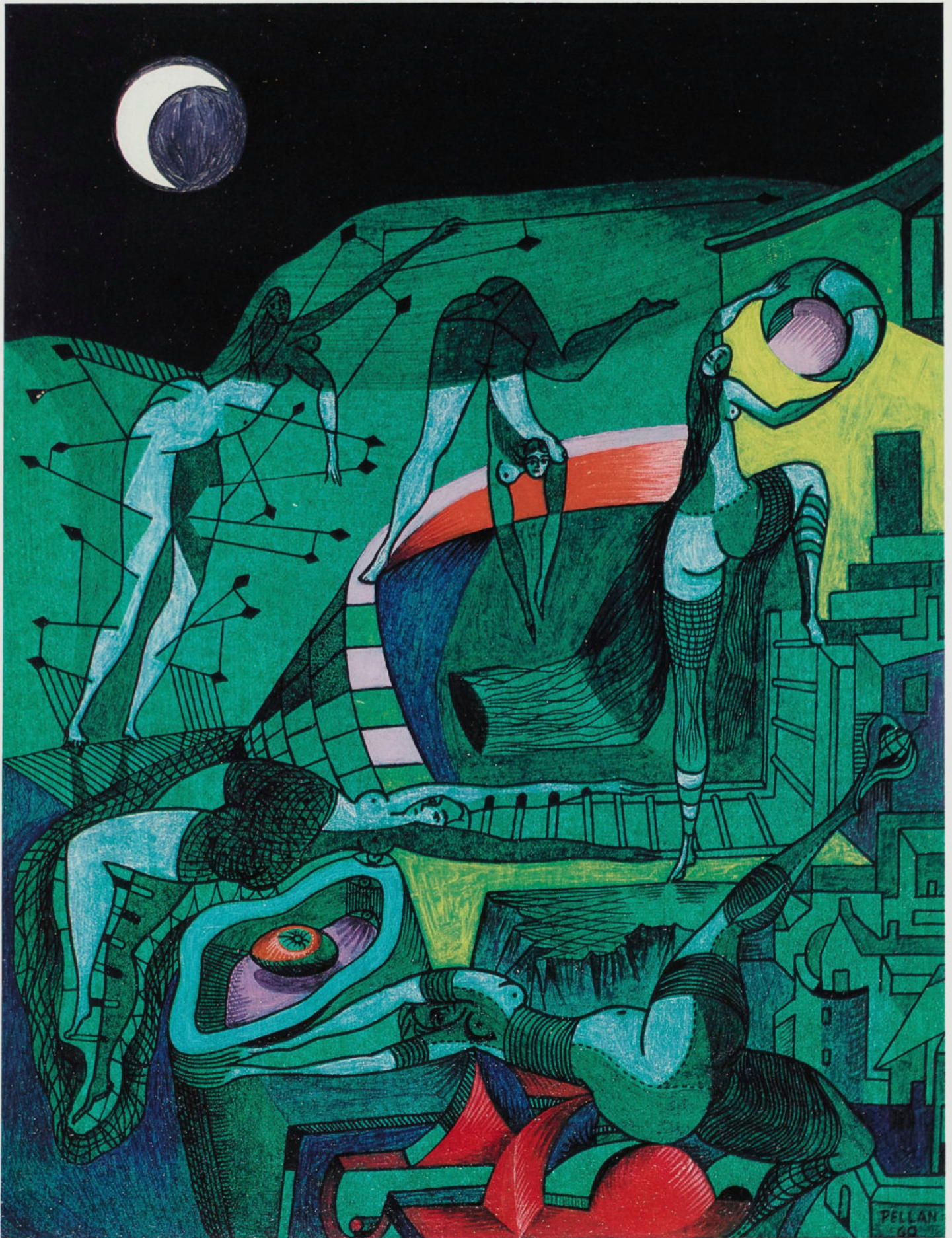
Danseuses en coulisse [Dancers in the Wings], 1960
Private Collection, Montréal



88
Repos [Resting], 1960
Private Collection, Lennoxville



89
Luna Park [Luna Park], 1960
The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, Kitchener



90

Croissant de lune [Crescent Moon], 1960
Musée d'art de Joliette, Joliette



91
Joie de vivre - B [Joy of Living - B], 1961
Private Collection, Laval



92

Phosphorescence [Phosphorescence], 1961
ICI Canada Inc., Toronto

150



93
Germination [Germination], 1961
The Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton



94

L'Aube magique [Magic Dawn], 1961

With permission from the Drabinsky Gallery, Toronto

152



95
Miroitement [Shimmering], 1961
Roberts Gallery, Toronto



96

Joyaux aquatiques [Aquatic Gems], 1962
Private Collection, Montréal

154





97
Adam et Ève et les diables [Adam, Eve and the Devils], 1962
Private Collection, Montréal



98

Le Champ [Field], 1964

Mackenzie Art Gallery, University of Regina



99

Végétaux marins [Aquatic Plants], 1964
Collection of the City of Kingston



100
Jardin mécanique [Mechanical Garden], 1965
Vancouver Art Gallery
Gift of J. Ron Longstaffe



101

Le Buisson ardent [Firethorn], 1966

The Gallery at Arts Court/La Galerie à la Cour des arts (Collection Firestone), Ottawa

102

Les Carnivores [The Carnivores], 1966

Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax

160





103
Sioux! Sioux! [Sioux! Sioux!], 1969
Private Collection, Outremont



104

Environnement [Environment], 1969
Private Collection, Outremont



105
J'herborise [I Herbalize], 1969
Private Collection, Montréal

106
Série noire - B [Black Series - B], 1970
Private Collection, Montréal





107
Naissance de Vénus - B [Birth of Venus - B], 1970
Private Collection, Montréal



108
Oniromancie [Oneiromancy], 1970
Private Collection, Montréal



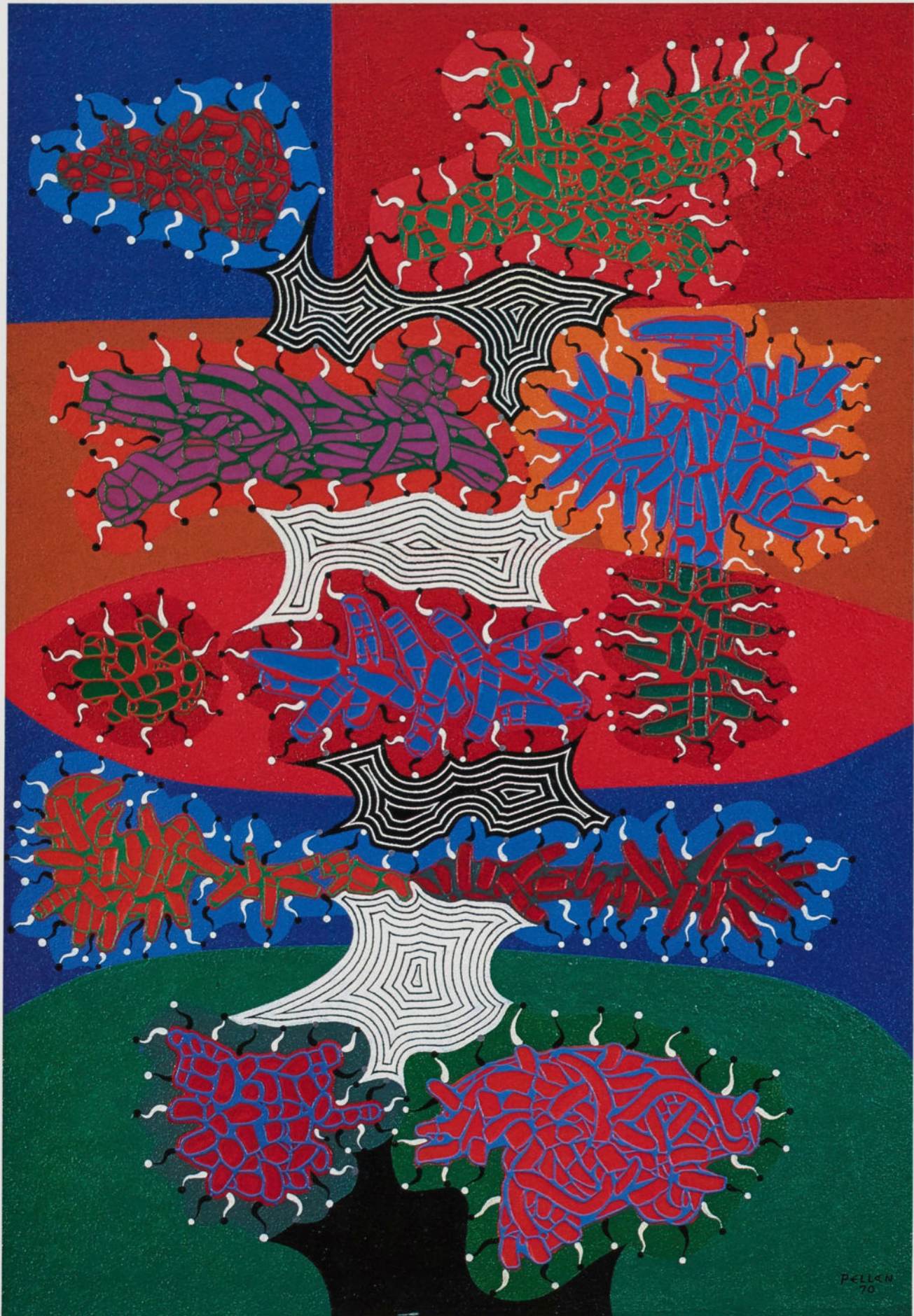
109

Ripolinade [Ripolinade], 1970
Private Collection, Outremont

168



110
Pop Shop, 1970
Quebecor Inc., Québec



111

Baroquerie [Baroquerie], 1970
Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa

170



112
Série noire - C [Black Series - C], 1971
CPC Collection, Montréal

1974-1988

KEYNOTE: HUMOUR

CHRONOLOGY

See note on page 26.

1974 MAY 7 – 9 (14): *Souliers d'artistes*, Exhibition presented by *Noix de Coco*, a Montréal gallery run by the Société des artistes professionnels du Québec. The organizers of the exhibition, whose theme is humour, ask Montréal artists to send in a pair of old shoes that reflect their personality. Enthusiastically, Pellan creates 27 different shoes: one for walking on the ceiling, one for painting feet, one for mowing the lawn, one for shovelling snow, one for pinching buttocks, one for chasing away angry dogs, etc. There is even an invisible shoe!¹

JUNE 15 – SEPTEMBER 2: *Les Arts du Québec*, Québec Pavilion, Man and His World, Montréal. Exhibition presented by the Ministère des Affaires culturelles. *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] (Cat. No. 52) appears in the exhibition catalogue.

NOVEMBER 20: *Alfred Pellan, Jean Paul Lemieux, René Richard and Charles Huot*, Galerie d'art Saint-Laurent, Montréal.

NOVEMBER 30 – DECEMBER 25: *Salon Claude Péloquin*, Galerie Espace 5 (1115 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest) and the Galerie Martal (1110 Rue Sherbrooke Ouest). Works by Pellan include *Autoportrait* [Self-Portrait] (oval mirror), *Six Fumeurs* [Six Smokers] (ink and coloured pencil), *Hollywood* (ink and coloured pencil on velvet paper), *Le Veau d'or* [The Golden Calf] (ink and coloured pencil), *Monument aux morts ambulants*, [Monument to the Walking Dead], *La Tour Eiffel* [Eiffel Tower] (seven ink drawings), *Mutons* [Mutation] (serigraph) and *Drapeau transparent*, a transparent flag (base and pole).²

Pellan receives an honorary doctorate of arts from the Université de Montréal.

1975 JUNE 20 – JULY 13: *Québec fête*, Centre d'art du Mont-Royal. Exhibition organized by Germain Lefebvre presenting 42 works by 12 Québec artists, including Pellan.³ *Jeux dans l'espace* [Play in Space], *Les Mini-jupes* [Mini-skirts] and *Discothèque* appear in the exhibition catalogue.



Collage on stone wall
Left: *Bestiary 10*, 1975
Right: *Bestiary 11*, 1975

DECEMBER 12 – FEBRUARY 1, 1976: *The Ontario Community Collects. A Survey of Canadian Painting from 1766 to the Present*. Travelling exhibition organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto. *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape] (Cat. No. 70) and *Végétaux marins* [Aquatic Plants] (Cat. No. 71) appear in the exhibition catalogue.

DECEMBER 5 – JANUARY 18, 1976: *The Collective Unconscious, American and Canadian Art: 1940-1950*, The Edmonton Art Gallery. *Sous-terre* [Underground] and *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] are reprinted in the exhibition catalogue.

1976 JUNE 30 – SEPTEMBER 1: *Trois Générations d'art québécois. 1940-1950-1960*, Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal.⁴

SEPTEMBER: *De la figuration à la non-figuration dans l'art québécois*, Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal. Included in the exhibition is a *Cadavre exquis* by Jean Benoît, Mimi Parent and Alfred Pellan (1947, Cat. No. 3), as well as Pellan's *Sous-terre* [Underground]. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.

- 1977 MARCH 5 – 24: *Hommage à Pellan*. Exhibition organized by the Société des artistes professionnels du Québec and presented at Galerie Signal, Montréal (4545 Rue Saint-Denis). In conjunction with the exhibition, the art magazine *Propos d'art* (mouthpiece for the Société des artistes professionnels du Québec) publishes a special issue devoted to Pellan and the group *Prisme d'yeux*. The exhibition includes some works by Pellan himself, as well as pieces by Jacques de Tonnancour, Arthur Gladu, Gabriel Filion, Pierre Gameau, Mimi Parent, Léon Bellefleur, Lucien Morin, Louis Archambault, Gordon Weber and Albert Dumouchel.⁵
- Pellan is awarded an honorary diploma at the Canadian Conference on the Arts (Vancouver).⁶
- DECEMBER 7 – JANUARY 3, 1978: *Alfred Pellan À la découverte des collections – Exploring the collections*, National Gallery of Canada. The exhibition includes ten drawings and four paintings dating from 1922 to 1956. Oils: *Un coin du Vieux Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec], *Sur la plage* [On the Beach], *L'Affût* [The Stalker]. Drawings: *Tête de femme* [Head of a Woman] (charcoal), two other heads of women, *Armuré* [Armoured], *Fragments* [Fragments], and six studies for paintings (ink or gouache).⁷
- 1978 JULY 7 – AUGUST 30: *Modern Painting in Canada (A Survey of the Development of Modern Art in Various Regions within Canada from the Time of the Group of Seven until 1970)*, Edmonton Art Gallery (Alberta). *Le Panier bouclé* [The Basket with a Bow] appears on p. 43 of the exhibition catalogue.
- SEPTEMBER – FEBRUARY 1980: *A Canadian Survey; Selected Works from the Collection of Imperial Oil Limited. Tour d'horizon canadien, Œuvres choisies de la collection de la Compagnie Pétrolière Impériale Ltée*. Travelling exhibition prepared by the Art Gallery of Ontario. Pellan's works include *Figure* [Figure], or *Les Polychromées-U* [Polychrome-U] (Cat. No. 28).
- SEPTEMBER 16 – OCTOBER 29: *Other Realities. The Legacy of Surrealism in Canadian Art*. Travelling exhibition organized by the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston, Ontario. Some of the works would subsequently be shown at Canada House, Trafalgar Square, London (January and February, 1979) and the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris (March and April, 1979). Five works by Pellan are exhibited: an illustration for the book of poems *Les Îles de la Nuit* by Alain Grandbois (Cat. No. 50), *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] (Cat. No. 51), *Le Vert Tige* (Cat. No. 52) and two drawings, *Les Petits Justes* (Cat. No. 53) and *Armuré* [Armoured] (Cat. No. 54).
- NOVEMBER 8: For its 20th anniversary, the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montréal honours 20 Montrealers who have made a special contribution to their particular profession over the past two decades. Pellan receives the "fine arts" award for the universal impact, continuity and uniqueness of his œuvre.⁸
- NOVEMBER 9 – DECEMBER 10: *Tendances actuelles au Québec. La gravure et la peinture*, Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal. *Bestiaire 21^e* [Bestiary 21] appears in the exhibition catalogue.
- The Image of Man in Canadian Painting: 1878-1978*, McIntosh Gallery, London, Ontario. Travelling exhibition shown at the Glenbow Alberta Institute, Calgary, the Vancouver Art Gallery, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. *Symphonie*, [Symphony] 1944 (Cat. No. 33) is reprinted in the exhibition catalogue.
- 1979 FEBRUARY 18 – APRIL 8: *Frontiers of our Dreams, Quebec Painting in the 1940s and 1950s*, The Winnipeg Art Gallery. *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 31), *Fillette en rouge* [Young Girl in Red] (Cat. No. 32), *Le Petit Avion* [Small Plane] (Cat. No. 33), *Pot à tabac* [Tobacco Pot] (Cat. No. 34) and *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] (Cat. No. 35) appear in the exhibition catalogue.
- APRIL 23 – JUNE 8: *Dessin et Surréalisme au Québec*. Travelling exhibition organized by the Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal showcasing *Question d'optique* [Question of Sight] (Cat. No. 26), *L'homme A grave* [Man Engraving] (Cat. No. 27), *La Pariade* [The Pairing] (Cat. No. 28) and a *Cadavre exquis* by Jean Benoît, Mimi Parent and Alfred Pellan (1947, Cat. No. 5).
- 1980 FEBRUARY 6 – MARCH 9: *Forces nouvelles 1935-1939*, Musée d'art moderne, Paris. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.
- FEBRUARY 15 – MARCH 13: *Nova Scotia Collects. Pellan and Brandtner, works on paper*. An exhibition catalogue is published for the occasion.
- SEPTEMBER 5 – SEPTEMBER 13, 1981: *The Contemporary Arts Society/La Société d'art contemporain, Montréal 1939-1948*. Travelling exhibition organized by the Edmonton Art Gallery. *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 41) and *Déguisement* [Disguise] (Cat. No. 42) are included in the exhibition catalogue.
- NOVEMBER 21 – JANUARY 18, 1981: *The Drawings of Alfred Pellan*. Travelling exhibition organized by the National Gallery. A major exhibition catalogue by Reesa Greenberg is published for the occasion.
- 1981 JANUARY 16 – FEBRUARY 22: *Canadian Prints and Drawings, 1915-1945*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.
- JULY 9 – OCTOBER 28: *Twentieth Century Canadian Painting*. Travelling exhibition in Japan organized by the National Gallery. *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 52), *Femme d'une pomme* [Lady with Apple] (Cat. No. 53) and *Floraison* [Blossoming] (Cat. No. 54) appear in the exhibition catalogue.
- OCTOBER 8 – NOVEMBER 1: *Canadian Treasures: 25 Artists, 25 Paintings, 25 Years*. Exhibition presented for the 25th anniversary of the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Centre. Illustration No. 9 in the exhibition catalogue is Pellan's *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape].

- NOVEMBER 27 – JANUARY 3, 1982: *Scenes of Charlevoix 1784-1950*, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Saint-François] (Cat. No. 40) appears in the exhibition catalogue.
- 1982 APRIL 22 – JUNE 13: *Modernism in Québec Art, 1916-1946*, exhibition organized by the National Gallery of Canada. Pellan shows six paintings.⁹
- AUGUST: Canadian International Shoe Fair, Place Bonaventure. On the program is a display of 16 shoe-sculptures by Pellan: those purchased by Sonja Bata, founder of the Bata Shoe Museum Foundation, in 1981, and six others from Pellan's private collection.¹⁰
- 1983 SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 14: *The Canadian Landscape*. Exhibition of Canadian landscapes by 33 artists, including Emily Carr, A.Y. Jackson, Lawren Harris, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Alfred Pellan, from the Firestone Collection (The Ontario Heritage Foundation). The exhibition runs at Canada House in Trafalgar Square, London, and in Plymouth (1984), before moving to the Madrid municipal museum and the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris (June 15 – September 12, 1984).¹¹
- The Hand Holding the Brush. Self Portraits by Canadian Artists*, London Regional Art Gallery, Ontario. No. 39 in the exhibition catalogue is a self-portrait (ca. 1933-1935) by Pellan.
- 1984 JULY 4 – AUGUST 24, 1984: *Joyaux des collections particulières de Québec*, Atrium, Palais de justice, Québec City. Exhibition organized by Denys Morisset presenting 80 paintings, engravings, gouaches and drawings by artists from Québec, Europe and the United States. Included are Pellan's *Tête de femme sur fond fleuri* [Head of a Woman on Flowered Background] and *Fluide du coudrier* [Fluid of the Hazel].¹²
- OCTOBER: Pellan receives the Prix Paul-Émile Borduas, one of the five annual Grands Prix awards attributed by the Government of Québec since 1977.¹³
- OCTOBER 11 – NOVEMBER 10: *Surréalistes et « Cie »* exhibition at Galerie l'Œil (Rue Saint-Denis, Montréal).¹⁴
- NOVEMBER 2 – MARCH 4, 1984: *Le Musée du Québec. 50 années d'acquisition*, a major exhibition devoted to the history of the Museum's collections since it opened in 1933.¹⁵
- DECEMBER 6 – FEBRUARY 10, 1985: *Quebec in Hollywood, Six Canadian Artists*, The Art and Culture Centre of Hollywood, Florida. Exhibition of works by Gilles Boisvert, Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, René Derouin, Pierre Leblanc, Pierre-Léon Tétrault and Alfred Pellan. Six of Pellan's bestiaries are reprinted in the exhibition catalogue.
- 1985 JANUARY 12 – FEBRUARY 24: *Selected View: The Longstaffe Collection 1959-1984*, exhibition organized by the Vancouver Art Gallery.¹⁶
- JANUARY 25 – FEBRUARY 24: *Présence de la peinture canadienne*, Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris.
- JANUARY 27 – APRIL 21: *Les Vingt Ans du Musée à travers sa collection*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Pellan's *Mascarade* [Masquerade] appears in the exhibition catalogue.
- OCTOBER: *Post-war Canadian Art*. Exhibition featuring Pellan's *La Mer rose* [Pink Sea] *Miroitement* [Shimmering] and *Hommage à Ruggieri* [Homage to Ruggieri] shown in various galleries and museums in Switzerland.¹⁷
- Art, Design and the Modern Corporation. Container Corporation of America Collection, A gift to the National Museum of American Art*, Washington. Pellan's *Neighbor* is No. 36.
- 1986 NOVEMBER 23 – JANUARY 4, 1987: *40 œuvres maîtresses de la Collection Lavalin*. Exhibition presented at the Musée du Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean in Chicoutimi. Works by Pellan include *Météore sept* [Meteor Seven] and *Jardin rouge* [Red Garden].
- 1987 JANUARY: Exhibition of Canadian drawings and prints from the period 1915-1945 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.¹⁸
- MARCH 1 – MAY 24: *Histoire en quatre temps*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. No. 18 in the exhibition catalogue is Pellan's *Mascarade* [Masquerade].
- MAY 22 – SEPTEMBER 7: *Accents de la Collection Lavalin/Accent on the Lavalin Collection*. Galerie des arts Lavalin (1100 Boulevard Dorchester Ouest, Montréal). *Jardin rouge* [Red Garden] and *Météore sept* [Meteor Seven] are reprinted in the exhibition catalogue.
- OCTOBER 5 – 23: *L'art québécois en mutation, 1944-1956*, Centre culturel de Trois-Rivières. Exhibition held as part of the 3rd national poetry festival. *Conciliabule* [Secret Conversation] appears in the exhibition catalogue.
- MAY 28 – JULY 26: *Industrial Images/Images industrielles*, Art Gallery of Hamilton. Pellan's *Magie de la chaussure* [Magic of Shoes] is No. 32 in the exhibition catalogue.
- 1988 MAY 11 – JULY 9: *Voies intimes/Voix intimes*. Works from the Musée du Québec collection at the Galerie d'art Lavalin in Montréal.¹⁹
- MAY 19 – JULY 31: *Pellan/Shakespeare, Le Peintre devenu scénographe*. Exhibition at the Maison Hamel-Bruneau (Sainte-Foy), organized jointly with the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde.²⁰
- MAY 19 – AUGUST 14: *L'Art au Québec depuis Pellan: une histoire des prix Borduas*. Exhibition organized by the Musée du Québec including seven works by Pellan.²¹
- OCTOBER 31: Alfred Pellan dies at age 82.
- NOVEMBER 18, 1988 – JANUARY 15, 1989: *Exposition Pellan, Fortin, Gagnon*, Maison des arts de Laval, Québec. Included are fourteen paintings by Pellan.²²

ENDNOTES

1. *La Presse*, May 9, 1974; Pierre Vallières, *Le Devoir*, May 9, 1974; *The Gazette*, May 11, 1974. See also: *La Presse*, August 10, 1982.
2. *The Gazette*, November 30, 1974; Gilles Toupin, *La Presse*, December 7, 1974.
3. G.T., *La Presse*, June 19, 1975.
4. Works by Pellan: *Les Œufs* [Eggs] (Cat. No. 131), *Peintre au paysage* [Artist in Landscape] (Cat. No. 132), *Paysage de Charlevoix* [Countryside in Charlevoix] (Cat. No. 133), *Interprétation des formes et couleurs* [Interpretation of Form and Colour] (Cat. No. 134), *Fabrique de fleurs magiques* [Magic Flower Factory] (Cat. No. 135) and *Chasse sous-marine* [Underwater Hunt] (Cat. No. 136).
5. Works by Pellan were *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor], his Santa Claus series, *Tête de femme* [Head of a Woman], a still-life, a charcoal drawing and a collage entitled *Après l'amour* [After Love]. See Virginia Nixon, *The Gazette*, March 12, 1977; Henry Lehmann, *The Montreal Star*, March 16, 1977.
6. *Honorary Diplomas 1977*, 1977, n.p.
7. Robert Smythe, *The Citizen*, December 10, 1977. *Ottawa Review*, January 11, 1978.
8. *La Presse*, July 12, 1978; *The Gazette*, July 22, 1978.
9. *Un coin du Vieux Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec] (Cat. No. 10), *Nature morte* [Still-Life] (1939-1940, Cat. No. 55), *Le Compotier* [Fruit Bowl] (Cat. No. 70), *Mascarade* [Masquerade] (Cat. No. 76), *L'Heure H* [H-Hour] (Cat. No. 78), *Conciliabule* [Secret Conversation] (Cat. No. 91), two drawings, *Jeune Fille* [Young Girl] (Cat. No. 46) and *Face et profil* [Face and Profile] (Cat. No. 83)], a tapestry (*Le Jongleur* [The Juggler], Cat. No. 108) and a stage set (*Le Jardin d'Olivia* [Olivia's Garden], Cat. No. 112). Major exhibition catalogue.
10. *Dimanche-Matin*, August 8, 1982; *La Presse*, August 10, 1982.
11. *The Gazette*, September 15, 1983.
12. *Le Soleil*, July 21, 1984; *Le Soleil*, August 20, 1984.
13. See Gilles Daigneault, *Le Devoir*, October 27, 1984; Jocelyne Lepage, *La Presse*, October 27, 1984; Lawrence Sabbath, *The Gazette*, November 3, 1984; *The Gazette*, October 24, 1984; Robert Lévesque, *Le Devoir*, October 24, 1984; Johanne Roy, *La Presse*, October 24, 1984; Louis Tanguay, *Le Soleil*, October 24, 1984; Raymond Giroux, *Le Soleil*, October 24, 1984; Louis Tanguay, *Le Soleil*, October 2, 1984; *Dimanche-Matin*, October 28, 1984.
14. Exhibition invitation.
15. Included Pellan's *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] (Cat. No. 223), *Fleurs et dominos* [Flowers and Dominoes] (Cat. No. 227), *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 233), *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] (Cat. No. 247), *Tête de jeune fille* [Head of a Young Girl] (drawing, Cat. No. 349) and the tapestry *Jardin d'Olivia* [Olivia's Garden] (Cat. No. 494). Exhibition catalogue.
16. *Tête rectangulaire* [Rectangular Head], *Déguisement* [Disguise], *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden], *Le Bûcheron* [The Woodcutter], *Jardin mécanique* [Mechanical Garden] and an ink drawing are reprinted in the exhibition catalogue.
17. Exhibition invitation.
18. *La Presse*, January 22, 1987.
19. Exhibition catalogue includes *La Table verte* [Green Table], *La Spirale* [Spiral], *L'Homme A grave* [Man Engraving], and *Tête de jeune* [Head of a Young Person] (Cat. No. 126).
20. Denise Martel, *Journal de Québec*, May 21, 1988; Marie Delagrave, *Le Soleil*, June 4, 1988.
21. *Autoportrait* [Self-Portrait] (charcoal drawing, Cat. No. 44), *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] (Cat. No. 45), *Sous-terre* [Underground] (Cat. No. 46), *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 47), *Conciliabule* [Secret Conversation] (Cat. No. 48), *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 49) and *Voltige d'automne* [Autumn Acrobatics] (Cat. No. 51).
22. *Les Œufs* [Eggs], *Sous-terre* [Underground], *Les Pensées* [The Pansies], *Nature morte au couteau* [Still-Life with Knife] (or *Nature morte aux deux couteaux* [Still-Life with Two Knives]), *Évasion* [Escape], *Fabrique de fleurs magiques* [Magic Flower Factory], *Météore sept* [Meteor Seven], *La Chasse sous-marine* [Underwater Hunt], *Le Grand Champ* [Large Field], *Les Mini-jupes* [Mini-skirts], *Fleurs d'yeux* [Flowers of the Eye] and *Mutons* [Mutation]. Exhibition catalogue.

WORKS REPRODUCED

- Bestiaire 2°** [Bestiary 2] (Cat. No. 113)
- Bestiaire 3°** [Bestiary 3] (Cat. No. 114)
- Bestiaire 4°** [Bestiary 4] (Cat. No. 115)
- Bestiaire 5°** [Bestiary 5] (Cat. No. 116)
- Bestiaire 6°** [Bestiary 6] (Cat. No. 117)
- Bestiaire 17°** [Bestiary 17] (Cat. No. 118)
- Bestiaire 18°** [Bestiary 18] (Cat. No. 119)
- Bestiaire 23°** [Bestiary 23] (Cat. No. 122)
- Bestiaire 24°** [Bestiary 24] (Cat. No. 123)
- Bestiaire 26°** [Bestiary 26] (Cat. No. 124)
- Fleurs – D** [Flowers – D] (Cat. No. 120)
- Gymnastique – B** [Gymnastics – B] (Cat. No. 121)



113
Bestiaire 2° [Bestiary 2], 1974
Private Collection, Montréal



114
Bestiaire 3° [Bestiary 3], 1974
Private Collection, Montréal



115
Bestiaire 4° [Bestiary 4], 1974
Private Collection, Montréal



116

Bestiaire 5° [Bestiary 5], 1974
Private Collection, Montréal



117
Bestiaire 6° [Bestiary 6], 1974
Private Collection, Montréal



118
Bestiaire 17° [Bestiary 17], 1976
Private Collection, Montréal



119
Bestiaire 18° [Bestiary 18], 1976
Private Collection, Montréal



120
Fleurs - D [Flowers - D], 1978
Private Collection, Montréal



121
Gymnastique – B [Gymnastics – B], 1980
Private Collection, Montréal



122
Bestiaire 23^e [Bestiary 23], 1981
Private Collection, Montréal



123

Bestiaire 24^e [Bestiary 24], 1981
Private Collection, Montréal

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124
Bestiaire 26° [Bestiary 26], 1984
Private Collection, Montréal

ESSAYS

THE CONQUEST OF CUBISM

Michel Martin

Pellan believed solely in Cubism, which was already—and in part thanks to him—devoid of mystery. Paul-Émile Borduas¹ [Translation]

THIS STATEMENT taken from Borduas' *Projections libérantes*, published in 1949, with its sarcastic reference to the outmoded nature of Cubism, typifies the way in which Alfred Pellan's work was perceived in the context of a sweeping debate led by the Automatiste avant-garde in the late 1940s in Québec. In hindsight, this remark, which is typical of the ideological distance which irrevocably separated these two forefathers of contemporary Québec art, nonetheless bears eloquent witness to the fundamental contribution of Pellan's art to the advent of modernity in Québec in the early 1940s.

The recognition of the contribution and impact of Cubism, which even Borduas subsequently acknowledged, notably in his famous gouaches of 1942,² was one of the dominant aspects in the revelation of Pellan's works when they were exhibited at the Musée de la province de Québec and at the Art Association of Montreal in 1940. Various critics of the era enthusiastically hailed this liberating oeuvre, inspired by the work of Picasso, Braque and Gris, which sought in the formal foundations of its esthetic the irrefutable principles of a direct challenge to the conservative academic values which supported an ideology of figuration.

This phenomenon was particularly emphasized by the critic Charles Doyon, who published in *Le Jour* a poem entitled *Cubisme*, which he dedicated to Pellan and in which he praised the artist's formal work through a clairvoyant ode to the art of Picasso.³ This comparison with the Catalan master had already been made in 1937 in *La Presse* by Reynald who, echoing articles in the European press on the success of the young painter, called him the Picasso of Québec.⁴ Art historian Maurice Gagnon was obviously also influenced by this collective enthusiasm, for he wrote in his book on Pellan published in 1943: "Pellan and Picasso are highly skilled; there is no doubt about it. But their skill is always very controlled, never overwhelming the work or becoming its focal point. It exists without annihilating humanity's creative forces; on the contrary, it ensures their survival".⁵ [Translation]

1. *Projections libérantes*, Saint-Hilaire, Mithra-Mythe Éditeur, February 1949; reprinted in *Les Automatistes*, Montréal; La Barre du jour, January-August 1969, p. 21.
2. François-Marc Gagnon quoted Borduas' remark on this subject in *Paul-Émile Borduas*, Montréal; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1988, p. 170.
3. Charles Doyon, "Cubisme", *Le Jour*, October 19, 1940.
4. Reynald, "Alfred Pellán, a Quebecker from Limoilou, 31 years of age, is one of the greatest painters our time", [Translation] *La Presse*, December 10, 1937; reprinted in *Le Soleil*, December 15, 1937.
5. Maurice Gagnon, *Pellán*, Montréal, 1943, p. 14.
6. Reesa Greenberg, "Pellán and Surrealism: Pellán's Picassoid Preference", *Surréalisme périphérique, actes du colloque Portugal, Québec, Amérique latine: un surréalisme périphérique?* Montréal; Luis de Moura, Université de Montréal, 1984, p. 71-92.
7. Maurice Gagnon, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
8. The Galerie de l'Effort moderne, directed by Léonce Rosenberg, published, between 1924 and 1927, forty issues of the *Bulletin de l'effort moderne* which, along with Christian Zervos' *Cahiers d'art*, are an important source of documentation on Cubism during this era.
9. The first exhibition of the Section d'or group, an association of artists on the fringes of the cubist movement whose research was based on the ideal measure resulting from the relationship between the square and the diagonal, was held in 1912 at the Galerie de La Boétie. The second, held at the same gallery in 1920, included works by Gris, Léger, Braque, Marcoussis, and Villon. A third, presented at the Galerie Vavin-Raspail in 1925, exhibited works by Braque, Gris, Gleizes, Léger, Marcoussis, and Picasso.

Gagnon thus interpreted this issue not only as one of style but as one of attitude, going beyond the stylistic contribution of Cubism to base his eloquent assessment on the similarities between Picasso and Pellán, in terms of the quest by both artists to fully master their style in their search for a sensitive expression free of all theoretical constraints.

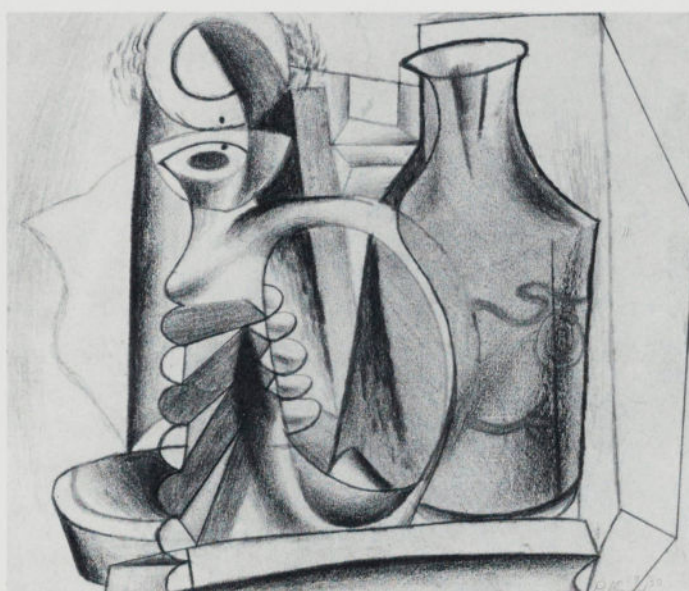
This comparison, which may today seem somewhat excessive in light of Picasso's worldwide renown as a leader in the implementation of the stylistic foundations of modern Western art, was nonetheless repeated, albeit more subtly, some forty years later by Reesa Greenberg in her text on Pellán's peripheral surrealism, entitled *Pellán and Surrealism: Pellán's Picassoid Preference*.⁶ Through a factual analysis which reveals parallels in the two artists' training, Greenberg goes so far as to advance the theory of a similar artistic approach, in which Picasso and Pellán deal with modern reality using a formal vocabulary which, removed from academic conservatism, claims to be a paradoxical synthesis "of originality and tradition; the 'sound tradition' as described by Maurice Gagnon and discovered by Borduas, Braque, Pellán and Picasso [...] both by and through their audacity".⁷ [Translation]

The need to be situated within a certain historical continuity, whether by practising or going beyond a given style, which was furthermore associated with the refusal to officially adopt a particular ideological orientation as denounced in the manifesto entitled *Prisme d'yeux* co-signed by Pellán in 1948, supports the eclectic nature of the artist's oeuvre. This eclecticism, which gained him renown in the 1940s by opening up new horizons, was later decried because it ran counter to the evolutionary concept of history, a concept contrary to that of the individual approach, which despite its multiple appearances hints at a structural consistency with flexible expressive limits. Could this have been the approach to Cubism chosen by Pellán?

Discovering Cubism

When Pellán arrived in Paris in the mid-1920s, the highlights of Cubism in its analytical and synthetic phases were, historically speaking, things of the past. Immediately after the First World War, the public, never receptive to the theories which had overturned the perspectivist order established since the Renaissance, re-established contact with this esthetic which, in the words of Juan Gris, became part of painting like an acquired method. Various events contributed significantly to the re-emergence of the formal principles of the cubist heritage, disseminating fundamental values which went beyond the statements which originally burst forth from the depths of the studios. Among the most enlightening were: the revelation, at auctions held in 1921 and 1922, of works from the so-called classical cubist period, and more particularly collages by Picasso and Braque, which had been out of circulation since the closing of the Kahnweiler gallery in 1914; the publication in Paris in 1921 of a book on Georges Braque written by Roger Bissière, followed in 1922 by the volume on Picasso by Maurice Raynal; solo exhibitions, some retrospective in nature, of works by Braque (1920), Picasso (1926), and Gris (1928), in the Galerie de l'Effort moderne,⁸ the Galerie Paul Rosenberg, and the Galerie Simon, as well as the presentations of the Section d'or in 1920 and 1925.⁹

Pellan certainly could not ignore this climate so conducive to the universal acknowledgement of Cubism, fascinated as he must have been by its promise of a new approach to painting in which the direct imitation of forms in nature was no longer the ultimate objective. In fact, his statements about his training in Paris bear witness to this.¹⁰ However, although the significant impact of the 1932 retrospective of Picasso's work¹¹ on the development of Pellan's pictorial practices must be acknowledged, it is certainly not in terms of the discovery of Cubism that it should be evaluated, but rather in terms of Pellan's realization of its unlimited expressive possibilities. A copy of the Raynal's book on Picasso, found in his library and signed "Pelland",¹² would seem to substantiate the theory that he became interested early on in "the intuitive knowledge of the object", which for Picasso, as the author points out, consisted in the synthesis of objective elements taken from the universe of academic instruction and subjective elements specific to post-Impressionist theories. This double-edged principle of renewal within a context of continuity was appropriated by Pellan beginning in 1930, when he completed the first known drawing of a cubist



Alfred Pellan
Nature morte
 [Still-Life], 1930
 20.5 × 27 cm
 Private Collection

still-life, preserved in the collection of Clare Wadleigh Hayes, friend and colleague of the artist at the Lucien Simon studio in Paris. A favoured subject in cubist works, this composition shows the extent to which Pellan exploited his mastery of draftsmanship in the application of cubist rules, disregarding the academic standards of the classical perspective through a skilful structural association of these singularly mundane objects and transforming them, in their formal interactive essence, into pictorial signs which helped define a new visual space.

In addition to this unique study which emerged mainly from the synthetic cubist vocabulary, focusing on the two-dimensional aspect of the plane through the subtle passages of shapes incorporated into each other using lines and chiaroscuro, and through the simultaneous perception of objects captured in their multiple facets, we would be justified in mentioning certain works which unfortunately, except for photographs, no longer exist. These photographs show dramatically inspired canvases which reflect the artist's desire to acquire systematic knowledge of the cubist approach through a sort of inventory of its analytical methods. In *Nature morte, n° 12* [Still-Life No. 12], Pellan, influenced by Braque and Picasso, experiments with

10. See Germain Lefebvre, *Pellan, sa vie, son art, son temps*, La Prairie, 1986, p. 23-24; Germain Lefebvre, *Pellan*, Montréal, 1973, p. 21-27.

11. Exhibition held at the Georges Petit galleries (8 Rue de Sèze in Paris). The catalogue mentions 236 works, including 223 gouaches, pastels, paintings, and pasted papers.

12. After studying the signatures on works he completed in the early 1930s, we concluded that Pellan must have dropped the final "d" in his name around 1932. Guy Robert, in *Pellan, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*, Montréal, 1963, specifies "beginning in 1933", while Reesa Greenberg, in her work *The Drawings of Alfred Pellan* (Ottawa: 1980), agrees with Guy Robert, but hypothesizes that it may have been earlier.

13. Thanks to research and studies done on the works in the Musée du Québec collection in preparation for the exhibition, we happened upon this painting done on the back of the work *La Spirale* [Spiral], ca. 1939. It had already appeared on page 109, No. 22, of Guy Robert's work *Pellan, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*, Montréal, 1963; at the time it was dated 1928 and declared destroyed. In light of the discovery of the drawing *Nature morte* (Still-Life), 1930 (Clare W. Hayes collection), we would tend to put the date closer to 1930.

14. The two canvases were reproduced in colour (Fig. 67 and 68), p. 74-75 of the catalogue by Douglas Cooper, *The Cubist Epoch* (London, Phaidon Press Limited), in conjunction with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1970.



Alfred Pellán
Nature morte, n° 22 [Still-Life No. 22], n.d.



Alfred Pellán, *Nature morte, n° 12*
[Still-Life No. 12], n.d.



Alfred Pellán
Personnage, n° 14 [Figure No. 14], n.d.

the branching out of formal homogeneity through the assemblage, not of objects, but rather of formal information whose illusionistic outlines are constantly annihilated by the domination of a two-dimensional plane, augmented by textural effects, collages, and writing on the canvas. In the same way, by surrounding his subject with an oval contour, as in *Nature morte, n° 22* [Still-Life No. 22], Pellán confines the impact of the image solely to the canvas, displaying a composition in which the descriptive intent remains secondary to the formal reality of the highly textured coloured planes, and in which muted tones (beige, burnt orange) are borrowed from the classical cubist palette to avoid the influential action of colour on our spatial perception.¹³ The work *Personnage, n° 14* [Figure No. 14] is a good example of the diversity of Pellán's sources of inspiration, showing how the artist approached Cubism from a broader perspective. From a structural point of view, it is tempting to establish a link between this figure, broken down into an intertwined mass of angular curves, and the *Portrait d'Igor Stravinsky* [Portrait of Igor Stravinsky] (1914) or the *Dancer* (1917), two works by Albert Gleizes,¹⁴ who with Jean Metzinger co-authored the work *Du Cubisme* (On Cubism), published in 1912, in which they defined their work as "a movement which targets the integral realization of painting". The secondary role of the anecdotal reference, dominated in this work by the movement of the spiral whose outline is contained within the plane of the canvas in coloured segments, recalls Robert Delaunay's quest for chromatic rhythms, which he undertook with his first *Formes circulaires* [Circular Shapes] in 1912.

To our knowledge, this is the most abstract work by Pellán during his years of training, when *genre* paintings, like still-lives, long associated with the academic tradition,

played a dominant role in his work. It is therefore all the more fortunate that he conserved photos of these works, since they enhance our understanding of the process of breaking down the human figure, as first introduced by Picasso and Braque in their famous portraits fragmented into a multitude of open facets from the analytical cubist period, then subsequently reformulated based on a concept of synthesization in which the motif, although reconstructed, remains fully incorporated into the canvas's structural workings, thus preserving this aspect of dehumanization which, apart from a few experiments, Pellán refused to explore systematically. In 1930, he began a series of more classically inspired portraits, such as that of *M^{lle} Geneviève Tirot*, dated 1932 (Cat. No. 8). In the violent lighting, the oval of the subject's face, whose static aspect is reinforced by the sculptural quality of the neck, is transformed here into a volume of formal severity borne out by the linear rhythms of the eyebrows, eyes, nose and mouth, which contrast dramatically with the impressionist treatment of the surrounding areas. Through the mask effect resulting from the contrast between the fixed expression of the face and the pensive gaze, Pellán aimed for a balance between the quest for pure form, one of the basic principles of Cubism, and the predominance of human imperatives, at the root of his own practice.

Pellán, Cubism, and Picasso

Discovering the primacy of this sensitive form-experiment balance specifically in the work of Picasso, Pellán began a more comprehensive study of the artist's œuvre through the book by Maurice Raynal, which became in a sense an iconographic reference, since Pellán cut out other reproductions of Picasso and pasted them over the text itself. In 1930, he obtained a copy of the magazine *Documents*,¹⁵ which was entirely devoted to the Spanish painter and illustrated with over fifty works reflecting the synthetic cubist styles invented by Picasso, which aimed to define an optical rather than perspective pictorial space, governed by the orderly arrangement of identifiable pictorial elements such as line, colour and texture in a plane placed parallel to the two-dimensional surface of the canvas. As mentioned above, Pellán's visit to the Georges Petit galleries to see the Picasso retrospective contributed significantly to the development of his pictorial vision, with the canvas evolving before his eyes from a formal *fait accompli* to a more disturbing psychological observation, thanks to the combination of impressions of transparent planes, foreshortening, truncated perspectives, and the breaking down of forms.

Following in the footsteps of Picasso, who was opposed to the idea of evolutionary research subjected to theoretical rigour, for fear of becoming lost in a maze of mental calculations,¹⁶ Pellán wholeheartedly supported the sensitive, intuitive approach to Cubism, which defined itself as an esthetic conception of that which nature is not. One of the rare passages in Raynal's work which Pellán annotated reads: "If I may immediately make a few observations on Cubism, at the movement's beginnings, there was never any question of establishing theories, much to the dismay of the successors to the Impressionists, who reproached us for this tendency, although they did not hesitate to practice it".¹⁷ [Translation] It was thus based on visual knowledge that Pellán used Picasso's work to extract formal, stylistic, iconographic, and thematic references, incorporating them harmoniously into his vocabulary as tools necessary to his pictorial practices, as evinced in his later work.¹⁸

15. *Documents* 2 No. 3, *Hommage à Picasso*, Paris, 1930, p. 113-184.

16. See "Statement by Picasso: 1923" in Alfred H. Barr, Jr., *Picasso, Fifty Years of His Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1946) p. 270-271. These statements, made by Picasso to Marius de Zayas, were first published in *The Arts*, New York, May 1923.

17. Maurice Raynal, *Picasso* (Paris: Les Éditions G. Grès & Cie., 1922) p. 73.

18. On the subject of Pellán's visits to Picasso's studio, see Germain Lefebvre, *Pellán, sa vie, son art, son temps*, 1986, p. 24; Germain Lefebvre, *Pellán*, 1973, p. 27.

The still-lifes painted by Pellán throughout these years were essentially influenced by the Cézannian esthetic, using the principle of the so-called bird's-eye perspective, where the object, perceived from an elevated viewpoint, appears to be tilted forward, creating a single plane on the canvas surface. However, in the case of *Fruits au compotier* [Fruit in a Fruit Bowl] (Cat. No. 14), for example, Pellán violates the consistent appearance of reality and the persistence of an illusionist depth which are omnipresent in Cézanne's work by emphasizing, in the cubist style, the properties inherent to the pictorial elements (form, drawing, colour, light, shadow, texture) within a unified iconic whole standing out clearly against an undefined background. The emphasis Pellán placed on drawing as a unifying element, augmented here by the decorative criss-cross motif, recalls Picasso's proto-cubist still-lifes such as his 1907 work *Vase de fleurs* [Vase of Flowers],¹⁹ in which the artist experimented with Cézanne-inspired rhythms, bringing them, through the mastery of his drawing, to a rallying point common to both the object and the space. The transparency of the central luminous, curvilinear form, which reveals the objects in their formal essence by reflecting their material nature, contrasts with the dense opacity of the shaded contours which encircle the forms so as to flatten them and bring them into the plane of the canvas. To this end, Picasso used a three-leaf motif virtually identical to that appearing in the centre, among others in a work entitled *La Table du musicien* [The Musician's Table] (1924), reproduced in *Documents 2* n° 3 and exhibited in 1932 at the Georges Petit galleries.

Instruments de musique – A [Musical Instruments – A] (Cat. No. 10), painted in 1933, is undoubtedly Pellán's most skilful example of synthetic Cubism. This is the only known canvas in which he exploits this theme, inspired by the purest cubist orthodoxy as practised by the likes of Picasso, Braque and Gris, i.e. the portrayal of string instruments such as guitars, violins, and lutes, not as they appeared individually, but rather in their conceptual expression. Portrayed here in still life, they become the formal transposition of a cultural reality which, beyond the plane of the painting, occupies a virtual space which can be defined solely through the sense of touch. Conserving a central objective mass applied to an undefined background, Pellán experiments with an angular geometrical structure which, through the lavish application of colour, conveys only a suggestion of form through identifiable elements such as keys, strings, outlines, and the strap, and hints at their imprint through shadows and trompe-l'œil effects. Also, Pellán contrasts the suppleness of the still-life on the right, whose more realistic treatment and spatial layout create the balance between abstraction and representation sought by the Cubists, with the stringent mathematical construction of the instruments which are laid out on a central horizontal axis, the heritage of the famous cubist pasted papers begun by Braque and Picasso in 1912 and continued in their structural confines by Gris. Pellán was able to admire this artist's last still-lifes with a guitar, which were reproduced in the catalogue of the exhibition of his works at the Kunsthau in Zurich in 1933.²⁰

Picasso declared in an interview with Christian Zervos, published in 1935 in a special issue of *Cahiers d'Art* devoted to him: "There is no such thing as abstract art. One must always begin with something. Only then can one remove all resemblance to reality; then there is no danger, because the idea of the object has left an indelible trace. It is the object which inspires the artist, stirs up his ideas, and arouses his emotions".²¹ [Translation] Guided by the reductivist process resulting from the absolute comple-

19. Painting from the collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, reproduced in colour in *Pablo Picasso, A Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 105.

20. Kunsthau Zurich, *Juan Gris (April 2-26), Fernand Léger (April 30 – May 5)* (Paris: Éditions Cahiers d'art, 1933), n.p.

21. Remarks made by Picasso to Christian Zervos, published under the title "Conversation avec Picasso" in *Cahiers d'art*, Vol. X, Nos. 7-10, p. 173-178.

mentarity between our perceptive and sensitive movements, Pellan painted, a few years later, *Fruits, cuillère et verre* [Fruit, Spoon and Glass] (Cat. No. 58), a free, almost abstract composition which conserves nothing of the objects save their apparent trace, still discernible in the strokes, colours and textures articulated on the surface of the canvas based on the mobility of the emotion.

This work was apparently painted in two phases. The artist's photographic records show us one version, without the textural effects, which was probably painted during the second half of the 1930s, when Pellan was venturing into the area of abstraction. Certain works such as *Bouche rieuse* [Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 17), and more specifically, *La Spirale* [Spiral] (Cat. No. 34), bear witness to a quest for ways of restructuring space by dividing the backdrop of the canvas into juxtaposed coloured planes on which Pellan drew analytical forms in profile; hence the transparent planes which lend the work its two-dimensional aspect. Thus the spiral shape, which in works such as *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players] (Cat. No. 19) and *Le Fluide du coudrier* [Fluid of the Hazel] (Cat. No. 35) remains secondary to the unifying concept inherent to representational works, emerges in *La Spirale* [Spiral] as the materialization of the rotating movement which is already part of the juxtaposition of the contrasting planes laid out around a circular focal point. Hence, through the constant application of structural schemes inherited from synthetic Cubism, such as the independent function of form-colour elements and the quest for flatness, Pellan leads us into a new topological space, manifestly distancing himself from the Renaissance definition of perspective.

Although in this sense, the work emerges as the logical conclusion to the studies Pellan completed during his first Parisian period, it is still something of an enigma when we observe the paradoxical path taken by the artist on his return to Canada. How, indeed, are we to interpret this proliferation of portraits and picturesque scenes produced by Pellan in 1941, except as the reflection of a need to adapt to a cultural context which required new ways of expressing itself? In this sense, he adopted an attitude similar to that of Picasso by refusing to acknowledge the evolutionary principle of art, instead creating a work which responded directly to the impulses of an immediate emotion. However, we remark that despite the realistic treatment which corresponds to the traditional values they depict, some of his canvases such as *Cordée de bois* [Cord of Wood] (Cat. No. 43) remain pretexts for the creation of spatial structures, borrowing from the cubist style the use of coloured masses dispersed in flat painting, and the foreshortening and intermingling of planes which break the deep-seated momentum generated by the play of oblique forms.

Despite this brief incursion into a style which, on the whole, he scarcely practised, in 1942 Pellan returned to cubist imagery and style with a series of still-lives which were, for the most part, a formal reinterpretation of some of his most famous works from his Parisian period. For example, *Lampe à pétrole* [Oil Lamp] (Cat. No. 44), is reminiscent of his work *Nature morte à la lampe* [Still-Life with Lamp] (Cat. No. 9), painted in 1932; *Panier de fraises* [Basket of Strawberries] (Cat. No. 47) echoes his *Le Panier de fraises* (Cat. No. 20), painted in 1935; and *Nature morte aux deux couteaux* [Still-Life with Two Knives] (Cat. No. 45) reveals overtones of the work *Nature morte à la palette* [Still-Life with Palette] (Cat. No. 25), executed in 1933. Taking advantage of the temporal distance between himself and the subject, Pellan produced an œuvre imbued with a new force of realism which,

through the sublimation of its formal elements, became, to quote Apollinaire, “pure esthetic pleasure”. [Translation] The effect is especially striking in *Le Couteau à pain* [Bread Knife] (Cat. No. 46) where, through a perfect blending of form-colour vectors within a geometrical order, he creates an ambiguous spatial definition, with the object constantly reappearing at the surface of the canvas, dominated by the decorative effect of the work as a whole. This way of constructing the composite image, which is developed vertically according to a process of accumulation of references and skilfully emphasized by an incisive drawing, heralds the large-scale mural compositions characteristic of Pellán’s artistic practices during the 1940s.

The influence of Picasso’s art remained obvious in the image-filled monumental wall-sized works which characterized Pellán’s work during this period. In the wake of the borrowed thematic and iconographic elements marking his canvases from the 1930s, i.e. in addition to those already mentioned, the Harlequin figure in the work *Jeune comédien* [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 23), or the trompe-l’œil effect of the nail on which the mirror is suspended in *Pensée de boules* [Bubble Thoughts] (Cat. No. 27), or even the stylized heads of the *Alpinistes* [Mountains Climbers] (Cat. No. 24), which are no more than the expression of a cry reminiscent of the women’s heads painted by Picasso after 1925, Pellán incorporated into his formal vocabulary a surrealist “Picassoid” vision of reality, centred essentially around the portrayal of women not as an ideal of beauty, but rather as organic forms whose exaggerated contortions and arabesques are an integral part of the analytical message underlying the image. In Pellán’s work, this method of depicting the human figure based on the synthetic cubist principle of the arbitrary breakdown of forms is closely linked to the underlying formal intent. His small-scale works entitled *Homme et femme [petit]* [Man and Woman] (Cat. No. 49) and *Les Nymphomanes* [Nymphomaniacs] (Cat. No. 54) bear eloquent witness to this, for in them the artist contrasts a process of rendering space into geometric planes of contrasting colour, juxtaposed vertically with each other, with a free, transparent drafting of broad image-like motifs marking the plane of a virtual field similar to that which emanates from the translucence of a stained-glass window. This illusionist impression of depth is nonetheless skilfully counteracted in the large works by the opacity of the coloured masses and the vibrating optical illusion of the decorative grid and the pointillist drawing which, while underlining the flatness of the work, also suggests the vastness of the space extending to meet the viewer.

The intimate scene portrayed in *Conciliabule* [Secret Conversation] (Cat. No. 56) also recalls the *Seated Woman* series painted by Picasso in 1938, including the work from the Norman Grantz collection (Geneva)²² showing a figure with an intermingled face and profile seated in an armchair in the centre of a space enclosed on three sides by what appears to be a window frame. The decorative treatment of the surface, done in stripes and arrows, is in many aspects similar in its rendering to the linear patterns covering Pellán’s work. However, contrary to Picasso’s closed composition, compressed in the foreground, Pellán creates an imaginary setting which in its definition conserves the structural elements of the cubist space, i.e. the persistence of illusionist references transmuted into elements of a formal vocabulary within an ambiguous space, where any allusion to a Euclidean perspectivist system is contradicted by the juxtaposition of divergent planes resulting from multiple viewpoints and the jagged movements of the linear networks.

22. Reproduced in *Pablo Picasso, A Retrospective* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1980), p. 358.

On the other hand, although the reference to Picasso's imaginary world is as clearly professed in the erotic fantasy of canvases such as *Sur la plage* [On the Beach] (Cat. No. 57), showing a gigantic head gazing lasciviously at two women in somewhat suggestive poses, as in the clearly inspired deformed profiles of *Le Modèle* [The Model] (Cat. No. 135, work not shown), it is more discreet in the muralist concept of *Citrons ultraviolets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 64). Pellán, undoubtedly influenced by the work of artist Fernand Léger, created a veritable "living structure" combining figures, symbols, and architectonic elements within a narrative program whose sequences are punctuated in the plane, in ascending order, by broad expanses of colour, reducing the expanding fictional space to that of the circumscribed formality of the canvas. Since the establishment of the autonomy of colour with regard to form, a tried-and-true principle of the second major period of Cubism, Léger celebrated this in his monumental works of the 1920s and the 1930s, going so far as to make it the basic organizational principle of a space-plane governing the perspectivist outlines of the diagonal.

In his murals painted between 1943 and 1954, such as *Surprise académique* [Academic Surprise] (Cat. No. 50), *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 55), and *La Chouette* [The Owl] (Cat. No. 70), Pellán experimented systematically with new expressive possibilities in order to fully comply with a representational ideology based on the complete incorporation of formal components into the realm of an extended poetic universe, the overall narrative principle of which was based on the expressiveness of each of these components. Pellán, with the sensory acuity of an artisan, was at home with pictorial concepts which, combining materiality and formality, evoke the concept of the canvas as a "manufactured object" previously promoted by Picasso and Braque in their collages and use of combined media. Thus Pellán began exploring the physical properties of new materials such as sand, silica, tobacco, slag, and later polyfilla, which he mixed with pigment, giving them a dual structural function similar to that of bas-relief, in which the suggestion of physical projection depends on the affirmation of the space-plane. The presence of these fragments of reality on the surface of the canvas calls first and foremost for a mathematical, rational organization which, by definition, runs counter to the spontaneous nature of art—one of the precepts of the Automatiste movement.

"The pictorial process", declared Pellán, "is essentially free. Painting is based on emotion and revelation, and uses unpredictable methods of formal and poetic invention to express itself".²³ [Translation]

However, the resulting emotion-revelation relationship, which for Pellán was also a projection of humanity, a constant in his work, could not tolerate restrictive parameters, since, as the expression of an essentially poetic imagery, it drew its formal references from anecdotal realms removed from reality. In this regard, the six *Jardins* [Gardens] exhibited for the first time at the Galerie Denyse Delrue in 1958, whose serial format corresponds to a number of possible objectives resulting from a single factual synergetic impulse, all require to an equal extent in their formal transposition the same intensity of exaltation of the medium as that perceived in reality. However, although in *Jardin rouge* [Red Garden] (Cat. No. 81), the clear allusion to a landscaped area resists the uniformity of the red pigment which covers the entire surface of the work, a principle already effectively applied by Pellán in

23. See Jean Séguin, "La peinture" (from an interview with A. Pellán, March 20, 1957), *Antennes*, Vol. IV, Nos. 2-3, Externat classique de Longueuil, 1957, p. 15-16.

1933 in a work entitled *Tête rectangulaire* [Rectangular Head] (Cat. No. 11), which combines astonishingly simple forms with complex meaning, the effect of *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] (Cat. No. 82) and *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden] (Cat. No. 139, work not shown) is entirely different. These works appear more as topographical points of reference, portions of reality framed subjectively by the artist, in which the depth of field remains ambiguous given the divergence of the gravitational movement of the organic masses emerging from it, some of which develop in the plane of the canvas following the marks traced in the pigment, while others project from the background or float freely in space. Pellan focused his attention on the expression of the virtual forces of the pigment which, in the cubist vocabulary, became a dynamic, structural substance, a synthetic principle which was fully realized in his so-called cosmic works of the 1960s and 1970s.

Of these works, Jacques Lassaigne wrote: "Pellan [...] ushers us today into a monumental world which has fully conquered the objectivity of the medium".²⁴ [Translation] The critic underlines the artist's determination to affirm, in these so-called surrealist abstract works, the primacy of objective definition over the sole revelation of the painting's structural concepts. Pellan thus places, in the centre of his work *Miroitement* [Shimmering] (Cat. No. 95), an opaque object-mass, resulting from the agglomeration of shapes with varying textures (impasto, glass shards), which contrasts through the static nature of the foreground with the vertical momentum generated in the background by the reddish bands appearing in the lower part of the canvas. The same occurs when he uses the transparent motif in *Série noire – C* [Series in Black – C] (Cat. No. 112) to mark the plane of a horizontal axis common to the three decorative branches, each of which blooms against a backdrop of a different colour. Pellan thus appears to come full circle, situating the fundamental issue of the structural background-form relationship in a context where the form conserves in itself the essence of this materialization of space, an approach specific to synthetic Cubism.

Conclusion

The author of this brief analysis of Alfred Pellan's work is not presenting it as the only valid interpretation, since it deals essentially with the formal aspect of his research and as such tends to bring to light, through the examples used, the consistency of the artist's open-minded method of approaching reality most often based on the components of the cubist universe. Also, although at the time Pellan himself bowed to the constraints of an evolutionary interpretation of his work, thereby acknowledging the expressive limits of Cubism, which was perceived more as a phase marking his transition from abstraction to Surrealism,²⁵ we are inclined to counter with an argument borrowed from Maurice Raynal who, in the first pages of his book on Picasso, writes: "Esthetics placidly follows a current stemming from the very source of man's sensitivity, beyond all considerations of time and place, beyond all restrictions ...".²⁶ [Translation]

It is perhaps not purely the result of chance that we find virtually the same words in the statement of one of the basic intentions of the *Prisme d'yeux* manifesto, of which Pellan was one of the signatories in 1948, and which reads as follows: "We are seeking a form of painting liberated from the contingencies of time and place and from restrictive ideologies, and created without any literary, political, philosophical or other interference

24. See Jacques Lassaigne, preface to catalogue *York Wilson. Toronto, Alfred Pellan. Montréal, Jean Paul Lemieux. Québec, Jean McEwen. Montréal, Joe Plaskett. Vancouver* (Paris: Musée Galliera, December 1963).

25. See Geneviève de la Tour Fondue, *Interviews canadiennes* (Montréal: Les Éditions Chanteclerc Ltée, 1952), p. 125-139.

26. *Ibid.*, Raynal, p. 9.

which could contaminate its expression or compromise its purity".²⁷ [*Translation*] This rejection of all forms of restriction in favour of a free style of painting, a decisive factor in Pellan's marginalization due to a historical context which, beginning in the mid-1950s, was fuelled mainly by the actions and reactions arising from Automatiste-inspired esthetic proposals, must today be reassessed in light of contemporary ideologies which, in keeping with the initial cubist philosophy, correspond to this quest for balance between representation and abstraction, as paradoxical as this may seem. From the orderliness of his first still-lives to the colourful lyricism of his *Bestiaires* (Bestiary series), Pellan executed a single continuous work, which appears to date as a new tradition whose realistic foundations, having since evolved into formal idioms, have contributed to the definition of a space whose tangibility is equalled only by its pictorial nature.

27. The text of the *Prisme d'yeux* manifesto was reprinted in Guy Robert, *L'art au Québec depuis 1940* (Montréal: Les Éditions La Presse, 1973), p. 66-67.

AN ESTHETIC JOURNEY

Sandra Grant Marchand

In a context of perpetual renewal, art reaches out to embrace the future. The era in which we create cannot but mark us. Alfred Pellán! [Translation]

INTERPRETATIONS OF PELLAN'S ŒUVRE generally concentrate on a specific area, addressing certain elements, and ignoring others. Whether anecdotal or formal, sociological or semiological, studies dissect Pellán's multifaceted work for their own purposes, probing particular aspects of it. This paper is no different, yet it seeks to approach Pellán's production from a new analytical perspective, i.e. whether chronological explanations of the developmental progress characteristic of Pellán's œuvre have been exhausted or can be supplemented.

Seen historically, Pellán's pictorial production encompasses elements reflecting the artist's questioning of his art and the art of his contemporaries, while presenting the means he chose to achieve his designs.² The current retrospective of his paintings provides food for thought on the connection between Pellán's artistic activity and the parameters within which he created. By isolating features characteristic of certain canvases executed at different times, and by cutting through the complex tissue of social and cultural factors, this study seeks to pinpoint the conditions underlying the emergence of this esthetic. If "Pellán is Pellán",³ [Translation] it is because of the choices he made in the way his work unfolded, based on the place he wanted to occupy in the history of art.

This retrospective displays a limited number of paintings taken from the body of the artist's work. It presents fragments of his œuvre, without reconstituting its entire history, and strives to clarify the relationship between his work and the artistic context from whence it emerged. In this exhibition, Pellán's work is presented along chronological, i.e. traditional, lines which reflect how significantly his production differed over time to reflect his artistic transformations. Throughout his career, Pellán's paintings proposed answers to fundamental contemporary questions, queried institutional certitudes, and won his "inventions"⁴ a place in the "avant-garde movement seeking to define itself".

1. From an interview with Alfred Pellán conducted by Geneviève de La Tour Fondue, *Interviews canadiennes*, (Montréal: Chantecler, 1952), p. 138.

2. See Michael Baxandall, *Formes de l'intention*, (Nîmes: Jacqueline Chambon, "Rayon Art" collection directed by Yves Michaud, 1991), French translation of *Patterns of Intention*, (Yale University, 1985).

3. The expression is borrowed from Pierre Vadeboncoeur, "Le procès de l'image (suite)", *Liberté*, XXXI, 183 (June 1989), p. 128.

4. The term is one that Pellán used, among others, in the film *Alfred Pellán*, directed by Georges Francon (Montréal: Société Radio-Canada, February 23, 1961), 28 min 25 s, 16 mm, black and white. Pellán stated during the interview, "But I believe that, even these days, there are painters who are concerned with painting in all sorts of fields. It is extremely interesting. It's always the same problem of drawing, of invention...especially of invention. [...] Everything needs to be re-invented, constantly, all the time. It's really astounding to see all the new discoveries being made in painting itself". [Translation]

5. Reesa Greenberg wrote, "To this day, Pellán defines drawing as black-and-white works executed in ink, charcoal, or pencil, or a mixture of these media and all coloured works as paintings". From *The Drawings of Alfred Pellán* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1980), p. 56.

6. Pellán said in an interview, "My job is to paint and not to talk about painting". From Guy Robert, *Pellán, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art* (Montréal: Centre de Psychologie et de Pédagogie, "Artistes canadiens" collection, 1963), p. 78.

This study will present an overview of Pellán's painted œuvre, taking a general approach to the changes marking it. Constrained by the need to condense a career that spanned many years, like any retrospective in which a few works must be chosen from among many, this exhibition offers some one hundred and fifty five works selected from the archives of Pellán's entire repertoire.⁵ While I have briefly touched on the relationship between these works, I have focused on the symbiotic interplay between paintings and the various artistic realms from which Pellán's work emerged.

Any study of Pellán's œuvre must deal with his characteristic questioning of art proper, a constant concern. Pellán saw himself, above all, as a "painter",⁶ and his concept of artistic activity was, from the days of his training at the École des beaux-arts de Québec, based on his search for a personal, liberating approach.⁷ Throughout his career, Pellán reaffirmed this quest for originality through the pursuit of art in evolution. The pictorial approaches he explored, and reinvented in many guises, bear witness to his relentless effort to expand the boundaries of painting. His search always seems to use a "range of formal solutions",⁸ [Translation] indicating how much he was attracted to modern painters, particularly during his stay in France, from 1926 to 1940. "When I discovered European art, I did not, at first, distinguish between schools. [...] I discovered contemporary art, and not the credos of such and such a movement".⁹ [Translation] Since previous studies have gone to great lengths to highlight references to the masters of the Paris school in Pellán's work,¹⁰ I will concentrate on exploring what led Pellán to delve into modern art. Why was he so insistent on melding these borrowed stylistic elements with his own paintings?

To begin with, the very nature of his primary sources seems significant. The artists whom Pellán openly admired¹¹ were essentially those of inter-war Paris, a "broiling stew whose depths he avidly plumbed for a host of pictorial ideas".¹² [Translation] His privileged contact with Paris' avant-garde was instrumental in liberating Pellán's own work. He said later, in 1967, "...I could not help but be influenced, I admired these 'giants' so much that it took me a long time to assimilate their teachings. I think that I managed to extricate myself, to create my own style".¹³ [Translation] In retrospect, Pellán's confession reveals his acute awareness of the lessons he learned from the masters of his age—undoubtedly these "colossal" tenets—and of his progressive assimilation of the major esthetic choices and challenges of an art which he considered contemporary. Pellán embraced the questioning inherent in the works of modern European artists, particularly those from France, since it corresponded to his own rejection of academic formulae in painting. His departure for Paris in 1926, at age 21, was prompted by the cultural suffocation he undoubtedly suffered in Québec and represented an important step in his artistic career. Pellán left to seek from Bonnard, Van Gogh, Picasso, Ernst, Klee, Léger, Miró, Matisse, Braque, Le Corbusier and Utrillo,¹⁴ the essence of their contribution to the development of modern art (subjects, techniques, systems of representation), and, in so doing, provided himself with the means to transform his painting to meet the criteria he had set for himself. By turning to these artists, he laid the foundations of his art on the stylistic paradigms of European modernism.

For Pellán, this receptiveness was undoubtedly the result of a lengthy, intensive exploration aimed at finding pictorial means to express his individuality. In a way, it unveiled his desire to strike back at the conservatism characteristic of art education in Québec and in France. From his earliest works—*Les Fraises* [Strawberries] (Cat. No. 1), *Nature morte à l'assiette*

[Still-life with Plate] (Cat. No. 4) and *Un coin du Vieux Québec* [A Corner of Old Quebec] (Cat. No. 3)—, Pellan tried to structure illusionist space through the use of expressive colour, distancing himself, almost instinctively,¹⁵ from the canons of academic esthetics. While attending the *École supérieure nationale des beaux-arts de Paris* and academies in that city, he pursued and consolidated his personal search for the formal elements of painting. While several portraits he painted during that period, particularly *Autoportrait* [Self-Portrait] (Cat. No. 5), *Jeune Fille au collier vert* [Young Girl with Green Necklace] (Cat. No. 125, not reproduced) and *Femme au peignoir rose* [Woman in Pink Robe] (Cat. No. 7), retain the traditional characteristics of portraiture—a bust on a solid background—they nonetheless reveal Pellan's audacity in their play of volume, line and colour. These experiments with the formal vocabulary would soon take him beyond the confines of the conventions marking realism.

Beginning in 1932—the year of the Van Gogh exhibit at the Musée du Jeu de paume and of the Picasso retrospective at the Georges Petit gallery, both of which Pellan saw and admired—explicit references to modern artists clearly marked his own work. From that time on, Pellan's painting raised questions similar to those posed by other artists of the era; like fauvist and expressionist works, portraits such as *Jeune Fille aux anémones* [Girl with Anemones] (Cat. No. 12) or *Jeune Fille au col blanc* [Young Girl with White Collar] (Cat. No. 16), and still-lives, such as *Nature morte à la lampe* [Still-Life with Lamp] (Cat. No. 9) and *La Table verte* [Green Table] (Cat. No. 15), testified to the expressive potential of colour and line within a new spatial perspective, breaking with a mimetic representation of the real. Like cubist paintings, works such as *Instruments de musique – A* [Musical Instruments – A] (Cat. No. 10) and *Fruits au compotier* [Fruit in a Fruit Bowl] (Cat. No. 14) introduced a two-dimensional aspect to the pictorial space by deconstructing form. Paintings with more surrealist overtones, *Tête rectangulaire* [Rectangular Head] (Cat. No. 11) and *Hommes-Rugby* [Footballers/Rugby Players] (Cat. No. 19), introduce graphic elements within a juxtaposition of coloured planes.

Why did Pellan, at that particular time in his career, choose to adopt the motifs and modes of expression of famous modern artists? One might have expected him to differentiate himself from them by distancing his painting from these borrowed elements. Perhaps, by affirming his sources, Pellan sought recognition of an affinity between his work and that of the “elders of the school of Paris”.¹⁶ [Translation] Since the avenues of artistic freedom had already been carved out in avant-garde Paris, Pellan had to define his approach in relation to it. Before Europe, he was somewhat unaware of the discoveries of his predecessors;¹⁷ after his arrival, he was able to further his knowledge of them, confronting them on a daily basis. The French context had become the environment in which the foundations of his art were laid, and he had to determine where his work stood in relation to what surrounded him. Given the lack of Québec role models to emulate, Pellan developed a repertoire of contemporary French models. In renewing his artistic vocabulary, Pellan turned to the modern masters of Fauvism and Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism, delving freely into these formal idioms. Concurrently, he stressed the importance he accorded to their formal solutions and situated his own search within the upheavals which had been occurring in France's artistic circles since the turn of the century.

7. Alfred Pellan stated in an interview, “...when I enrolled in the *École des beaux-arts*—it was 1920 and I was 15—there was no question of modern art, or even contemporary art. What you received was a very interesting academic education. The director was as effective as possible in terms of emulation as well. We had freedom, great freedom. Afterward, I rarely encountered a school of its type”. [Translation] In Georges Francon, *op. cit.*

8. The expression used is Pellan's own. From Germain Lefebvre *Pellan, sa vie, son art, son temps* (La Prairie: Marcel Broquet, 1986), p. 112.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Among these is Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 70-78.

11. During a 1939 interview, Pellan responded to the question, “Whom do you admire most?” with, “After the Great Masters, I particularly admire painters such as Picasso, Matisse, Braque, Dufy”. [Translation] In Juliette Cabana, “Chez Alfred Pellan, peintre moderne”, *La Revue Populaire*, Paris (November 1939), p. 9. Later in 1961, during a conversation with Jacques Folch-Ribas, Pellan said, “All those I loved as painters, whether Utrillo, Bonnard, Picasso, Matisse, etc. Miró [...] Ernst, Picasso...these people enthral”. In “Pellan parle...”, *Liberté* (March-April, 1967), p. 65.

12. André Jasmin, “Le climat du milieu artistique dans les années 40”, in Conférences J.A. de Sève, *Peinture canadienne-française* [debats] (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1971), p. 16.

13. Alfred Pellan in Jacques Folch-Ribas, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

14. Enumeration taken from Reesa Greenberg, *op. cit.*, p. 22. For more on these “influences and friendships”, see Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 70-78.

15. The term is used by Pellan. “I feel we must follow our instincts, since that is the only way to produce an original work”. [Translation] From Juliette Cabana, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

16. Term used by Jean T. Bédard, “La longue maturation de l'œil et de la main”, *Le Devoir*, (Saturday, November 11, 1972), p. 17.

17. “The young painter, now 20 years of age, left the *École des beaux-arts de Québec*, having carried off all the prizes, but having little acquaintance with French art, and still less with its more recent phases. He had already guessed from some poor-quality monochrome photographs that ‘the Impressionists are no doubt great colourists.’” From Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

18. See the study by Kenneth E. Silver, *Esprit de corps: The Art of the Parisian Avant-garde and the First World War, 1914-1925* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 504 p.

19. Michelet wrote, "...we always thank God for having given us our wonderful homeland, France. Not only because of its many glorious accomplishments, but because it represents world freedom and the greatest country in the world, the origins of universal love...". From *Le Peuple* (1846), p. 236. Quoted in Michael Fried, "Manet's Sources, Aspects of his Art, 1859-1865", *Artforum*, New York, Vol. VII (March 1969), p. 66.

20. See Andrzej K. Olesewski, "L'un des problèmes de l'art français des années trente: le groupe 'Forces nouvelles'" (1971). In Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *Forces nouvelles 1935-1939* (1980), 100 p.

21. Ibid.

22. Jean Cassou, *Panorama des arts plastiques contemporains*, (Paris: NRF Gallimard, 1960). In Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *op. cit.*

23. From the manifesto reproduced in Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *op. cit.*

24. Jacques Lassaigne, *Les Heures de Paris*, (April 24, 1935). In Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *op. cit.*

25. Expression borrowed from Guy Robert.

26. Élie Faure, "L'Agonie de la peinture", *L'Amour de l'art*, No. 5 (1931), p. 238. Quoted in Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *op. cit.*

27. Henri Héraut, in Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, *op. cit.*

When Pellan arrived on Paris' artistic scene in 1926, France, in the process of defining a cultural identity within the post-war political and social climate,¹⁸ had already authored numerous modern, stylistic trends. Fed by the French nationalist undercurrents of the 19th century, an era during which intellectuals from various milieus had embraced the views of Michelet,¹⁹ artists sought to affirm French art and establish its international stature. Calling traditional figurative vocabulary into question and defining a new abstract order had been at the heart of the debate since the turn of the century. Pellan witnessed this ideological transformation and, in the 1930s, the viewpoints of a new generation of French artists, which came to the fore as the innovative movements of the preceding decades lost momentum.²⁰ Major fauvist, cubist, surrealist and abstract trends continued to influence and offer their creative contribution, but critics, theorists²¹ and artists began to question the very foundations of modern painting and, rather anxiously, the very future of French art. In the years of uncertainty which followed the Crash, and faced with crumbling democracies in Italy, Spain and Germany, young artists reacted by expressing their desire to renew ties with the art of the past and thus ensure continuity with the humanist values of French tradition. This generation reproached its elders for having broken with tradition—not the tradition peopled by "academic and scholarly ghosts", [Translation] but the one "embracing the doctrines of spirituality, idealism, morality and craftsmanship, of all sorts of values conceived and held by the French people and truly belonging to them".²² [Translation]

It was in this cultural climate that the "Forces nouvelles" group was created by Henri Héraut in 1935. At the group's first exhibition at the Galerie Billiet, which included works by Pellan, its founder signed a categorical and rather harsh manifesto in which he claimed to have discovered "in Paris, several young artists of steady disposition [...] who remain convinced that the return to Humanism, the return to the Portrait, the return to the Subject, etc. are mere formulae, empty of all meaning, attempts doomed to failure if there is not first a return to Drawing, to the painstaking draftsmanship of Tradition in close commune with Nature".²³ [Translation] Pellan agreed to show "a few beautiful drawings"²⁴ [Translation] at the group's first showing, and, in a way, this brief event illustrated his involvement in Paris' artistic circles, tying another knot in the fabric of reciprocity he had been weaving with his adopted culture. During these years of "real learning"²⁵ [Translation] in Paris, Pellan's concept of painting was closely intertwined with the cultural context within which it evolved. With French artists, he shared affinities that corresponded to his own approach. Furthermore, from his earliest years in France, critics' reaction to his work was based on how his production was perceived in relation to the transformation French art was undergoing. If Pellan momentarily aligned himself with the "Forces nouvelles" group, it was undoubtedly because he understood the feeling of urgency among artists of his generation when confronted with what has been referred to as "the agony of French painting".²⁶ [Translation] Eliminating human content from modern painting posed "a threat to current art"²⁷ in the eyes of Héraut, and the return to the realist tradition in French painting became a guarantee of "strength" for the time being. Pellan, however, quickly distanced himself from the group on the occasion of its second exhibition in 1936.

Pellan's brief stint in the "Forces nouvelles" group is revealing in several respects. On one hand, he was considered, at that point in his career, as one of the young artists who were reintroducing the stylistic elements of

Classicism, i.e. restraint, order and harmony, to modern French painting; and on the other, in his constant desire to be “independent” and “contemporary”, he quickly distanced himself from the group, saying, “I always avoided being a painter espousing any particular ideology, or being limited to one form of expression”.²⁸ [Translation] This episode represents one of the many esthetic choices Pellán made while in Paris to better define his painting. It also illustrates how the artistic community responded to his decisions.

Many years later, Pellán would say of his years in Paris: “I have always been a worrier. I would do something very daring, only to return to the realistic and figurative. I would switch back and forth constantly”.²⁹ [Translation] This is a good example of Pellán’s self-expressed need to take a critical view of his own painting. If he alternated between “more daring” forms and those he considered “realistic” or “figurative”, it was because his work changed to reflect his artistic needs; he did not allow the abstract or figurative precepts of modernism to dictate his course. Pellán’s works of the 1930s, while undoubtedly in the recent modern tradition, can by no means be described in a summary reference to a specific stylistic influence. They are the result of his manipulation of medium, design and colour, which constantly renewed his formal works. One need only compare³⁰ *Instruments de musique – A* [Musical Instruments – A] (Cat. No. 10) to the Cubist works of Braque, Juan Gris or Picasso, *Jeune Comédien* [Young Actor] (Cat. No. 23) to the more classic portraits of harlequins by Picasso, *Les Pommes Rouges* [Red Apples] (Cat. No. 13) to Cézanne’s still-lives, *Terrasse de café* [Café] (Cat. No. 31) to Braque’s semi-abstract studies, *Au clair de lune* [In the Light of the Moon] (Cat. No. 28) to Picasso’s surrealist profiles to see how Pellán used his ability to structure line and colour to transform an icon or borrowed motif and create a unique pictorial approach. “Confined to a room all his life, Mozart could never have composed”, [Translation] said Pellán, convinced that art is the product of past and present sources, but fundamentally marked by the artist’s “personal choices and discernment”.³¹ [Translation]

Through and throughout his work in Paris, Pellán sought to better understand the features specific to modern painting, particularly that of France. He clearly acknowledged his masters: Bonnard, Picasso, Van Gogh, Miró, Matisse and Ernst, explicitly indicating the links between their work and his own form of expression.³² Pellán’s approach presupposes that he was aware of what distinguished him from his predecessors, that he felt this difference,³³ but also, implicitly, that he recognized the intrinsic quality of French art. In 1939, with a group of young artists, he signed a commentary defending the independent artists who “contributed to the splendour of French Art” by basing their work on “a genuine vocation, as mysterious and ineffable as art itself”, a genuine vocation which “must meld with expression”. [Translation] To these independent artists who “had, for one hundred years and more [...], been the magnificent links in the chain” of “tradition”, [Translation] a tradition that “could be found in the country itself, emanating from its soil, recognizable in the virtues of its people, and finding form in these artists”, [Translation] to these artists fell the task of carrying “the spirit of France beyond its borders”.³⁴ [Translation]

Before returning to Québec in 1940 due to the war, Pellán had, in deference to his heritage, allowed himself to be overwhelmed by the sheer power³⁵ of the French culture, and perhaps, in so doing, had attempted to develop his own independent style of painting. With the French artists of

28. Handwritten notes of Alfred Pellán, [no date].

29. Alfred Pellán, in Jacques Folch-Ribas, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

30. Here, reference is made to the illustrations of artists’ works from publications in the personal library of Alfred Pellán. Among them: Jean Cassou, *Picasso*, (Paris: Brun & Cie, collection des Maîtres, 1937), unpaginated; Daniel Henry, *Juan Gris*, (Leipzig and Berlin: Von Klinkhardt & Bierman, 1929), 32 p.; Christian Zervos, “Tableaux magiques de Picasso”, *Cahiers d’art*, Nos. 3-10 (1938); Élie Faure, *P. Cézanne*, (Paris: G. Crès & Cie, 1926); E. Tériade, “Aspects actuels de l’expression plastique”, *Minotaure* [Paris], Albert Skira, 1st year, No. 5 (1934), p. 33; (collective), *Picasso 1930-1935*, (Paris: Cahiers d’art), [no date], p. 8.

31. Alfred Pellán, “L’araignée tisse chez Pellán”, interview conducted by Murielle Villeneuve and Louise Filion in *Toile d’araignée*, Collège Basile-Moreau newspaper, Saint-Laurent, 10th year, No. 11, [no date].

32. Alfred Pellán, “I have always attempted to escape any influence. My greatest desire is to create something personal”. [Translation] In Juliette Cabana, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

33. Alfred Pellán, “During my Paris years, I worked hard as I attempted to learn from the experience of these masters”. [Translation] Interview accorded *Vie des Arts*: “La queue de la comète. Alfred Pellán. Témoin du surréalisme”, *Vie des Arts*, Vol. XX, No. 80 (Fall 1975), p. 20.

34. Charlot, Gaspard, Carbell, Himichsen, Morère and Pellán, “Pour l’art français”, *Beaux-Arts*, Paris, (March 3, 1939).

35. Expression used by Diderot in *Paradoxe sur le comédien*, quoted in Jean Larose, *L’Amour du pauvre*, (Montréal: Boréal, Papiers collés collection, 1991). See chapter entitled, “Le fantôme de la littérature”, p. 9-25.

his generation, he chose to share an acceptance of the living tradition, making way, with them, for the return of the expressive technique: “The hand transcribes the brain’s meaning, and that is all important”.³⁶ [Translation] With the masters of the school of Paris, he chose to share a desire to renew the formal vocabulary using contemporary pictorial techniques, rejecting, once again, stagnant academic principles. On this point, critic Jean T. Bédard wrote, “Pellan seeks to synthesize the formal discoveries made by his older colleagues of the Paris school, an approach which he sees as the key to strong, original creation”. [Translation] Bédard adds that this is “the most obvious leitmotif in this complex œuvre”.³⁷ [Translation] In other words, beginning in Paris, Pellan’s paintings represented an exercise in personal expression, developed using a modern stylistic vocabulary (a study of the formal aspects of composition: plane, line, colour, tone, etc.); the eclecticism attributed to him, and which is his dominant feature, can be seen as an exploration of the very pictorial elements he was willing to use for his esthetic ends: “I wanted to take a global approach, I wanted to be a surrealist, I wanted to know how to draw and paint well. In short, I wanted all those qualities that make a work plastic, and therefore esthetic”.³⁸ [Translation] It was this yearning, which enabled Pellan, in his work, to unite a modern pictorial approach based on the development of plasticity of form and the more traditional aspects of drawing.

In 1926, Pellan saw exile as the solution to pursuing the artistic career he had mapped out for himself during his school days in Québec City. More broadly speaking, François-Marc Gagnon wrote that “it was Pellan who best understood [...] at that time [...] the choices and challenges involved”—“the secular isolation” of painting in Québec—and Pellan who “had accepted exile as the only solution to the problem”.³⁹ [Translation] When the artist returned in 1940, Québec, after several decades of slowly changing attitudes, was on its way to becoming a modern culture marked by an ever-increasing desire to open up to the world.

During Pellan’s absence from the Québec scene, important signs of a break with tradition were becoming more and more apparent in intellectual circles and, in particular, in the visual arts. Among others, John Lyman, who returned from Europe in 1931, deserves mention for his efforts to earn recognition for modern art. His initiatives led to the creation of the Contemporary Art Society in 1939, which drew together artists, art lovers and critics who opposed the esthetic academicism and regionalistic tendencies dominating painting of the era. Also noteworthy are articles by journalists and critics, during the same period, favouring *art vivant*, or “living art”, open to the contemporary influences of international art. Finally, especially among Montréal’s avant-garde artists, there was an increasingly manifest desire to break with an indurated past and institute a style of painting which fulfilled their need for expression and freedom.

So, the intellectual climate in early-1940s Québec had changed remarkably since the 1920s, when Pellan had left. A schism between the clergy and politicians was taking shape, on the one side, and the forces of a historic cultural transformation emerging, on the other. From that moment on, Pellan found himself at the heart of an artistic upheaval which would create a new esthetic order in Québec that would reign for decades to come. “We have reason to be grateful”, exclaimed Charles Doyon in 1941, “that he was removed from the excessively artistic ambience of the capital of the arts so that he could give free rein to his forceful personality”.⁴⁰ [Translation] Regardless, while in Paris, Pellan had resolutely opted for a

36. Charlot et. al., *op. cit.*

37. Jean T. Bédard, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

38. Alfred Pellan, in Jacques Folch-Ribas, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

39. François-Marc Gagnon, “Miró et la peinture des années quarante au Québec”, *Vie des Arts*, Vol. XXXI, No. 123 (June 1986), p. 83.

40. Charles Doyon, “Pellan à la Galerie des Arts”, *Le Jour*, Montréal, (November 2, 1940).

modern view of painting, and his sudden return to Montréal would be decisive in affirming his artistic approach.

It was during this time that the ideology of what would later be called “cultural catching up”⁴¹ began to crystallize, giving voice to the urgency felt by Québec intellectuals in the late 1930s due to their cultural lag compared with other countries and, more specifically, to their growing openness to contemporary European society. Pellán was aware of this situation. The 1940 exhibition at Québec City’s Musée de la Province, and at Montréal’s Art Association, included a significant number of his paintings and drawings brought back from France, and was, for him, an opportunity to solidly implant artistic internationalism in Québec. He intended to continue to base his work on his European experiences, which meant he would have to strike a chord with other artists and the public. That is why, given the public’s reaction to this first major encounter with abstract trends, Pellán, “worried about the future”, painted a series of portraits and landscapes, to prove that modern artists “were also able to draw”, saying “If painters exhibit only modern paintings, we may remain alone in our ivory towers...I wasn’t thinking only of myself”.⁴² [Translation] His 1941 portraits, *Fillette en rouge* [Young Girl in Red] (Cat. No. 40) and *Fillette aux lunettes* [Young Girl with Glasses] (Cat. No. 41), and landscapes, *Maisons de Charlevoix* [Houses in Charlevoix] (Cat. No. 42), *Village de la Petite-Rivière-Saint-François* [Village of Petite-Rivière-Saint-François] (Cat. No. 127, not reproduced) and *Cordée de bois* [Cord of Wood] (Cat. No. 43), with the frank colours of what Pellán called “transposed realism”, were painted during a stay in the Charlevoix region, and can be considered tools the artist used to achieve an objective which was important to him at the time, though he risked being “accused of regressing”. “There was no question in my mind of capitulating, on the contrary, this was a stage I had to go through—perhaps for the good of painters and for the good of the public”.⁴³ [Translation] More than merely a “compromise in order not to rock the local public excessively”,⁴⁴ [Translation] these figurative works do not, in Pellán’s view, abandon his modern “perspectives”.⁴⁵ Rather, they are a phase which could be considered salutary in the evolution of visual arts in Québec and in Canada, and therefore also in his art.

Pellán’s later paintings, of the 1940s, would confirm his position in the debate characterizing this crucial period in the confrontation between certain ideologies, such as those of Conservatism, cultural catching up and contestation, the latter being advanced by Borduas and the Automatistes.⁴⁶ It is not this study’s intention to review the facts and events that set off the ideological skirmishing within the Contemporary Art Society or in art education circles, particularly at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal. What is important to note is that Pellán’s painting during this decade can be described essentially in terms of the international artistic trends defined by the Paris school. This break with Academicism and its rather outmoded values would contribute to generating and maintaining the momentum of “cultural catching up” with Europe and, more specifically, France.

During this period, Pellán, having fully mastered the technical aspects of his art and possessing an in-depth knowledge of the most contemporary formal idioms, developed and perfected a deliberately multiform style—eclectic—which sometimes drew on the vocabulary and subjects used by the cubists, and sometimes on the methods and themes of the surrealists. Within the context of Québec’s “cultural lag”,⁴⁷ [Translation] his work marked the end, for a whole generation of artists, of academic and regional art, and

41. Expression borrowed from anthropologist Marcel Rioux. Also used by François-Marc Gagnon, “We can place the dawn of contemporary culture in our field at about the end of the 1930s or early 1940s. [...] Catching up to European culture implied condemning the ideology immediately preceding it, i.e. conservatism”. [Translation] In “Mimétisme en peinture contemporaine au Québec”, *Peinture canadienne-française* (debats), *op. cit.*, p. 40-41.

42. Alfred Pellán, in Georges Francon, *op. cit.*

43. *Ibid.*

44. Guy Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 39. Quoted in English in François-Marc Gagnon, “Pellán, Borduas and the Automatistes. Men and Ideas in Québec”, *Artscanada*, Vol. XXIX, No. 5 (December 1972-January 1973), p. 51.

45. Term used by Alfred Pellán in Georges Francon, *op. cit.*

46. See François-Marc Gagnon, “Pellán, Borduas and the Automatistes. Men and Ideas in Québec”, *op. cit.*, p. 48-55.

47. See Nicole Boily and François-Marc Gagnon, “L’enracinement de l’art au Québec. Problématique des années 1920 à 1945”, *Critères*, No. 10 (January 1974), p. 121-143.

48. Alfred Pellán said in an interview, "I think one can create something new based on one's experience...if one has any experience". [Translation] In Jacques Folch-Ribas, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

49. Comparisons have been made with illustrations of specific works from publications in the personal library of Alfred Pellán. See Jean Cassou, *Picasso, op. cit.* [n.p.]; (collective), *Fernand Léger—La forme humaine dans l'espace*, (Montréal: L'Arbre), 1945; Joan Miró, "Je rêve d'un grand atelier", *XX^e siècle*, No. 2 (May-June 1938), p. 25.

50. François-Marc Gagnon, "Pellán, Borduas and the Automatistes. Men and Ideas in Québec", *op. cit.*, p. 49. In 1942, Borduas wrote in the text entitled, "Des mille manières de goûter une œuvre d'art", "The cycle of true expression, the means used, the intermediary between the artist and visible world is closed off by Cubism. Only one path remains open: that of the artist's own invisible world, Surrealism". [Translation] Quoted in Guy Robert, *Borduas*, (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1972), p. 270.

51. Fernande Saint-Martin, in *Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère des Affaires culturelles, Trois générations d'art québécois 1940, 1950, 1960*, (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain, 1976), p. 13.

52. See the article by François-Marc Gagnon, "Le sens du mot 'abstraction' dans la critique d'art et les déclarations de peintres des années quarante au Québec", in Yvon Lamonde et Esther Trépanier, *L'Avènement de la modernité culturelle au Québec*, (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1986), p. 113-138. Also see, by the same author, "Le surréalisme de Paul-Émile Borduas", *Surréalisme périphérique, actes du colloque Portugal, Québec, Amérique latine: un surréalisme périphérique?*, Montréal, Luis de Moura Sobral; Université de Montréal, (1984), p. 83-94.

53. Quoted in Jean-Paul Villiers, "Quarante ans de surréalisme dans la peinture québécoise", *Vie des Arts*, Vol. XXXI, No. 123, (June 1986), p. 46.

gave rise to the desire to see the dawn of a "living art", of international stature. When Pellán borrowed decorative motifs, subjects or representational structures from "his predecessors", and used these elements to construct his own formal expression, he introduced Québec to the possibility of "making [art] over",⁴⁸ of creating an original esthetic rooted in a modern, French, artistic tradition.

If, in retrospect, his references to the masters of the Paris school seem explicit, it is, nevertheless, true that Pellán gave himself a great deal of latitude in his use of them and that he used pictorial elements, purity of colour and precision of drawing in a personal and unique way to create images infused with his own imagination:⁴⁹ *Mascarade* [Masquerade] (Cat. No. 36) is glaringly different from Picasso's *Les Trois Masques* [Three Masks] (or *Les Trois Musiciens* [Three Musicians]) (1921); *Nature morte au verre de cristal* [Still-Life with Crystal Glass] (Cat. No. 51) may be loosely based on Picasso's *Guitare aux étoiles* [Guitar of the Stars] (1924); *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 55) integrates the main figure in Picasso's *Femmes au bord de la mer* [Women by the Seaside] (1923) in a completely different way; *Homme et femme* [Man and Woman] (Cat. No. 58) calls to mind the collection of massive human forms floating in space found in the study for Fernand Léger's *Les Plongeurs* [The Divers] (1941); *Fruits, cuillère, verre* [Fruit, Spoon and Glass] (Cat. No. 58) recalls the sinuous lines of Picasso's *Pichet et compotier* [Pitcher and Fruit Bowl] (1934); and *Surprise académique* [Academic Surprise] can be compared to Miró's surrealist canvas entitled *Le Carnaval d'Arlequin* [Harlequin's Carnival] (1924). Works like these, and others, are unprecedented composites, based on the formal discoveries marking the early 20th century. Their's is a unique figurative language which borrowed from Cubism and, increasingly, by the mid-1940s, from Surrealism. It was this practice of Pellán's that Borduas and his followers would so vehemently contest.

Pellán had already chosen to break with the canons of Academicism, and to pursue the modern tradition, turning to French culture to find catalysts for an authentic formal expression. Borduas, for his part, had chosen to question the very foundations of the traditional pictorial vocabulary (both recent and historical) and finally, during these years, opposed the "catching up", which he perceived as an ideology that hindered the emergence of a radically new art form. Both men both sought the creation of a "living art" based on the rejection of an academic approach to painting. However, by the latter 1940s, they had each defined different directions for the future of art in Québec, a fact which would generate the definitive split in Montréal's avant-garde movement.

Their divergent critical attitudes toward French Surrealism, "the most advanced"⁵⁰ in the history of art according to Borduas, would make these two leaders of the art world the rallying points for a new generation of artists. Borduas "perceived Surrealism as an even greater freedom to change the very bases of the pictorial vocabulary".⁵¹ [Translation] He borrowed André Breton's notion of "pure psychic automatism" [Translation] and explored the surrealist technique of "automatic writing". [Translation] However, during the 1940s, he sought to develop an essentially non-figurative pictorial automatism⁵² which echoed the impulses of the unconscious mind. "Surrealism is figurative, automatism is not", [Translation] said Jean-Paul Mousseau, while Claude Gauvreau stated, "Our automatism is pure automatism in that the exclusive basis of creation is the free play of the unconscious...".⁵³ [Translation]

Pellan, “who saw surrealist painting when it was being done”, was a “witness [...] viewing from the outside without taking part”,⁵⁴ [Translation] and encountering Parisian surrealists (Breton, Masson, Léger, Picasso and Ernst), would have understood surrealism as “a state of poetry”,⁵⁵ a source for “creating a poetic, unlimited, hitherto-unseen world”. [Translation] It gave rise to an art which exploited the figurative—oneiric painting—whose point of departure was an accident on the canvas—a “fluke”, a “splotch”, said Pellan—“developed” afterward “in an original manner”. “If we work with abstract splotches, they must be humanized if we are to achieve universality. [...] Painting has to contain a human element. I honestly think that’s the direction true Surrealism is taking”. [Translation] Pellan’s painting, throughout the 1940s (and after), maintained figurative elements, which he juxtaposed and jumbled in fictitious relationships, creating a “different world”, and is perceived as the culmination of a “satisfying [...] formal solution”.⁵⁶ [Translation] Commenting on the painting *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 64), Pellan said that “it was at once surreal and formal” and that, for him “the subject was entirely secondary”. [Translation] He then shared a comment made to his students, which clearly expressed the leitmotif of his entire œuvre, “...you need a foundation, a skill, otherwise nature will overpower and always master you. You must tame it using formal methods: that is the principle, the key”.⁵⁷ [Translation]

Believing in the artist’s total freedom, Pellan never belonged to the surrealist group in Paris, “I did not want to be regimented in any manner, by anyone”.⁵⁸ [Translation] Furthermore, from the time he returned from France until 1944, he distanced himself from the growing surrealist activity of artists and writers among Québec’s intellectual elite. Reesa Greenberg’s interpretation of what could be seen as Pellan’s “sudden conversion”⁵⁹ four years after he settled in Montréal is based on the artist’s expressed views on the evolution (rather than revolution) of art, on his conviction that the artist must be free of all constraint and on his choice of Picasso as the model to follow—factors which influenced him even before his interest in Surrealism. Although Pellan affirmed years later that his painting was “perhaps [...] closer to that of Surrealism” after his return from Paris and that he saw an “undeniable [...] continuation”, (“I had begun some time earlier, I think!”⁶⁰), [Translation] we can also see that he had intensified the figurative portrayals in his painting, delving deep into the imaginary for archetypes and universal symbols (woman, the hand, the eye, the circle, etc.), and that this iconographic turn was closely linked to the illustrations for surrealist poetry he had drawn in 1944 and 1946 (*Les Îles de la Nuit*, by Alain Grandbois, and *Le Voyage d’Arlequin*, by Éloi de Grandmont). Beginning in the latter half of the 1940s, Pellan’s painting embraced a figurative style with a surrealist spirit. However, he integrated cubist techniques (radical fragmentation of objects, with several sides seen simultaneously), as well as techniques marking Surrealism (composite or hybrid images, disproportion, floating forms and the construction of imaginary spaces).⁶¹

Pellan’s works of this era reveal a preoccupation with “content”, although the boundaries of his “métier” were constantly being pushed to the limits of what was possible in painting. Oils such as *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 55), *Nanette* [Nanette] (Cat. No. 65) and *Citrons ultra-violets* [Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 64), mixed media works such as *Science fiction* [Science Fiction] (Cat. No. 131, not reproduced) and *Calme obscur* [Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 132, not reproduced), and ink drawings like *Floraison* [Blossoming] (Cat. No. 129, not reproduced) and *La Pariade* [The Pairing]

54. Alfred Pellan, “La queue de la comète. Alfred Pellan. Témoin de surréalisme”, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

55. Alfred Pellan, from the film *Voir Pellan*, directed by Louis Portugais, Montréal, National Film Board, 1969, 19 min 42 s, 35 mm, colour.

56. Alfred Pellan, “La queue de la comète...”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

57. Comments made by Alfred Pellan assembled in August 1969 by André Marchand, *Bulletin du Musée du Québec*, No. 14, (March 1970), p. 5.

58. Alfred Pellan, “La queue de la comète...”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

59. Reesa Greenberg, “Pellan and Surrealism: Pellan’s Picassoïd Preference”, *Surréalisme périphérique*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

60. Alfred Pellan, “La queue de la comète...”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

61. See Réjeanne Giroux, *Analyse thématique du temps dans l’œuvre de Pellan*, thesis, Université de Montréal, 1982. Ms. Giroux focuses principally on seven Pellan drawings for a contest to determine who would create the mural for the City Centre building in 1957. She lists certain techniques inspired by Surrealism that he had been using since 1944.

(Cat. No. 134, not reproduced) suggest an imaginary world composed of poetic relationships between figurative elements. Within Montréal's avant-garde circles, Pellan's work paralleled that of Borduas, who was experimenting, along with his followers, with Automatism. It is easy to assume that their fundamentally different approaches to painting were the source of their conflict, and to play down differences in their personalities and quarrels about their positions within the *École du meuble* and the *École des beaux-arts de Montréal*. From this viewpoint, Pellan's painting could be seen as a sort of response to Borduas' work, just as that of Borduas could be seen as a retort to Pellan's. But, within the dynamics of an artistic oeuvre built according to its own criteria and constantly being re-evaluated, it would be just as valid to suggest that Borduas and Pellan approached their artistic endeavours independently and unconditionally.

In 1942, Pellan expressed his desire to "create genuine enthusiasm among young people for modern art, its evolution, its international character".⁶² [Translation] He pursued this objective by teaching at the *École des beaux-arts de Montréal* from 1943 to 1952, and by taking concrete action through the creation of a group of artists sharing the aims enumerated in the *Prisme d'yeux* Manifesto published in February 1948. The following is an extract:

Prisme d'yeux is open to all painters of inspiration and traditional expression. By this, we mean painters who obey only their most profound spiritual needs while respecting the material aptitudes of formal painting.

*We seek painting free from all contingencies of time and place, of restrictive ideology, conceived without any literary, political, philosophical or other meddling which could adulterate its expression or compromise its purity.*⁶³ [Translation]

The text, written by Jacques de Tonnancour, reveals Pellan's commitment to an "independent art" expressing spiritual needs and targeting "universality". Pellan confirmed that the manifesto's goal was to "unite young artists, to create a model and to offset the Borduas movement".⁶⁴ [Translation] However, it also seems to reveal the underlying intentions of Pellan's painting given his privileged encounter with French art and the values of universality he espoused.

The years which followed the collective declarations of the artists flocking around *Prismes d'yeux* and *Refus global* (1948) saw Pellan affirm the direction of his artistic career, just as he had done during his first stay in Europe, "I always opted for freedom. And I quickly understood, while in Paris, that art is freedom in its fullest sense".⁶⁵ [Translation] Indeed, during the years when the Automatiste group surrounding Borduas held sway, given the conviction of their theoretical statements and their anarchical plan for a society freed from its ancestral fears—from that point until 1954, when the Automatistes held their final exhibition, *La matière chante*, Pellan aligned himself against what he deemed the "facileness" engendered among surrealists and Québec Automatistes by the automatist process. He continued freely exploring subjects inspired by the surreal—in the general sense of the word—as well as the inherent formal possibilities of the canvas' components. Examples of paintings based on his 1948 illustrations, which were inspired by Paul Éluard's *Capitale de la douleur*, i.e. *L'Homme A grave* [Man Engraving] (Cat. No. 66) and *L'Amour fou* [Mad Love] (Cat. No. 71), show

62. Alfred Pellan, quoted in Odette G. Coupal, "Deux fresques de notre grand artiste A. Pellan sont destinées au Brésil", *Le Petit Journal*, (November 29, 1942), p. 40.

63. Reproduced in Germain Lefebvre, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

64. Alfred Pellan, *Bulletin du Musée du Québec*, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

65. Alfred Pellan, "La queue de la comète...", *op. cit.*, p. 20.

just how complex the stylistic elements drawn from Surrealism⁶⁶ were and the importance Pellán placed on execution, on the mastery of line and the explosion of pure colour. In 1952, he reiterated his perception of a painter as “a good draftsman” whose “first concern is to paint well”.⁶⁷ [Translation] This was an idea drawn from the dregs of Classicism, as acknowledged by Pellán himself: “Modern painting must show as careful an attention to detail as classical pieces, without relying on outmoded forms”.⁶⁸ [Translation]

In Paris from 1952 to 1955, at his retrospective at the Musée national d'art moderne, Pellán reiterated his concern for “good painting” based on draftsmanship, and the “problem” of media and colour. Probably reacting not only to the dominant trend toward lyrical abstraction in Europe, but also to the American expressionists coming to the fore during this period, Pellán finally defined his own approach in opposition to abstraction: “...I used to believe in pure abstract painting, I no longer believe in it, nor in pure Automatism”. [Translation] He stressed the importance of dealing with esthetic problems, “of emulating the artists of old who toiled over their paintings”.⁶⁹ [Translation] The oil entitled *La Chouette* [The Owl] (Cat. No. 70) is one example of how Pellán painstakingly structured his painting using graphic elements and a complex play of hues. After his return from Europe, other paintings, including the 1957 oils on paper submitted for the contest to paint the mural for the City Centre building in Montréal and entitled *Vertige du temps* [Temporal Vertigo] (Cat. No. 77), *Le Temps* [Time] (Cat. No. 138, not reproduced) and *Le Sablier* [The Hourglass] (Cat. No. 78), show Pellán's constant preoccupation with creating a figurative image through a line drawing and the studied application of colour.

In the latter half of the 1950s, Pellán completed several works with less intricate motifs using a method which was, essentially, just as complex. Among these, the *Jardins* [Gardens] series constituted something of a turning point, calling to mind achievements and, at the same time, looking to the future. *Jardin rouge* [Red Garden] (Cat. No. 81), *Jardin vert* [Green Garden] (Cat. No. 82) and *Jardin orange* [Orange Garden] (Cat. No. 139, not reproduced) are the result of “controlled Automatism based on a few improvised splotches”,⁷⁰ [Translation] (as Pellán described it) constituting an in-depth manifestation of the affirmation of pure colour and matter, while representing a clear comeback of the “landscape” genre. From the start, Pellán had rejected, in informal French art, the concept of the surface as a site marked by the artist's psychomotor forces. However, he retained other fundamental notions, such as the use of matter as a medium of formal expression and the reference to nature, characteristic of the trend in abstract landscape painting. It should be noted that Pellán drew elements from certain French artists, namely Fautrier, Dubuffet and Tal-Coat, elements which had already existed for some time in his own painting. Consider his early naturalist landscapes of the 1920s, and more particularly, the “transposed” landscapes of the Charlevoix region in the early 1940s. Also remember the introduction of materials such as silica and cinders in certain 1940s paintings.

In *Jardins*, Pellán's use of colour peaks, going as far as to title the various paintings. It supports the descriptive elements of a “poetic, unlimited, hitherto-unseen” [Translation] world where references to landscape become symbols. It is undoubtedly here that Pellán best defines his position on the significant change in the Québec art scene after his second stay in Europe. In the early 1950s, a new generation of artists had, in fact, managed to generate in-depth reflection on Automatism and its foundations in “supra-rational” lyricism. When Pellán returned from France in 1956, the first

66. See, among others, the study by Reesa Greenberg, “Surrealism and Pellán: *l'Amour fou*”, *The Journal of Canadian Art History*, Vol. I, No. 2, (Fall 1974), p. 1-11.

67. Alfred Pellán, *Interviews canadiennes*, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 138.

69. Alfred Pellán, from an interview of Alfred Pellán conducted by Jean Cassou, February-March 1955.

70. Alfred Pellán, “La queue de la comète...”, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

“Plasticiens” had already stated their theory to Montréal’s avant-garde circles and begun a painting style defined strictly in terms of the “‘plastic’ facts: tone, texture, form, line, their ultimate unity in the painting, and their inter-relationships; Elements valid in and of themselves”.⁷¹ [Translation] The second-generation of “Plasticiens” would propose an analysis of the “dynamic possibilities of colour”,⁷² [Translation] establishing the parameters for exploring a new esthetic experience. Although they dealt with different issues, both generations of Plasticiens introduced abstract geometric painting to the Québec art scene of the 1950s.⁷³ It was this climate of interrogation and radical questioning of the foundations of painting, as envisaged in the 1940s, that Pellan encountered after his three-year absence from Québec. The *Jardins* series may represent a breach in the modernist notion of self-referential painting, which defines itself strictly in terms of its own constituent elements. At the very least, this hypothesis is legitimate, despite a manifest willingness among certain critics to ascribe Pellan’s use of pure colour to an affirmation of the work of art as self-contained.

From this time on, Pellan seems to have pursued his work through efforts aimed at exploring its limits, experimenting with materials and creating surfaces using texture and vibrant colour. *Phosphorescence* [Phosphorescence] (Cat. No. 92), *Germination* [Germination] (Cat. No. 93), *Le Champ* [Field] (Cat. No. 98), *Le Grand Champ* [Large Field] (Cat. No. 142, not reproduced), *Jardin mécanique* [Mechanical Garden] (Cat. No. 100) and *Fond marin* [Sea Floor] (Cat. No. 143, not reproduced) are just a few examples. In contrast to the formalist painting advanced by Greenberg, in its glory in the United States and also influential in Canada and Québec, which made the two-dimensional nature of the canvas a criteria for self-contained, modern work, Pellan created relief in his paintings, using a “matérialiste” space.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, Pellan continued to transform visual subjects taken from his imaginary universe, whether they were the metaphoric spaces from a world inhabited by plants (*L’Aube magique* [Magic Dawn], Cat. No. 94 or *Fleurs d’yeux* [Flowers of the Eye], Cat. No. 147, not reproduced), the symbolic spaces of surrealist-inspired themes, e.g. the figure of woman linked to nature (*Croissant de lune* [Crescent Moon], Cat. No. 90, *Environnement* [Environment], Cat. No. 104, or *Nature de Vénus – B* [Venus Nature – B], Cat. No. 107), the imaginary spaces of an imagery drawn from Inuit art (*Sioux! Sioux! Sioux! Sioux!*, Cat. No. 103), or the dream-like spaces of an animal phantasmagoria, his work also revealed his obsession with “the poetic state” to which he had always aspired. The series *Les Bestiaires* [Bestiaries], which he began in 1974 and pursued until the completion of his final painting, *Bestiaire 26°* [Bestiary 26] (Cat. No. 124), is the result of Pellan’s attachment to an iconography. *La Pariade* [The Pairing] (Cat. No. 134, not reproduced), *Fauconnerie* [Falconry] (Cat. No. 60), *À vol d’oiseau* [As the Crow Flies] (Cat. No. 69) and *Chez le fermier* [At the Farmer’s] (Cat. No. 83) testify to this devotion and bear witness to the importance he placed on achieving a human element through that iconography.

Pellan’s paintings, through their formal and iconographic transformations over the years, have provided Québec with a legacy of artistic distinctness, the importance of which has never been fully assessed. This study has provided an impression of some of Pellan’s choices, which were fundamental to his painting. By examining the development of his œuvre in relation to his artistic surroundings and the Québec and European contexts, it queried

71. From the *Manifesto of the Plasticiens*, written by Rodolphe de Repentigny. Reproduced in Gouvernement du Québec, Ministère des Affaires culturelles. *Jauran et les premiers Plasticiens*, Montréal, Musée d’art contemporain, 1977, p. 33.

72. Fernande Saint-Martin, *Structures de l’espace pictural*, Montréal, HMH, 1968, p. 138.

73. See Josée Bélisle, “Et puis les abstractions géométriques”, Josée Bélisle et. al, *La Collection : tableau inaugural*, Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal, (1992), p. 97-101.

the links between the artist and culture. However, the issue is complex and remains open to further study, falling as it does, within a historic and social dynamic which cannot be described briefly. From 1920 to 1984, the developments in Pellán's painted œuvre reveal the true extent of his esthetic dimensions and originality. It may be too soon for a retrospective study which is not biased by Quebeckers' boundless emotivity. Or perhaps, on the contrary, now may be the perfect time to review Pellán's œuvre given the cultural choices and challenges facing Québec today.

FROM EUPHORIA TO SILENCE

Marie Carani

PELLAN'S WORK was warmly received by critics more often than not. From generation to generation, Frenchmen Jacques Lassaigne and Bernard Dorival, Quebecers Reynald, Jean Paul Lemieux, Marcel Parizeau, Robert Ayre, Rodolphe de Repentigny, Guy Viau and Claude Jasmin, and Ontarians Donald W. Buchanan and Robert Fulford, to name only a few, greeted the eclectic metier of the painter from Limoilou generally with enthusiasm, at times with reservation, and more rarely, with severity. This is an indication of the scope and contradictory manifestations of the critical acclaim which accompanied the stylistic evolution of Pellán's art over more than sixty years. My main objective here is to establish links between the various articles on Pellán which appeared in popular dailies and in art journals between 1925 and 1990, both in Québec and elsewhere.

The Highs ...

In 1926, young Alfred Pellán became the first recipient of the Province of Québec painting scholarship. The year he graduated from the École des beaux-arts de Québec, he won all the awards offered to students. At twenty years of age, Pellán was a remarkable draftsman with a brilliant future. The National Gallery of Canada even purchased a canvas painted by the artist in 1922, which was shown the following year at the Art Association of Montreal's Salon du printemps. The local press commented on his "superior talent", which it deemed absolutely exceptional, and immediately dubbed Pellán a French-Canadian prodigy of painting.¹ When, upon his arrival in Paris, he was accepted into the studio of master Lucien Simon, an honour rarely enjoyed by Québec artists, *Le Soleil* reported the emotion, joy and honour experienced by the young man who, the newspaper predicted, "will enjoy success upon success".² [Translation] Shortly afterward, the much-commented exhibition of his best works from his school years, shown at the drill hall in Québec City in 1928,³ and the first prize for painting he received from the École supérieure nationale des beaux-arts de Paris at the end of the 1927-1928 academic year,⁴ reinforced the artist's reputation, which was growing increasingly in the eyes of Québec critics. In the late 1920s, the Québec City daily *L'Événement* had already remarked

1. "Un boursier", *La Presse* (May 31, 1926) (with a photo of the artist); "Premiers succès de deux jeunes boursiers", *Le Soleil* (November 20, 1926); "Les deux premiers boursiers choisis par l'École des beaux-arts de Québec", *La Presse* (May 28, 1926); "Monsieur Alfred Pelland", *Le Terroir* (January 1929) (with a drawing by Pellan on the frontispiece).
2. "Premiers succès de deux jeunes boursiers", *Le Soleil* (November 20, 1926).
3. "Le 7^e salon nous révèle des talents", *L'Événement* (June 9, 1928); "Un Canadien qui réussit à Paris", *L'Événement* (May 16, 1928). This unsigned article refers to a "flexible, delicate art worthy of the great masters". [Translation]
4. "Succès d'un des nôtres à Paris", *Le Soleil* (March 6, 1930).
5. "Le 7^e salon nous révèle des talents", *L'Événement* (July 19, 1928).
6. "M. Alfred Pelland retourne à Paris", *L'Événement* (July 19, 1928).
7. Claude Balleroy, as quoted in Germain Lefebvre, *Pelland*, (La Prairie: Éditions Marcel Broquet, 1986), p. 25; also quoted for the first time in Québec by Reynald, in "Des aquarelles où il y a du rythme", *La Presse* (February 27, 1935). Unfortunately, as Pelland pointed out, this article written by Balleroy for the *Revue du vrai et du beau*, was never published as such. Lefebvre described the article in greater detail in his monograph on the artist.
8. Jacques de Laprade, untitled, *Beaux-Arts* (November 1934).
9. "Un groupe de peintres", *Beaux-Arts* (January 11, 1935).
10. Jacques Lassaigue, untitled, *Sept* (February 1, 1935); "Les expositions", *Les lettres et les arts* (February 1, 1935).
11. Jacques Lassaigue, *Sept* (May 1935).
12. Ibid.; J. Lassaigue, "Forces nouvelles", *Magazine d'aujourd'hui*, No. 81 (April 24, 1935).
13. J. V. Laprade, "Forces nouvelles", *Beaux-Arts* (April 19, 1935).
14. Henri Héraud, "Le mouvement artistique à Paris", *Sud Magazine*, Marseille (May 15, 1935).
15. See *Beaux-Arts* (June 7, 1935); "Notre compatriote Pelland. 1^{er} prix d'art mural", *Comœdia* (June 30, 1935).

upon the "extraordinary successes" achieved by Pelland in Paris, and recognized in his work "fresh sources of inspiration", a vivid imagination, and "above all, an exceptional confidence in his craft".⁵ [Translation] Although he was not yet twenty, the frequent trips to Paris by this "promising youngster" were followed with interest.⁶

The rapid recognition on the part of French critics during the years of esthetic development in Paris—from 1930 to 1940—seemed to situate Pelland favourably in comparison to his modern young European counterparts. In 1933, his work caught the eye of Claude Balleroy at a group exhibition held at the Galerie Beaux-Arts. After having observed the "talent which was very real and confident" [Translation] of this painter who was still unknown to Parisian critics, Balleroy concluded his article on a hopeful note, writing, "A few more years of research and Pelland will be a figurehead among his generation".⁷ [Translation] The following year, when the Salon d'automne agreed to exhibit one of his works, Jacques de Laprade had encouraging words for this artist "who incorporates, clearly and simply, the object of his work into a solid composition".⁸ [Translation] But it was Pelland's participation in a group exhibition staged in 1935 at the Galerie des Quatre Chemins which drew the attention of Parisian critics as a whole. *Beaux-Arts* magazine commented on his still-lives, noting their "lovely, harmonious radiance".⁹ [Translation] In the weekly *Sept* and the magazine *Les lettres et les arts*, Jacques Lassaigue spoke of the "remarkable debuts of a young Canadian painter, who seems to have learned the most important lessons of Picasso and Bonnard with relative ease".¹⁰ [Translation] Pelland held his first solo exhibition at the Académie Ranson the same year, and Lassaigue once again commented on his work, maintaining that the artist was emerging as "one of the most talented painters of his generation, thanks to his qualities of exuberance and violence".¹¹ [Translation] Despite some reservations, Lassaigue once again pointed out Pelland's ease in appropriating the style of the French masters, adding that he nonetheless admired this eclecticism which blended admirably with a "temperament so rich that he can borrow from everyone without being accountable to anyone".¹² [Translation] This quote was to appear in all of Pelland's biographical references, and rapidly become a sort of leitmotif characterizing his reception by critics.

During his solo exhibition at the Académie Ranson, Pelland also exhibited his work at the Galerie Billiet-Pierre Worms with the Forces nouvelles group, which included artists such as Henri Héraud, the leader of the movement, Robert Humblot, Jean Lasne, and Tal Coat. In *Beaux-Arts*, recognizing Pelland as one of the most striking personalities in this new group of "young painters well versed in drawing", [Translation] J.V. Laprade underlined the remarkable "strength and keenness" of his work, as well as "a profound, dramatic sense of the life expressed therein".¹³ [Translation] In fact, according to Héraud, Pelland's art appeared at the time "more solemn ... matured by life experience" [Translation] than that of his Forces nouvelles colleagues.¹⁴ Pelland continued his artistic activities in 1935, showing his work in June at the new Salon de l'art mural, where he received the first prize for painting for his work *Instruments de musique* [Musical Instruments] (registered as *Composition abstraite en rouge et noir* [Abstract Composition in Red and Black]) from the international jury chaired by novelist and art historian Eugenio d'Ors. The event was covered by the French press, but without much fanfare;¹⁵ in Québec, reports were more glowing. Subsequently, several activities in France and Europe bore witness to Pelland's rise. Between 1936 and 1940, his work was exhibited in Paris with, consecutively, the group of

Anglo-American artists at the Galerie de Paris; the members of the Forces nouvelles group at the Salon de la nouvelle génération, held at the Galerie Beaux-Arts; as part of the annual Surindépendants exhibitions; in a number of commercial galleries; and in three group exhibitions outside France, i.e. in London, The Hague, and Prague. These various events were underlined by Paris critics. The *Mercure de France* celebrated the “exceptional qualities”¹⁶ of his still-lives, *Beaux-Arts* called attention to “his exceptional temperament as a colourist”,¹⁷ *Paris Soir* suggested that Pellan often found ways of “freeing himself from earlier lessons”,¹⁸ and *Miroir du monde* heralded his colourful portrayal of figures from the natural world as “vibrancy verging on violence”.¹⁹ [Translation] But two comments are especially significant: one written by a Dutch critic, who said of Pellan’s expressive colour palette that it seemed to “seize us”,²⁰ and the other by French critic Jacques de Laprade who, like Lassaigne before him, ranked this “robust talent among the top artists of his generation”.²¹ [Translation] At the 1936 Salon des Surindépendants, de Laprade praised Pellan’s startling abstractions highly, writing: “His schematic works display a sensuality and vigour which are lacking in many artists devoted to portraying reality more directly”.²² [Translation]

By the end of the decade, reproductions by Pellan had been published in the Paris *Almanach des arts* (October 1937), two of his works had been purchased by the French government, he had been signed by the renowned Galerie Jeanne Bucher, and his works had been shown at the Museum of Modern Art in Washington as part of the *Paris Painters of Today* exhibition. These years, which saw the onset of modern permissive principles, reflected in Pellan’s case by a broad exploration of painting styles other than through traditional imitation, contributed to expanding the parameters of his imaginary world and those of outside influences. Far from meeting with disfavour, the scope of these influences, from Fauvism to Cubism, from Matisse to Picasso, suggested instead to French and European critics a spirit which was receptive to the best of the contemporary artwork being done in France. Pellan thus gained veritable eminence in certain Parisian circles during the second half of the 1930s. Here, in any case, he seems to have been considered on a par with other promising young French artists, such as Tal Coat. The unique exploit of a Québec artist gaining renown across the Atlantic did not escape the attention of Québec City and Montréal newspapers, which on several occasions published long excerpts from glowing articles which had appeared in the French press in Europe, where Pellan’s success seemed to have been recognized and established.

Québec critics were only too eager to associate themselves with this virtually unexpected renown from abroad. The Québec press as a whole expressed its satisfaction at the fact that Pellan’s merits were being recognized outside Canada’s borders and that he was therefore being ranked among the masters, which could only reflect favourably on the local community. The first prize received by the artist at the Salon de l’art mural was the subject of a flattering article by Gérard Morisset in the *Événement*: “Attracting attention is not easy in a city with as many inhabitants as a province, where artists number in the tens of thousands, but Pellan has accomplished this feat. This speaks highly of his strength of character ... it is also a tribute to French Canada”.²³ [Translation] In *La Presse*, Reynald’s article introduced Pellan to the Montréal public as a “young modern, a fellow countryman who is doing us proud in Paris and who has no intention of bowing to the academic approach, declaring himself to be resolutely modern”.²⁴ [Translation] His article concluded with a few biographical notes and some excerpts

16. *Mercure de France* (March 15, 1937).

17. “Le groupe d’artistes anglo-américains”, *Beaux-Arts* (June 19, 1936).

18. *Paris-Soir* (March 8, 1937).

19. *Miroir du monde* (March 6, 1937).

20. H. W. Sandberg, “De drie besten”, *Het Vok* (May 9, 1937). Cf. G. Lefebvre, *Pellan, op. cit.*, p. 34.

21. Jacques de Laprade, “Premier salon des jeunes artistes”, *Beaux-Arts* (February 19, 1937).

22. Jacques de Laprade, “Le Salon des Surindépendants”, *Beaux-Arts* (October 23, 1936).

23. Gérard Morisset, “Alfred Pellan à l’honneur”, *L’Événement* (July 24, 1935).

24. Reynald, “Des aquarelles où il y a du rythme. Alfred Pelland à Paris”, *La Presse* (February 27, 1935).

25. Reynald, "Alfred Pelland au Jeu de paume", *La Presse* (December 11, 1937).

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*; "Pelland a un voisin; Morrice est avec lui", *La Presse* (December 18, 1937).

28. Reynald, "Alfred Pelland, un Québécois de Limoilou, âgé de 31 ans, est l'un des plus grands peintres de l'époque contemporaine", *Le Soleil* (December 15, 1937); the article was also reprinted in *Le Terroir* No. 19 (December 7, 1937), p. 11 and 15.

29. Georges Langlois, "Un grand peintre canadien-français", *Le Soleil* (December 15, 1937).

30. "Des peintres canadiens font sensation à Paris", *Le Soleil* (December 19, 1935); Jean Dupleix, "L'abondant travail des caricaturistes et des enfants terribles de l'art", *La Presse* (March 13, 1937); Jean-Picart-Ledoux, "Un jeune peintre: Pelland", *Cahiers de la jeunesse* (December 15, 1938) (article reprinted in *Le Jour*, January 14, 1939); "Pelland expose bientôt de ses œuvres au pays", *Le Canada* (July 12, 1939); "Il nous revient", *La Patrie* (July 19, 1939); Juliette Cabana, "Chez Alfred Pelland. Peintre moderne", *La Revue populaire* (November 1939).

of flattering comments by art critics Balleroy and Lassaigne. Two years later, after France had purchased two of Pelland's canvases, Reynald wrote that Pelland was "the first Canadian ever to be accepted into the hallowed Musée du jeu de paume, the most renowned art museum after the Louvre and the Luxembourg, a museum reserved for living artists, with the other museums holding a sort of option after the artist's death".²⁵ [Translation] The article also includes examples of flattering testimony to Pelland, "found purely by chance" in the European press, and concludes with an appeal to the artist's compatriots to consider him, like foreign critics, as "Québec's Picasso", so that he can return to his homeland "when the time is ripe for people to understand and appreciate his painting".²⁶ [Translation] A week later, rectifying somewhat his article of December 11, Reynald noted with admiration that Pelland was, "along with James Wilson Morrice", the first Canadian to emerge and make his mark on the French art scene, as witnessed by the fact that they were displayed side by side at the Musée du jeu de paume.²⁷ When Reynald's initial article was published shortly thereafter in *Le Soleil* (as well as in the December issue of the monthly *Le Terroir*), bearing the title "Alfred Pelland, a Quebecker from Limoilou, thirty-one years of age, is one of the greatest painters of the contemporary era", [Translation] according to an unsigned foreword, the idea spread throughout the popular press that "our compatriot has become so famous in the art world that he has been ranked among the finest of today's painters".²⁸ [Translation] Furthermore, it was written that Pelland's renown "would continue to grow", since he was still very young. On the same day, *Le Soleil* published an article by Georges Langlois explaining why Pelland "is already part of the avant-garde" and was perceived by a number of connoisseurs as "a successor to Picasso, the leader of a school, a master of forthcoming generations".²⁹ [Translation]

When Pelland exhibited his work with Anglo-American artists and with the Forces nouvelles group, Québec became aware of these new events through dispatches from the Canadian Press, "letters from Paris" from foreign correspondents, critical reviews such as that of Reynald, and journal articles which aimed to sum up the artist's European career based on biographical summaries and critics' writings.³⁰ The use, by art critics of the major Québec dailies, of ecstatic metaphors and adjectives to describe both his work and his renown in Paris, contributed to making Pelland a landmark figure in modern Québec art, and quickly designated him a leader and forerunner in his community. Although Paris recognized the importance of Pelland's work before Québec and Canada, and served as a springboard for the artist, Québec critics were the ones who deemed him remarkable. Unfortunately, this did not escape the attention of the traditional vanguard, with the result that Pelland was unable to obtain a position as professor at the École des beaux-arts de Québec in 1936, due to the dissent expressed by regional painters Horatio Walker and Clarence Gagnon. In the name of obsolete pictorial values, they reproached him for his exaggerated—and, in their eyes, unacceptable—penchant for the work of modern artists alone. In the oft-repeated words of Clarence Gagnon, "Pelland is lost; he has chosen modern art". [Translation]

Paradoxically, in its euphoric coverage of the critical acclaim accorded Pelland in France, the Québec press failed to mention another decisive aspect of this reception. Despite an increasing number of exhibitions during the 1930s and an award for painting, Pelland was perceived first and foremost in Paris as a young and promising artist among countless others. When he exhibited his work with the Forces nouvelles group, which targeted an

esthetic return to humanism and lauded the timeless art of drawing as the very essence of the subject, his work received critical acclaim, as we have seen, in more traditional, conservative publications such as *Beaux-Arts* and *Mercure de France*.³¹ Furthermore, this criticism was often limited to short articles of a few paragraphs like those of Lassaigne which, although encouraging, did not receive widespread attention. The fact that these accolades came solely from certain “conservative” critics, who were sympathetic to neo-humanist principles which, in Pellan’s art, were transformed into an erudite eclecticism and the classical skill of draftsman or colourist, or that this acclaim remained somewhat mitigated, is never mentioned in Québec writings on the artist’s Parisian period. In other words, even if the admiring tone of this foreign criticism was a pleasant surprise and made a considerable impact in Montréal, Pellan, seen from Paris before the Nazi invasion in May-June 1940, remains a figure on the fringes of Parisian art circles of the inter-war period. Therefore, local critics exaggerate greatly when they compare Pellan to Morrice, whose real and substantial impact in France during the first two decades of the 20th century has been well documented in the annals of art history.

As the 1940s dawned, bringing with them a new openness, things changed rapidly in Québec. The situation evolved swiftly and the move to catch up with modern Europe was definitely under way. Essayist Jean-Charles Harvey, writer Étienne-Charles Hamel, and artist and critic Jean Paul Lemieux played a decisive role in this respect in the progressive Montréal daily *Le Jour*.³² Of one accord, they hailed Pellan as the man best qualified to lead these inevitable changes in the field of culture. According to Harvey, Pellan was obviously “the master of Canadian painting” and an “internationally renowned artist”.³³ [Translation] As proof of this claim, Harvey reviewed the considerable successes enjoyed by Pellan overseas, as well as articles on the artist published in the European press. He continued on the topic of the artist’s powerful expression, noting the “synthetic trend” which was pushed to its limits by the painter, a quality which recalled Lassaigne’s comment on the artist concerning his “rich” temperament and his ability to borrow from everyone without being accountable to anyone. The still-lifes, drawings and abstractions exhibited at the Musée de la province in 1940 were eloquent proof of this, captivating the viewer “with an audacity unknown to our artists”.³⁴ [Translation] In an article entitled “An artist who shuns moribund art”, [Translation] Hamel recounted in detail “the story of Pellan” from his studies at the École des Beaux-Arts on, in the form of an imaginary dialogue between a critic, one of his friends who was a caricaturist, and himself.³⁵ He described in detail the reception of Pellan’s works in Europe and his return to Montréal, which seemed to provoke “a forceful reaction” and led to “the great movement of emancipation and free art”. [Translation] As for Lemieux, he used the 1938 exhibition in Québec City of some of Pellan’s still-lifes as a pretext to celebrate the artist’s modern workmanship and identified him as Québec’s most important representative of living art in the intense struggle being waged against the academic style.³⁶ In an explosive summary of 20th-century French-Canadian painting, Lemieux attributed the young artist from Limoilou, who had already made a name for himself on the international scene, a place of honour, writing: “All is not lost. Already, Pellan’s work is being shown in various European capitals. A promising debut”.³⁷ [Translation] Thanks to his forceful remarks, Lemieux was already paving the way for the artist’s return to Canada two years later which, overnight, was to propel Pellan to the forefront of the

31. Reesa Greenberg developed the same idea in her many articles on the artist.

32. See Marie Carani, *Jean Paul Lemieux*, (Québec: Musée du Québec/Les Publications du Québec, 1992), 325 p.

33. Jean-Charles Harvey, “Le maître de la peinture canadienne à Montréal”, *Le Jour* (October 5, 1940).

34. Jean-Charles Harvey, “L’exposition Pellan”, *Le Jour* (October 5, 1940).

35. Étienne-Charles Hamel, “Un peintre qui n’aimait pas l’art moribond”, *Le Jour* (June 16, 1945).

36. Jean Paul Lemieux, “Notes sur quelques toiles de Pellan”, *Le Jour* (May 14, 1938).

37. Jean Paul Lemieux, “La peinture chez les Canadiens français”, *Le Jour* (July 16, 1938).

debate on living art. His return, which marked a new phase in Québec's encounter with modern international art, was accompanied by great promotional fanfare in both the popular and elitist papers.³⁸ An admiring Lemieux wrote about the emergence of a new art form: "And Pellan returned from Paris with an astonishing style which left us reeling and overwhelmed. With his canvases, he introduced Canada to a new art form, imported from Europe".³⁹ [Translation] This opinion was to be shared by his entire generation.

The two Pellan exhibitions held consecutively at the Musée de la province and the Galerie des Arts of the Art Association of Montreal in 1940 were covered by all Québec dailies, both French-language and English-language, often on the front page in articles several columns long, bearing poetic titles and accompanied by a number of illustrations. Instantly, Pellan became a key figure. His career seemed a perfect example of what could be accomplished by being receptive to foreign trends. Marcel Parizeau wrote in the liberal daily *Le Canada*, "A novel happening: Pellan, a Canadian, has already taken on international significance";⁴⁰ [Translation] and thanks to this new international stature, Parizeau specified that for the first time, a painter from Québec "holds in his hands a measure of human ingenuity", [Translation] and concludes that "one must go as far as New York to find the equivalent".⁴¹ [Translation] Pellan's art seems to have compared favourably with universal painting and was finally proof of Québec's ability to catch up with and even equal the most modern art being produced abroad. In *Le Jour*, Charles Doyon published on the same topic, under the title "Cubisme", a poem dedicated to Pellan's talent and formal expressiveness, which were fuelled by contemporary practices,⁴² and discusses, in another more analytical article, Pellan's "unreal products" which "constituted a pretext" for a "modernist" and a very up-to-the-minute challenge to the figurative representation of the behind-the-times "conformists".⁴³ [Translation] Commenting on the artist's bold transition from Cubism to Surrealism, Doyon saw in this a new depth, a quest for a personal style, and a successful appropriation and synthesis which "corresponded to great contemporary painters". [Translation]

The defense by other critics of Pellan as a non-academic painter was often intermingled with passionate outbursts in favour of a new expressive form of painting. Having emphasized the artist's social significance for many years in *La Presse*, Reynald focused on the pictorial qualities of the works shown at the Art Association. He wrote that, based on the artist's resolutely subjective painting, even more than the "Impressionist" familiar to the uninitiated, Pellan was first and foremost a "total, integral modern, more French than most Frenchmen".⁴⁴ [Translation] Emphasizing, in terms of the values of civilization, the serious nature and decisive impact of this artistic modernity, Reynald added that Pellan, the abstract, "has freed himself of any descriptive or anecdotal intent, and paints what he thinks of what he sees".⁴⁵ [Translation] Reviewing Pellan's oils exhibited at the Art Association in the *Montreal Star*, Robert Ayre spoke of an "esthetic shock" and, like Reynald, acknowledged Pellan's artistic re-creation of a subjective modern world: "Out of emotion, imagination and intelligence, he creates his own world. It is purely a painter's world of shapes, colors and rhythms".⁴⁶ Minguel wrote the same thing in the popular newspaper *La Patrie*, defending Pellan's abstraction as "timely" and something people should not always seek "to restrict".⁴⁷ [Translation]

The exhibition of the Indépendants, staged in 1941 by Father M.-A. Couturier and in which Pellan was invited to exhibit eight canvases, soon

38. Henri Lagacé, "Notre Pellan est revenu parmi nous", *L'Événement* (May 30, 1940); "Le Salon de Pellan. Prélude d'un vernissage", *L'Événement* (June 12, 1940); "Ouverture de l'exposition Pellan", *Le Soleil* (June 12, 1940); "M. H. Groulx visite le Salon Pellan", *L'Événement* (June 13, 1940); "Alfred Pellan parmi nous", *La Presse* (October 5, 1940); "Salon du peintre Pellan", *Le Devoir* (October 5, 1940); "L'artiste canadien Pellan à Montréal", *La Patrie* (October 5, 1940); "Alfred Pellan Show Opens on Wednesday", *The Gazette* (October 5, 1940); "Fled Paris With 500 Paintings", *The Standard* (October 5, 1940); "Alfred Pellan, artiste de réputation internationale", *Le Canada* (October 7, 1940).

39. Jean Paul Lemieux, "Notes sur l'art à Québec", *Regards*, 3, 2 (November 1941), p. 80-84.

40. Marcel Parizeau, "Pellan", *Le Canada* (October 17, 1940).

41. *Ibid.*

42. Charles Doyon, "Cubisme", *Le Jour* (October 19, 1940).

43. Charles Doyon, "Pellan à la Galerie des arts", *Le Jour* (November 2, 1940).

44. Reynald, "Pellan, notre impressionniste", *La Presse* (October 19, 1940).

45. *Ibid.*

46. Robert Ayre, "Pellan's Exhibition A Painter's World of Shapes, Rhythms", *The Montreal Star* (October 13, 1940).

47. Minguel, "Pellan", *La Patrie* (October 19, 1940).

confirmed his dominant position in the community. Pellán also co-authored Couturier's public reply to Maillard's anti-modern protests in *Le Devoir*.⁴⁸ When the exhibition was first shown at the Palais Montcalm in Québec City, *Le Soleil* stressed Pellán's role as catalyst, "an independent, renowned artist", whose works stood out for approaching the boundaries of "the great inner dream" and "the reality of things".⁴⁹ [Translation] Then, during his exhibition at the Henry Morgan Gallery in Montréal, Marcel Parizeau and Charles Doyon claimed kinship with this new liberated painting.⁵⁰ Doyon hailed the "happy scandal" perpetuated in Québec by Pellán's "bold ventures" into drawing and colour.⁵¹ [Translation] Parallel to the event organized by Father Couturier, revelling in the discoveries of his imaginary Siamese twin "Anatole Laplante", essayist François Hertel wrote that he was "enraptured" by Pellán, and observed with pleasant surprise that "his star is not fading", even though "Borduas is on the rise".⁵² [Translation] In December 1941, following the Salon des Indépendants, Pellán hung his most recent works, inspired by the natural landscape of Charlesboix, alongside numerous portraits of young girls in his studio on Rue Jeanne-Mance. This provided Hertel with an opportunity to exercise his talent as a poet with regard to the expressive, recognizable figures portrayed by the artist.⁵³ These works, more figurative than his earlier ones, seemed to be Pellán's way of taking a short hiatus from abstraction, and were perceived by Parizeau as a successful initiative on the part of the artist, an interesting approach "which knows no bounds" and which provided added points of reference for the public. "Through these more recent works, he [Pellán] draws nearer to us, without making any concessions. He offers himself to us ... he continues to astonish".⁵⁴ [Translation] Observing that those who had disparaged his work the year before now spoke of "a welcome rapprochement", Doyon agreed, writing that Pellán did not "paint by formula, but rather by procedure".⁵⁵ [Translation] He was to reveal, in his most recent works, "his discovery of a new form of communication", which was not one-way and which fulfilled in another manner "the promise he had shown when he was first discovered in Québec".⁵⁶ [Translation] Along the same lines, Lucien Desbiens, in *Le Devoir*, wrote that Pellán, "avant-garde painter, leader in his field, has become more human and closer to us common mortals" through pictorial testimony to a new state of mind or "perhaps simply as a concession to the climate of the community to which he was forced to readapt".⁵⁷ [Translation]

Following these exhibitions, critics in Montréal and Québec City began to consider Pellán the most significant modern French-Canadian painter and the only one to have achieved international renown.⁵⁸ In an essay published in 1943 in the form of a booklet in the new Art Vivant collection—and incidentally, the first title in the series—Maurice Gagnon acclaimed this French Canadian who had triumphed in Paris and who attempted through his lyrical style to make his work accessible to as many people as possible.⁵⁹ The success achieved by Pellán in the early 1940s was penned for years afterward, and he became the focus of the critics due to his sincerity, authenticity, and colossal talent, a modern yardstick used to measure the progress or shortcomings of Québec painting in a context of worldwide painting. Eventually, Pellán even came to be perceived as an essentially "European" painter who had come (back) to Québec to take up a career following his international success. Pellán underwent no drastic ideological upheaval or break on his return to Québec; instead, he displayed a serene, reassuring, and confidence-inspiring will to change things from within. A mythical portrayal of Pellán was being formulated, complete with stereotypes

48. "Réponse à M. Maillard", *Le Devoir* (May 28, 1941).

49. "Le salon des Indépendants", *Le Soleil* (May 2, 1941).

50. Marcel Parizeau, "Peinture libérée", *Le Canada* (May 28, 1941); Charles Doyon, "Peinture moderne canadienne", *Le Jour* (June 14, 1941).

51. Charles Doyon, "Peinture moderne canadienne", *Le Jour* (June 14, 1941).

52. François Hertel, "Anatole Laplante au vernissage", *Le Devoir* (May 19, 1941).

53. François Hertel, "Sur trois tableaux de Pellán", (December 1941), quoted in Maurice Gagnon, *Pellán*, (Montréal: L'Arbre, 1943); and in Germain Lefebvre, *Pellán, op. cit.*, p. 90.

54. Marcel Parizeau, "L'exposition Pellán", *Le Canada* (December 18, 1941).

55. Charles Doyon, "Pellán 1941", *Le Jour* (January 3, 1942).

56. *Ibid.*

57. Lucien Desbiens, "Le Salon Pellán", *Le Devoir* (December 18, 1941).

58. *La Presse* of October 12, 1940, shows four canvases under the following title: "De la réalité à l'abstraction, avec Pellán". The caption, by Reynald, reads: "[These paintings and drawings] show him to be the most advanced and perhaps the only and greatest of our moderns". [Translation]

59. Maurice Gagnon, *Pellán*, (Montréal: L'Arbre, 1943), 36 p.; "Intermittences", in *Gants du ciel*, Fides, (September 1943), p. 47-56; *Peinture canadienne*, (Montréal: Pascal, 1949).

and repetition; furthermore, he was perceived as a veritable hero, an innovator in a sensitive universe where both his character and his work seemed already to be eluding the critics' grasp. They were more interested in the concrete impact on the public of such an œuvre, which stood somewhere between "the extremely abstract and the extremely figurative", [Translation] according to the stylistic categories defined at the time by Jacques de Tonnancour in his art review in the *Quartier Latin*.⁶⁰

From the outset, de Tonnancour wrote that the artist was, in Europe, an "international figure", and that he should be recognized in Québec as well "by name and by reputation" due to the "vigorous impetus" he gave from abroad "to shake Québec out of the lethargy in which it had been wallowing for centuries". [Translation] In his "Vues de la terre promise", de Tonnancour referred to Pellan's abstract Parisian work as a painting of symbols: "Pellan touches on outside reality... solely to enter his own world, largely independent, a reality separate from this one".⁶¹ [Translation] However, the risk of a rift with the public was looming. Published in the magazine *Amérique française* in December 1941 under the eloquent title "Notes on a Sorcerer", [Translation] a second article by de Tonnancour set the pattern for the way the artist was to be greeted by critics in the future. For the very title of this article, as well as its shaman-like theme symbolically associated with Pellan, the mysterious, unpredictable creator-magician and visual designer, was quoted or paraphrased countless times after 1942. De Tonnancour underlined first and foremost the unequalled status of Pellan who, like Picasso in Europe, had risen to the highest ranks of the artists of his generation. "In Europe, Pellan was a known and recognized reality. Here, in his homeland, he is still only a legendary figure".⁶² [Translation] Next, he pointed out in Pellan's fanciful imagery a troubling, challenging power through which viewers could make contact with their innermost selves. Another important fact bears noting: while closely studying Pellan's surrealist unreality, the "sensitive" approach of de Tonnancour, which tended to degenerate into an excess of allegorical prose, resulted simultaneously in a tendency on the part of Québec critics to opt for a poetic discourse on Pellan's imagery to the detriment of a serious, in-depth analysis of his painted work. Hence the impression, which became widespread during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, that Pellan's work was, in general, rarely the subject of formal analysis during these decades of intense artistic activity.

The innovation represented by Pellan's daring use of pure colour blended well with the more traditional forms of his sure-handed drawing, in vibrant synthesis or unity which contrasted with the more jarring compositions of the automatist style. However, none of the critics of the era noted that Pellan was borrowing from a Cubist and Surrealist style which, in the mid-1940s, was already twenty or thirty years old. In the same way, his arbitrary "jack-of-all-trades" eclecticism still drew no reproaches for its technical over-indulgences, as was later the case in the 1960s. Pellan was more a figure who commanded unanimous approval as well as unconditional respect from both English- and French-speaking critics.

In 1941, Pellan settled in Montréal, where he taught at the École des beaux-arts from 1943 to 1952. It was during these years that his influence in Québec cultural circles peaked. Pellan became akin to a national hero, a standing which was not diminished but rather reinforced when he held an exhibition in New York in 1942 at the Bignou Gallery. However, in the New York City press, Pellan was not perceived as a Quebecker first and foremost, but rather as a modern French painter well versed in draftsmanship and the

60. Jacques de Tonnancour, "En marge de l'expo Pellan. Vues sur la terre promise", *Le Quartier Latin* (October 25, 1940); "Propos sur un sorcier", *Amérique française*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (December 24, 1941), p. 16.

61. Jacques de Tonnancour, "En marge de l'expo Pellan. Vues sur la terre promise", *Le Quartier Latin* (October 25, 1940).

62. Jacques de Tonnancour, "Propos sur un sorcier", *Amérique française*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (December 24, 1941), p. 16.

use of colour. The critic for the *New York Sun* played heavily on this French reference in his commentary: “[Pellan] is already represented in many French collections. As might be surmised, his French accent is a secure one and he handles the modern idiom as though he had been born to it”.⁶³ The *New York World Telegram*, the *New York Journal American*, the *Brooklyn Eagle*, and *New Yorker* and *Cue* magazines also cited this French connection to describe and attempt to explain the artist’s abstract work and more recent stylized representations.⁶⁴ The great Parisian masters such as Matisse, Picasso, and Miró were each mentioned and presented as inevitable references. But, as was the case in Paris during the second half of the 1930s, these reviews mostly consisted of short comments of a few paragraphs, which drew little attention. As might be expected, the opposite occurred in Québec. Although from a strictly commercial point of view this exhibition was a failure because Pellan did not sell a single work, the relatively warm reception given to Pellan’s “European” painting by New York critics was reported and remarked on enthusiastically in Québec. The artist’s international adventure seemed to be continuing, to the obvious satisfaction and pleasure of Québec critics.

This reinforced Pellan’s double reputation as a resolutely modern painter and avant-garde artist. Publishing a dispatch from Don Gilbert of the Canadian Press on Pellan, the “modernist” painter, all the major English- and French-language Québec dailies recalled the writings of the critic for the *New York Sun*, and mentioned once again that the critic for *Art News* described this “flat paint” as “the semi-abstractions of a splendid composition, painted in hues straight from the palette of Matisse”, because “French Canadians can be more French than the French themselves, and Alfred Pellan, born in Québec City, is Gallic to the bone”.⁶⁵ [Translation] The title of *Le Devoir* read: “New York Critics Praise Pellan”,⁶⁶ [Translation] the *Montreal Daily Herald* proclaimed “Critics Acclaim Montreal Artist. Alfred Pellan’s New York Show Wins Wide Approval”.⁶⁷ The popular *Montréal-Matin* also applauded this exploit.⁶⁸ However, the surprising reference made by *Art News* to Pellan’s “flat paint” which best defined the artist’s North American (and not strictly European) pictorial “modernism” as it was at the time, seems to have completely escaped the attention of local critics. Neither do they seem to have noticed that Pellan’s use of pure colour—at a time when Borduas and the Automatistes were employing a sombre palette—heralded a dramatic new trend, which was brought to maturity in the late 1950s and during the 1960s by the geometric formalists on the Québec arts scene. Instead, critics tended mainly to resituate Pellan within the realm of modern European movements. In 1942, when Marcel Parizeau attempted to complete an exhaustive summary of Canadian painting and make stylistic comparisons, categorically distinguishing between the “direct disciples of the European school”, painters “of Canadian expression”, and “the independents”, he ranked both Pellan and Borduas in the first category, which had something of an “Old-World family air”.⁶⁹ [Translation] Although he observed that, of all these painters, it was Borduas who underwent “the most striking transformation”, Parizeau still did not interpret this drastic change as the product of intensive research by Borduas on the referential foundations of his practice, but rather as the result of the creative “whirlwind” unleashed by Pellan. Like Reynald some years before, he concluded that “since Morrice, he [Pellan] is Canada’s most complete contribution to art”.⁷⁰ [Translation]

The same frenzy was stirred up when the works exhibited in New York were shown in May 1942, at the Galerie municipale in Québec City, and when Pellan participated in the group showing of the Contemporary Arts

63. “Alfred Pellan”, *New York Sun* (April 19, 1942).

64. “The Bignou Gallery”, *New York World Telegram* (April 11, 1942); *New York Journal American* (April 12, 1942); *Brooklyn Eagle* (April 12, 1942).

65. “Pellan”, *Art News* (April 30, 1942); quoted in “New York fait fête à Pellan”, *La Presse* (April 21, 1942); “Les critiques de New York font l’éloge d’Alfred Pellan”, *Le Soleil* (April 21, 1942); “La critique new-yorkaise louange Pellan”, *Le Devoir* (April 21, 1942); “Éloge d’Alfred Pellan à New York”, *L’Événement-Journal* (April 21, 1942).

66. “La critique new-yorkaise louange Pellan”, *Le Devoir* (April 21, 1942); “Canadien à l’honneur”, *La Patrie* (April 21, 1942).

67. “Critics Acclaim Montreal Artist”, *Montreal Daily Herald* (April 21, 1942).

68. “M. Alfred Pellan vu par ceux qui le connaissent bien”, *Montréal-Matin* (April 25, 1942).

69. Marcel Parizeau, “Peinture canadienne d’aujourd’hui”, *Amérique française*, Vol. 2 (October 2, 1942), p. 8-18.

70. *Ibid.*

71. "Ouverture du Salon Pellan", *L'Événement* (May 19, 1942); "Pellan à Québec", *L'Événement* (May 20, 1942); "Exposition de peinture d'Alfred Pellan", *Le Soleil* (May 9, 1942); Georges-Henri Dagneau, "À l'exposition d'Alfred Pellan", *L'Action catholique* (May 22, 1942); "L'exposition des œuvres de Pellan", *Le Soleil* (May 19, 1942); Pierre Daniel, "De Borduas à M. Bouchard", *La Presse* (November 14, 1942); Henri Girard, "Des Surréalistes aux peintres du dimanche", *Le Canada* (November 20, 1942); "Pellan. Peintre de l'abstraction. Créateur de symboles", *Le Temps* (December 8, 1942); "Intéressante exposition d'artistes", *Le Soleil* (May 13, 1943).

72. Michel B. Kamenka, "L'Érable au Canada", *Correio da Noite*, Rio de Janeiro (December 4, 1944); Valérie Vally, untitled, *La Nación*, Buenos Aires (December 2, 1944); Antoine Bon, "Alfred Pellan, peintre canadien", *Le Canada* (December 9, 1943) (article reprinted from the Brazilian magazine *Revista Franco-Brasileira*); Donald W. Buchanan, "Brazil Sees Canadian Art", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (February-March, 1945), p. 105.

73. Herbert Whittaker, "Theater-Montreal 44-45", *The Gazette* (May 19, 1945).

74. Éloi de Grandmont, "Le combat Pellan-Shakespeare dans *Le Soir des rois* aux Compagnons", *Le Jour* (June 1946); Robert Ayre, "Pellan versus the Bard", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Summer 1946), p. 162-166; Paul Dumas, "Recent Trends in Montreal Painting", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (Winter 1948), p. 120-127.

75. "Incident à l'École des beaux-arts", *La Presse* (July 14, 1945); "M. Pelland répond à M. Charles Maillard", *La Presse* (June 20, 1945); "M. Pellan s'explique après avoir été mis en cause par M. Maillard", *Le Canada* (June 19, 1945); "La querelle des pompiers et des artistes vivants", *Le Jour* (June 25, 1945).

76. "La querelle des pompiers et des artistes vivants", *Le Jour* (June 25, 1945).

76. Pierre Gélinas, "Exposition de fin d'année à l'École des beaux-arts", *Le Canada* (June 20, 1944).

77. Henri Girard, "À l'École des beaux-arts", *La Patrie* (June 19, 1944).

78. Étienne-Charles Hamel, "M. Maillard se serait enfin décidé à servir l'art", *Le Jour* (June 23, 1945).

79. Marcel Fournier et Robert Laplante, "Borduas et l'automatisme, les paradoxes de l'art vivant", *Possibles*, Vol. 3, No. 4, (Spring-Summer 1977), p. 127-164.

Society in Montréal in fall 1942, which travelled to Québec City in spring 1943.⁷¹ The hanging of a mural painting (seen the previous year at the Contemporary Arts Society) on the walls of the Canadian Embassy in Rio de Janeiro, as well as a group show including eight canvases by Pellan held in Rio and São Paulo in 1945, also presented an opportunity for critics to promote Pellan's international career both in Canada, thanks to Donald Buchanan, and throughout South America.⁷² About the same time, Herbert Whittaker of *The Gazette* became enraptured by Pellan's whimsical, spectacular drawings for the theatre done for André Audet.⁷³ Following similar comments made by author and poet Éloi de Grandmont, Robert Ayre stated, when shortly afterward Pellan designed the costumes and sets for the presentation of a Shakespearean play by the Compagnons de Saint-Laurent, that the artist had become "a cult" and "a force". Collector and critic Paul Dumas made the same comment to the Toronto and Canadian public a few years later in *Canadian Art*.⁷⁴

In the mid-1940s, Pellan once again received unqualified support from Montréal critics during the "Maillard affair", which in 1945 spread from the École des beaux-arts to the cultural community on the occasion of a controversial exhibition by the graduating students.⁷⁵ *Le Jour* presented to its readers the contradictory declarations of Maillard and Pellan under the eye-catching title "The Quarrel Between Conventionalists and Living Artists". [Translation] In this historic battle, which pitted contemporary art against ossified academism, Pellan once again emerged as an agent of change in the cultural community and as the supreme defender of endangered modernity in Québec art. The struggle against Maillard thus guaranteed, for a short while yet, Pellan's sociocultural pre-eminence, as he rapidly assumed the role of the ultraconservative Maillard's challenger and main adversary. Socialist columnist Pierre Gélinas congratulated him on this "innovative" position during the students' annual exhibition in 1944: "To think that it took Pellan only a year to make his students forget their earlier teachings and launch them on a new path; this is truly remarkable".⁷⁶ [Translation] Henri Girard made similar comments in *La Patrie*, declaring his admiration and unwavering support for Pellan in the struggle against esthetic obscurantism.⁷⁷ Combined with the student manifestations in support of Pellan, this common front of intellectuals and journalists pushed Maillard into submitting his resignation, to the joy of Charles Hamel.⁷⁸ With this ideological victory on the part of Pellan, Québec's esthetic hierarchy underwent a sort of initial cultural metamorphosis, a precursor to the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s, three years before the publication of the *Refus global* by the Automatistes. The local press quickly grasped the meaning and scope of what was at stake in this confrontation, and took a stand against the ultraconservative past in favour of the forward-looking present. Apparently, although the means of opposition chosen by Pellan and Borduas differed profoundly, to the extent that reference was later made, through analytical convenience, to "a paradox of living art",⁷⁹ and even to the "right" and "left" in the history of contemporary Québec art, they were fighting the same enemy, at least in the mid-1940s, as noted by the critics.

However, the troubled relationship between Pellan and Borduas, as well as between Pellan's friends and the young Automatistes in the Contemporary Arts Society—which had been founded in the late 1930s by John Lyman and which was still the only forum for living art in Montréal—was reflected in the founding of the short-lived group *Prisme d'yeux*, which signified the co-existence of several paths, and the publication of the

manifesto by the same name in February 1948 to counterbalance the growing influence of the Automatiste movement. Dumouchel, de Tonnancour, Bellefleur, and Mimi Parent, to name only a few, sided with Pellan.⁸⁰ These developments, as well as exhibitions of the new group's work held at 3440 Rue Ontario and at the Librairie Tranquille, were largely ignored by the Québec press. A telling fact, however, is that the press went from being unanimously sympathetic to outright hostile in certain instances. In *Le Temps*, Madeleine Gariépy confined herself to recounting with interest the creation of this group of Pellan supporters which was *Prisme d'yeux* and to giving a positive report on its members' philosophy in favour of free expression, without truly analyzing it.⁸¹ Julien Labedan, in *Le Canada*, referred more explicitly to the more radical sectarianism of the Automatistes: "Let us [thus] thank the artists of *Prisme d'yeux* for having succeeded in rising above personality and group conflicts, in the interest of the best of art which beautifies human life".⁸² [Translation] Although a hard-line Automatiste, Charles Doyon voiced his support in *Le Clairon*; Jean Simard did the same in *Notre temps*. However, neither critic explained what separated, in a virtually irreconcilable manner, the anti-academic positions, strategies, and tactics of Borduas' and Pellan's respective disciples. Borduas' profound disillusion following Pellan's hiring at the École des Beaux-Arts, only a few years after his initial approval of the Limoilou-born artist's merit upon his return from Paris, was not mentioned in the critics' articles as a factor explaining their bitter quarrel, as it was twenty-five years later. At best, apart from Labedan's indirect remark in this regard, the divisions which had emerged concerning the current and future orientations of Québec's living art were apparently still not significant enough to arouse the passions of our critics; at worst, the *Prisme d'yeux* exhibition was bitterly criticized, based on a conservative ideology which disregarded the decisive contribution of Borduas as well, by the likes of J.G. Demombynes in *Le Devoir*. In a number of particularly virulent articles,⁸³ Demombynes denounced in quick succession the "wailing" and "emptiness" of the exhibitors who, in his opinion, had taken an "anti-natural stance" due to their suicidal tendencies; the childlike workmanship of certain works, including those of Pellan himself, seemed to him no more than a "dizzying checkerboard of which one can make neither head nor tail". [Translation] Jacques Delisle of the *Montréal-Matin* attacked the spirituality conjured up by these artists, and denounced the "angelic art which in reality is nothing more than banal materialism wearing tin-foil wings".⁸⁴ [Translation] It was the first time Québec's critics and cultural community were divided on the subject of Pellan, and that enthusiastic praise shared column space with bitter denunciations.

Pellan's stormy relationship with Borduas had not yet shattered any significant alliances in artistic circles. Despite the rapidly growing socio-esthetic impact of Borduas and the young non-representational painters surrounding him in the wake of the escalating confrontations which culminated in the *Refus global* manifesto in 1948, the decisive impact of Pellan's art did not diminish significantly in the eyes of Québec critics in the latter half of the 1940s. With the exception of *Le Devoir* and *Montréal-Matin* journalists, critics were still, almost without exception, devoted to Pellan's cause, being far more likely to back his social and cultural moderation than Borduas' anarchical protests. Therefore, around 1950, Pellan was still considered a top-ranking artistic personality, whose national and international stature remained unchallenged, despite the fact that he was no longer the only Québec artist to claim ideological leadership of the Montréal avant-

80. See the special issue of *Propos d'art* devoted to the movement *Prisme d'yeux*, Vol. 2, No. 9 (March 5, 1977).

81. Madeleine Gariépy, "Prisme d'yeux", *Le Temps* (May 22, 1948).

82. Julien Labedan, "La création du Prisme d'yeux", *Le Canada* (February 27, 1948).

83. J. G. Demombynes, "Prisme d'yeux", *Le Devoir* (February 10, 1948); "Prisme d'yeux ou le goût du suicide", *Le Devoir* (February 18, 1948). There were also subsequent attacks and counterattacks, because Demombynes' articles raised a tumult in the community.

84. Jacques Delisle, "Un nouveau groupe de peintres modernes: les Prisme d'yeux", *Montréal-Matin* (February 7, 1948); "Un essai de critique sur Prisme d'yeux", *Montréal-Matin* (February 9, 1948).

garde, being compelled as he was to share this position with Borduas. Along the same lines, in esthetic terms, his para-automatist method of creating images based on the two-phase procedure initially defined by Breton and the French surrealist painters, which combined initial spontaneity in the draftsmanship with the ensuing construction of the figurative portrayal, was forced to co-exist with the “surrational” approach stemming from libidinal impulses, according to Borduas’ theory. In other words, from a formal viewpoint, Pellan was no longer a prophet in his own country, although he still enjoyed an enviable standing in cultural circles in the early 1950s. A flattering article, which appeared under the title “Canadian Rebel: Alfred Pellan” in the British magazine *The Studio*, constitutes impressive testimony to this fact.⁸⁵

Also, there still existed sympathetic voices among local critics, like that of Paul Gladu, ready to acknowledge Pellan’s educational efforts to open up Québec society to the contemporary art from abroad and, in the same breath, to bitterly mourn his sudden departure from the École des beaux-arts de Montréal in 1952, as well his supposedly permanent establishment—in the French capital, which in the end lasted only from 1952 to 1955, Paris having undergone major esthetic changes since the 1930s—thanks to a bursary from the Royal Society of Canada.⁸⁶ Despite this, with the exception of Gladu, journalist Michelle Tisseyre, and essayist François Hertel (who had settled in Europe) who, among the Montréal intellectuals of the era, always displayed an unqualified penchant for the work of their friend Pellan, the dawning of the decade also marked local disillusion with the painter, or at least a certain distance. His participation in the Biennale in Venice, in 1952, was met with total silence here, except for an article in *Canadian Art*.⁸⁷ His exhibition, presented the same year at the Galerie L’Atelier in Ottawa, received only minimal regional coverage in the newspaper *Le Droit*, even though this presentation was Pellan’s first major exhibition in Canada since 1943.⁸⁸ Whereas his first trip to Paris was reported, followed and commented on with admiration and assiduity in the Québec press, 1952 marked a new indifference in the community with regard to Pellan’s Parisian activities. Critics seem to have forgotten him, all their attention being taken up with the Post-Automatistes and the emerging Plasticien movement.

Pellan, the man, was not relegated to obscurity; he was still the object of some interesting interviews,⁸⁹ but increasingly, Québec critics were becoming more analytical and less flattering with regard to their criticism of his art, modifying, at first subtly, and later more directly, both the content and tone of their comments on his painted work. This was true for Rodolphe de Repentigny of *La Presse*. In 1954, while reviewing the exhibition “Peintres canadiens à l’étranger” held at the Dominion Gallery and in which Pellan participated, de Repentigny focused on the esthetic route followed by the artist from Limoilou from the perspective of a critic and Plasticien artist.⁹⁰ Referring to the abstract surrealist basis of Pellan’s imagery, de Repentigny first discussed the incisive effect of these canvases, where the colours are applied “two-dimensionally” on the objects. “The artist shows that he has definitively abandoned three-dimensional drawing, and moved toward fanciful forms derived from a medley of objects”.⁹¹ [Translation] However, de Repentigny goes on to express serious reservations with regard to Pellan’s trademark eclecticism. “It should be mentioned that each painting shows, perhaps too well, the painter’s ease with the many formulas of his art”.⁹² Just as he was no longer the object of unanimous acclaim from a

85. Geoffrey Drayton, “Canadian Rebel: Alfred Pellan”, *The Studio*, No. 142 (July-December 1951), p. 54-57.

86. Paul Gladu, “Pellan boucle la boucle”, *Métropole* (January 1953), p. 20-21; “Alfred Pellan est à son aise dans un siècle de peinture française”, *Le Petit Journal* (October 24, 1954); “Pourquoi des bourses aux Pellan, Cosgrove, Roberts, Jones, etc. ?”, *Le Petit Journal* (December 28, 1954).

87. Eric Newton, “Canada’s Place in the 1952 Biennale as Viewed by an English Critic”, *Canadian Art*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Fall 1952), p. 18-21.

88. Aristarque, “Une exposition Pellan”, *Le Droit* (May 2, 1952).

89. Geneviève de la Tour Fondue, *Interviews canadiennes*, (Montréal: Éditions Chanteclerc, 1952), Chapter 7, p. 125-139.

90. Marie Carani, *L’œil de la critique*, (Sillery: Éditions du Septentrion, 1990), 285 p.

91. Rodolphe de Repentigny, “Alfred Pellan et Robert Blair”, *La Presse* (November 13, 1954).

92. *Ibid.*

social perspective, for the first time, from a formal perspective, a Québec critic dared to express his disaccord with this important facet of Pellan's artistic approach. Other voices of dissent were not long in coming—Guy Viau, René Chicoine, and Françoise de Repentigny—and irrevocably changed the relationship between Québec critics and Pellan.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the artist himself had the distinct impression of being shunned by Québec critics, and voiced this in a number of interviews.⁹³ But Pellan went further; not content with denouncing the negligible attention paid him by Québec intellectuals, he decided to identify the main cause, namely, the reign of Borduas and of automatism, and concluded: "I often have [had] the impression of being neglected ... due to my anti-Automatiste and anti-Borduas stance. This is unjust".⁹⁴ [Translation] The artist also pointed out that in this context, "snobbery was so rampant that when I exhibited my works, people laughed at me".⁹⁵ [Translation] Despite this, following his exile to New York, Borduas took refuge in Paris, where he died in 1960, and automatism ceased to exist in Montréal as a structured, organized movement when the exhibition *La matière chante* was presented at the Galerie Antoine in 1954. Only its Post-Automatiste variation remained, supplanted between 1955 and 1970 by the geometric formalism of the Plasticiens and the New Plasticiens.⁹⁶ Québec's arts scene was thus more complex than Pellan cared to admit. He was not only the victim, as he firmly believed, of a "conspiracy of silence", but also of an uncontrollable shift in and disintegration of the socio-esthetic beacons of his artistic practices.

... and the Lows

Around the mid-1950s, everything seemed to go downhill for the artist in the space of a few years. This coincided, in the first place, with the silence which greeted his participation in 1954, in Paris, in the exhibitions at the Palais de Tokyo, the Coq Liban, and the Salon de mai—a silence broken only by Jean Gachon's dispatches from the Agence France-Presse⁹⁷—and then with the negligible impact his major European retrospective, presented in February-March 1955 at the Musée national d'art moderne in Paris, had in Québec. This event, which nonetheless established Pellan's reputation on the international artistic scene once and for all, was not fully appreciated in Québec, whereas French reviews were more sympathetic, although remaining somewhat divided and mitigated, since Surrealism and its numerous variations was no longer the art of the moment in France.

Consequently, French critics confined themselves mainly to short articles of a few paragraphs at most.⁹⁸ René Domergue hesitated before the work of this "happy prisoner of Surrealism".⁹⁹ [Translation] In *Les Lettres françaises*, Pierre Descargues saw in Pellan "a synthesis of avant-garde art", but denounced the "distressing dryness" [Translation] of his outlines.¹⁰⁰ Jean Bouret was even more severe, expressing his confusion at the fact that Pellan was chosen to exhibit at the Musée national d'art moderne: "Perhaps, after all, it is because Pellan is the only painter in which Canada can take pride".¹⁰¹ [Translation] The critic of *Le Monde*, who was more sympathetic, noted Pellan's successful transition from Cubism to Surrealism, in particular the "textural effects" of his most recent paintings,¹⁰² linking this with the "matérialiste" approach of informal French art during the postwar period. In the Communist journal *Combat*, this medium-oriented research was also

93. Marcel Séguin, "Entretien avec Alfred Pellan", *L'École canadienne*, Vol. 1 (September 1959), p. 5-9; Marcel Séguin, "Qu'êtes-vous Pellan", *La Patrie* (January 10, 1960); Claude Jasmin, "Je suis un sorcier", *La Presse* (July 14, 1962); Manuel Maitre, "La peinture moderne abonde en fumistes! (Alfred Pellan)", *La Patrie du Dimanche* (January 1, 1961); Guy Robert, "Rencontre avec Alfred Pellan", *Le Devoir* (April 21, 1962); John Wyllie, "Alfred Pellan", *Canadian Art*, No. 93, (September-October 1964), p. 288-290; "Pellan parle", *Liberté* (March-April 1967), p. 65-69; Germain Lefebvre, *Pellan, op. cit.*

94. A. Pellan quoted in Claude Jasmin, "Je suis un sorcier", *La Presse* (July 14, 1962).

95. A. Pellan quoted in Germain Lefebvre, *Pellan, op. cit.*, p. 115.

96. Marie Carani, *L'œil de la critique, op. cit.*

97. Jean Gachon, "Pellan donne une avant-première de sa grande exposition parisienne", *La Presse* (January 30, 1954); "Une nouvelle exposition d'Alfred Pellan à Paris", *La Presse* (June 17, 1954).

98. "Puzzle pour psychanalyste", *L'Express* (February 26, 1955); Sioma Baram, "Alfred Pellan", *Arts* (February 1955); "Alfred Pellan", *Le Parisien libéré* (February 24, 1955); untitled, *Le Figaro* (February 24, 1955); G. Hilaire, "La morte saison", *Dimanche-Matin* (October 9, 1955); Pierre Momand, "Pellan au Musée d'art moderne", *La Revue moderne* (April 1, 1955).

99. René Domergue, "Pellan le surréaliste", *L'Information* (February 11, 1955).

100. Pierre Descargues, "Pellan", *Les Lettres françaises* (February 17, 1955).

101. Jean Bouret, "Des peintres qui se cherchent et qui parfois se trouvent", *Franc Tireur* (February 17, 1955).

102. "Alfred Pellan. Peintre canadien", *Le Monde* (February 11, 1955).

103. "Pellan au Musée d'art moderne", *Combat* (February 9, 1955).

104. Marie Carani, *L'œil de la critique*, *op. cit.*

105. Renée Arbour-Brackman, "Alfred Pellan et les clefs de l'enchantement", *La Revue française*, No. 59 (August 1954), p. 65-68; "Un peintre canadien au Musée d'art moderne", *Les cahiers de l'ouest*, Vol. 7 (July 1955), p. 71-73; "Alfred Pellan", *La Dépêche de Paris* (June 12-19, 1955).

106. Bernard Dorival, "Alfred Pellan", *Le Jardin des arts*, Vol. 5, (March 1955), p. 313-318; Roland Giguère, "Peinture vivante au Canada", *Phases*, Vol. 2 (1955), p. 15-19.

107. "Pellan, au Musée d'art moderne", *La Presse*, Tunis (February 11, 1955).

108. Yvonne Hagen, "Objects", *New York Herald Tribune* (February 23, 1955).

109. "Canadian Abroad", *Time Magazine* (February 28, 1955).

110. Joe Plaskett, "Paris Honors Alfred Pellan", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Spring 1955), p. 113-115.

111. "190 toiles de Pellan au Musée d'art moderne de Paris le 8 février", *La Presse* (January 19, 1955).

112. Renée Arbour, "L'expo parisienne de Pellan est un succès", *Le Petit Journal* (February 20, 1955).

113. Marie Carani, *L'œil de la critique*, *op. cit.*

114. Paul Gladu, "Pellan nous a bien représentés", *Le Petit Journal* (March 20, 1955).

115. Marie Carani, *L'œil de la critique*, *op. cit.*

116. "19 ans après Paris, le Québec fête Pellan", *Québec-Presse* (May 28, 1972); "La querelle de l'automatisme et de l'abstraction", *La Presse* (July 1, 1967).

emphasized, but from the perspective of "an essentially mural work".¹⁰³ [Translation] The contemporary pull of the muralist theories of the group Espace, led by Vasarely and the Parisian magazine *L'Art d'aujourd'hui*, is not unrelated to this observation.¹⁰⁴ It is easy to understand that the popular French press, both right- and left-wing, greeted Pellan's work with more positive comments when it was able to link it to its own formal interests of the moment. As for feature articles published in periodicals, three by Renée Arbour targeting the defense of Pellan's stimulating action and surrealist heritage are definitely more positive and warm; in *La Dépêche de Paris*, for example, she recalled at the beginning of her article the famous quote by André Breton made during a visit of the Canadian painter's works: "Toutes les lampes intérieures au pouvoir de mon ami Pellan" (The power of my friend Pellan is from the interior lamps of the spirit).¹⁰⁵ [Translation by George Lach in *Pellan, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*] In March 1955, Bernard Dorival, curator at the Musée national d'art moderne, also devoted an article to Pellan in the monthly *Le Jardin des Arts*; the primarily "European" character of Pellan's multifaceted production was emphasized as the most valid explanation for the up-to-date nature of his œuvre; at the same time, Québec critic Roland Giguère published a short article in France in the small Parisian magazine *Phases*, on living art in Canada, in which he paid tribute to Pellan's retrospective exhibition.¹⁰⁶

While Pellan's presence abroad was confirmed in the Tunis daily *La Presse*,¹⁰⁷ the *New York Herald Tribune*,¹⁰⁸ and *Time Magazine*,¹⁰⁹ local coverage, although favourable, remained mitigated and discreet given the circumstances. Radio-Canada broadcast a radio interview between Pellan and critic Jean Cassou, who wrote the preface to the catalogue for the Musée national d'art moderne exhibition. Outside Québec, the monthly *Canadian Art* published a highly flattering article of the artist's career under the title "Paris Honours Alfred Pellan".¹¹⁰ In Québec, with the exception of a dispatch from the Agence France-Presse reprinted in *La Presse*,¹¹¹ only the popular newspaper *Le Petit Journal* underlined, in an article by its Paris correspondent Renée Arbour, the significance of the retrospective organized in France.¹¹² In the same weekly, portraying himself not as a specialist in artistic production but simply as the man in the street,¹¹³ Paul Gladu also celebrated this important artistic manifestation in Paris and, noting its lack of impact in Québec, issued a desperate plea to the arts community to react more favourably to Pellan.¹¹⁴ He cited the artist's glorious past which propelled him to the summit of Québec's avant-garde, where he had since remained. However, during this era in Montréal, the later Automatiste movement, Post-Automatiste, and the Plasticiens were garnering more critical attention between 1953 and 1955, with Québec critics reporting on the consecutive exhibitions *La Place des artistes* (1953), *La matière chante* (1954), *Les Plasticiens* (1955), and *Espace 55* (1955). In this context, where critics focused on what was new and interesting in Québec, Pellan's activities abroad were not a priority because, in the opinion of many, they seemed not to have a direct effect on the esthetic debates of the here and now in Québec.¹¹⁵ Therefore, his works exhibited in Paris were never commented on, let alone analyzed in depth by Québec critics so as to provide an overview. Instead, the major Québec City and Montréal dailies confined themselves to reprinting the most flattering excerpts from French newspapers based on dispatches from the Canadian Press. These fragments of information went into the artist's file, reappearing now and again on the occasion of major exhibitions.¹¹⁶ All this was quite the opposite of the craze aroused

twenty years earlier; Pellan had now been relegated to the fringes of Québec's contemporary art history, and was evaluated accordingly.

During the second half of the 1950s, parallel to what was occurring in New York, Montréal critics were turning increasingly toward a modernist ideology which focused on self-referential concepts such as materialist surfaces, large-scale supports, and the order and structure of the painted canvas. In the context of these new developments, Pellan was not the Québec painter best able to accept the still-nebulous idea gradually being adopted by critics and artists of the teleological evolution of art. Instead, it was the new generation of formalist Plasticiens who espoused this ideology, attuned as they claimed to be to a trend in painting boasting forefathers such as Malevich and Mondrian. Strangely enough, although Québec critics seemed to want to disregard Pellan's image-filled, textural work of the 1950s, which appeared to them to be less spectacular than before, it was nonetheless the abstract and semi-abstract oils in flat colour executed by the artist in Paris and Montréal during the 1930s and 1940s which, at the expense of the lyrical Automatiste œuvre as a whole, were now being extolled by the New Plasticiens in Québec, including Molinari, as the first manifestation here of a veritable "modernist" pictorial use of pure colour. This astonishing situation also prevailed among the critics of the era who, following in the footsteps of the young Montréal painters, focused on celebrating Pellan's past rather than his productive present.

Coinciding with Pellan's establishment in Paris, which culminated in a formal abstractivization revealed through symbolic painting, and then with the appearance in Montréal among the Plasticiens (the old and the new, who merged at the end of the decade for the *Art abstrait* exhibition in 1959) of a geometric abstraction that was strictly two-dimensional, or at least perceived as such in Québec between 1955 and 1960, the more modernist and formal leanings of our critics were reflected by a will to expose, and perhaps even to distance themselves from, once and for all, the Pellan factor in Québec art. Furthermore, this preliminary assessment included a challenge to the esthetic reference points of his art. De Repentigny remarked disparagingly on this subject that throughout the 1950s, Pellan had continued to merrily borrow from the pictorial trend of abstract Surrealism, despite the fact that it was twenty-five years old.¹¹⁷ In *Photo-Journal*, Adrien Robitaille accused the artist of having failed to progress beyond Cubism and of perpetuating in his imagery a "game" which "risks losing its appeal".¹¹⁸ [Translation] In other words, Pellan was outdated in esthetic terms, both in form and technique. On his return to Montréal in 1956, the artist became aware of this new critical trend and suffered from it greatly. It upset him, and he remarked less than ten years later that he saw in it the beginnings of a veritable "conspiracy of silence" in the community,¹¹⁹ as well as the reason behind the obstinate refusal of director John Steegman to hold an exhibition of his work in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,¹²⁰ a decision denounced by both Gladu and de Repentigny for different reasons, the former because of his firm friendship with Pellan, the latter in the name of freedom of expression and justice for all.¹²¹

Despite the customary praise from Montréal and Québec City critics for Pellan's original use of colour and draftsmanship following the exhibition of his work at the Musée national d'art moderne in Paris, the 1956 retrospective—this time 100% "Québécois"—which, since it was not accepted by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, was held at the Montréal City Hall on the initiative of Mayor Jean Drapeau, was an important indicator of this new, more critical

117. Rodolphe de Repentigny, "Alfred Pellan et Robert Blair", *La Presse* (November 13, 1954).

118. Adrien Robitaille, "Trop d'expositions ouvertes à la fois", *Photo-Journal* (November 18-24, 1956).

119. Claude Jasmin, "Je suis un sorcier", *La Presse* (July 14, 1962).

120. "M. Steegman explique pourquoi le Musée ne peut exposer Pellan", *La Presse* (April 11, 1956).

121. Rodolphe de Repentigny, "Attaque, défense et parade", *La Presse* (March 31, 1956); Paul Gladu, "Pellan nous a bien représentés", *Le Petit Journal* (March 20, 1955).

122. Pierre Saucier, "J'aime bien les cheveux sur la tête d'une dame... mais je ne les aime pas dans la soupe (le conseiller A. Tremblay)", *La Patrie* (November 18, 1956).

123. Pierre Desmarais, "Déclaration de M. Pierre Desmarais", *Vrai* (November 24, 1956); Roger Duhamel, "La peinture en procès", *La Patrie* (November 13, 1956); Jean Desprez, "La porcherie de monsieur le maire", *Le Petit Journal* (November 10, 1956); Jacques Hébert, "M. Antoine Tremblay est-il plus catholique que le pape?", *Vrai* (November 24, 1956); Claude Langlois, s.j., "Le message pictural de Pellan", *Le Devoir* (December 1, 1956); "De vives protestations contre une exposition de peintures dans le hall de l'hôtel de ville", *Montréal-Matin* (November 10, 1956); "Un artiste répond à Antoine Tremblay et autres ignorants", *Vrai* (November 24, 1956); "Ce Pellan, ce galeux! ou l'immoralité d'un nez en forme de... Duplessis", *La Réforme* (November 28, 1956); "Paintings at City Hall Stir Criticism", *The Gazette* (November 10, 1956); "Le jury du maire supprime 3 ou 4 tableaux de l'exposition Pellan", *Dimanche-Matin* (November 11, 1956); Rodolphe de Repentigny, "L'exposition de Pellan ne sera pas modifiée", *La Presse* (November 13, 1956); "L'exposition d'Alfred Pellan restera à l'hôtel de ville", *Le Devoir* (November 13, 1956); Louise Cousineau, "Que pensez-vous de l'affaire Pellan", *Le Petit Journal* (November 18, 1956).

124. Paul Gladu, "Pellan, un peintre dont on est fier", *Le Petit Journal* (November 14, 1956); "La leçon de Pellan", *Notre temps* (November 24, 1956).

125. Paul Gladu, "Alfred Pellan refusé par l'École des beaux-arts de Montréal. Pourquoi?", *Points de vue* (October 2, 1956), p. 7-8; "Je décerne mon propre trophée!", *Le Petit Journal* (March 31, 1957).

126. Charles Doyon, "Pellan à l'Hôtel de ville", *La Réforme* (November 21, 1956).

127. Rodolphe de Repentigny, "Pellan ne cherche pas le confort", *La Presse* (November 10, 1956).

128. Robert Ayre, "Ample, Prodigal, Complex", *The Montreal Star* (November 10, 1956).

129. René Chicoine, "L'exposition Pellan", *Le Devoir* (November 17, 1956).

130. "Notre peinture, de source française, s'est développée en marge de nos institutions", *La Presse* (June 25, 1957).

reality. Suspiciously enough, the public's interest was captured more by the suggestively erotic nature of the shapes drawn by the artist. Thus, this presentation, which should have confirmed Pellan's reputation in Québec, since it was his first solo exhibition in Montréal in fifteen years, provoked instead, in the declining years of Duplessis' sanctimonious reign, a heated debate on the "suspected" pornographic character of certain works by Pellan and, as a result, confrontations on the problem of public censorship in Montréal. The debate was sparked when alderman Antoine Tremblay, former president of the public morality committee, used the terms "piggery" and "indecenty" to describe the artwork displayed at City Hall at the taxpayers' expense.¹²² To the detriment of a serious discussion on the meaning and scope of the work itself, which would have had the effect of partially counterbalancing the silences of 1955, the articles which appeared on the front pages of local newspapers under alarming titles focused more on the pros and cons of censoring. The "Tremblay affair" had considerable repercussions, perhaps more than the exhibition itself.

Fortunately, intellectuals such as Pierre Desmarais, Jean Desprez, Jacques Hébert, Roger Duhamel, as well as Father Claude Langlois, took a stand in favour of Pellan, thereby resisting the onslaught of traditional forces, in such a way that the retrospective remained relatively intact.¹²³

Critics showed the same type of resistance. Listing the regrettable reproaches aimed at Pellan, Paul Gladu set out to contradict them straight off, pointing out the artist's esthetic import in two articles.¹²⁴ Shortly thereafter, he took the École des beaux-arts to task for having refused to take Pellan back into its fold, and the Cercle critique de Montréal, which seemed to be snubbing the painter.¹²⁵ Although they unreservedly denounced the advocates of reaction, Charles Doyon and Rodolphe de Repentigny nonetheless wanted to avoid getting caught up in these unpleasant matters, and attempted to focus exclusively on the intrinsic value of the works on display at City Hall. In *La Réforme*, looking back on fifteen years of production and fuelled by his perceptive intuition, Doyon noted Pellan's stylistic evolution toward allegorical surrealism, as well as the decisive role played recently by his use of impasto.¹²⁶ A confirmed existentialist, de Repentigny took advantage of the occasion to praise and explain Pellan's "humanist" esthetic which reflected the chaos of the era, but with respect to technique, the critic was less flattering owing to the excesses of facility and over-indulgence he perceived: "One is forced to admit that Pellan does not seem to know when to stop".¹²⁷ [Translation] Robert Ayre made a similar comment; he was concerned by Pellan's exaggeratedly formal technique, which seemed to limit the overall effect. "In human experience, he doesn't take us very far", he wrote.¹²⁸ But the most virulent criticism came from René Chicoine of *Le Devoir*. Denouncing "the trap of facility", observed in Pellan's work, Chicoine called the painter "a joke", maintaining that only his bright palette saved him from "bad taste".¹²⁹ [Translation] The article in *Le Devoir* ended with a comment on the completely disembodied and obsolete character of Surrealism. Less than a year later, *La Presse* published an article on a conference given by Guy Viau, in which he denounced Pellan as a "daubster" in the wake of the 1956 retrospective.¹³⁰ Viau stated that he preferred the artist's early Parisian works, or his Québec works done between 1941 and 1944, to his more recent canvases, whose three-dimensional "matérialisme" was displeasing. Between 1957 and 1960, this comment was raised often in intellectual and critical discussions as a subtle way of expressing a profound dissatisfaction with the painter and, especially, as a way of denying the impact of Pellan's pictorial work.

Clearly, the mid- and late 1950s marked the turning point in critics' reaction to the artist's work. Subsequently, critics followed with interest, for example during Pellan's participation in the Canadian delegation to the World Fair in Brussels,¹³¹ but mainly with a great deal of complacency, if not with a sort of feigned indifference, his gradual passage into history. Michelle Tisseyre vehemently denounced this situation in *La Patrie* and in *La Revue moderne*, referring to a deplorable "plot" woven against the artist in Québec, whereas he had recently become renowned in Toronto thanks to his exhibition at the Laing Galleries; her conclusion was that "no man is a prophet ... in his own province".¹³² [Translation] Attentive critics in Québec had become few and far between. For example, when Pellan manifested a drastic, materialist change in style during the exhibition at the Denyse Delrue gallery of his exotic *Jardins* [Gardens] series, painted in an abstract surrealist style—a series which was to continue through the 1960s—Montréal critics hailed his courage, determination and unshakeable will to pursue his formal research but, as already pointed out by Guy Viau, the tendency remained to recall with nostalgia and admiration the oils done fifteen or twenty years earlier. While emphasizing, as an esthetic formalist and defender of absolute autonomy among the arts, that he did not care for this work which used both pictorial and sculptural techniques, de Repentigny nonetheless referred perceptively to a type of "shock" painting which had gradually evolved into a manufactured object.¹³³ He concluded from this that Pellan surely took great pleasure "in his unadulterated play with colour and media", [Translation] but that this play, based on the construction and combination of formal elements, seemed to lead nowhere. In *Le Devoir*, René Chicoine observed "the troublesome significance of [these] media in relief" [Translation] which gave a trompe-l'œil effect and tended to disorient the viewer.¹³⁴ Shortly thereafter, in the monthly *Cité libre*, as well as in his work published in 1964 entitled *La Peinture moderne au Canada français*, Guy Viau described these textured *Jardins* as "the most seductive of imposters".¹³⁵ [Translation] Among French-speaking critics, only Paul Gladu steadfastly maintained his profession of faith, referring to Pellan's "unappreciated greatness" [Translation] in Québec.¹³⁶ Dorothy Pfeiffer, in *The Gazette*, who felt that this work finally went beyond Picasso's Cubism, and Robert Ayre, in *The Montreal Star*, who perceived in them a remarkable new measure of creative originality, were much less severe;¹³⁷ they therefore approved greatly, as did Paul Duval,¹³⁸ of Pellan's emergence on the Ontario arts scene thanks to this new muralist type of painting which astonished and enthralled Toronto when it was first seen at the Roberts Gallery between 1959 and 1964.¹³⁹

Two years after this first *Jardins* series, the exhibition entitled *Hommage à Pellan*, presented at the Galerie Delrue in April-May 1960, was once again a forum for contradictory opinions and the settling of old scores. While the indomitable Paul Gladu continued in *Le Petit Journal* to laud the expressive sensuality and the contemporary nature of the themes dear to the "enfant terrible" of Québec painting,¹⁴⁰ and Jean Sarrazin, in *La Presse*, saw the essentially decorative mural attempts of "Saint Pellan" as blue-chip stock and a "guiding light",¹⁴¹ Françoise de Repentigny, in *Le Devoir*, wrote that she had "little sympathy for this facile painting by rote, this lamentable, ugly art, where all the pleasure is Pellan's and not ours".¹⁴² [Translation] Except for a very ordinary paragraph in *La Patrie*,¹⁴³ the rest of the French-language press remained mute. Michelle Tisseyre, in her *Photo-Journal* article, thus felt compelled to fly to the defense of "Pellan the forgotten one", and to exhort the Montréal community to continue considering him as its most

131. Donald W. Buchanan, "The Changing Face of Canadian Art", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 15, No. 1, (January 1958), p. 22-28.

132. Michèle Tisseyre, "On nous apprend...", *La Patrie* (December 1, 1957); "Confidentiellement", *La Revue moderne* (October 1956), p. 8-9.

133. Rodolphe de Repentigny, "Les naïfs, les jeunes et Pellan", *La Presse* (April 19, 1958).

134. René Chicoine, "L'art des jardins", *Le Devoir* (April 19, 1958); "La fête, la corrida et le théâtre", *Le Devoir* (September 20, 1958).

135. Guy Viau, "Pellan, peintre primitif", *Cité libre*, Vol. 12, No. 36, (February 1961), p. 30-31; "Peintres du Québec", *Revue française*, No. 140 (May 1962), p. 38-45; *La Peinture moderne au Canada français*, (Québec: Ministère des Affaires culturelles, 1964).

136. Paul Gladu, "La réponse de Pellan, ce sont ses tableaux", *Le Petit Journal* (April 20, 1958); "Pellan ou la grandeur incomprise", *Notre temps* (May 3, 1958).

137. Dorothy Pfeiffer, "Pellan Exhibits Exotic Gardens", *The Gazette* (April 19, 1958); "Non-figurative Galaxy", *The Gazette* (September 20, 1958); Robert Ayre, "The Prodigal Inventions of Alfred Pellan's Art", *The Montreal Star* (September 20, 1958).

138. Paul Duval, "A Trail of Achievement", *The Toronto Telegram* (April 22, 1961).

139. "Paintings by Pellan on View", *Toronto Globe and Mail* (May 30, 1959); "Eight Artists Paint their Quebec", *MacLean's Magazine* (May 9, 1959); Herbert Steinhouse, "Alfred Pellan. Painter, Poet and Dreamer", *Star Weekly*, Toronto, (August 6, 1960); Donald W. Buchanan, "Pellan", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (January 1960), p. 16-21; "Outstanding French-Canadian Painter in Roberts Gallery Exhibition", *Toronto Globe and Mail* (April 17, 1961); Ken Lefolli, "Alfred Pellan. His Art Came like a Blow", *Maclean's Magazine* (January 28, 1961); Lawrence Sabbath, "Alfred Pellan: Lyric Abstractionist", *Saturday Night* (March 4, 1961); Bill Trent, "Alfred Pellan: Lover of Life and Art", *Weekend Magazine*, Vol. 10, No. 42 (October 15, 1960), p. 16-21; Kay Kritzwiser, "Pellan: Apostle of Art for Everybody", *The Globe and Mail* (November 14, 1964).

140. Paul Gladu, "Qu'attend-on pour nommer Pellan professeur?", *Le Petit Journal* (May 1-8, 1960).

141. Jean Sarrazin, "Hommage à saint Pellan, poète et artisan", *La Presse* (April 30, 1960).

142. Françoise de Repentigny, "Paysages lyriques et paysages de tiroirs", *Le Devoir* (April 28, 1960).

143. "Pellan évoque les femmes et la lune", *La Patrie* (April 24, 1960).

144. Michelle Tisseyre, "Pellan l'oublié?", *Photo-Journal* (April 30 – May 7, 1960).

145. Dorothy Pfeiffer, "Hommage à Pellan", *The Gazette* (April 30, 1960); Robert Ayre, "Quebec Wins Four out of Five Canadian Guggenheim Awards", *The Montreal Star* (April 30, 1960).

146. Guy Robert, "Pellan. Peintre magicien", *Le Magazine Maclean* (January 1963), p. 23-25, 38-41.

147. *Ibid.*

148. Guy Robert, *Pellan, sa vie et son œuvre — His life and his art*, (Montréal: Centre de psychologie et de pédagogie, 1963).

149. "La peinture de Pellan est poétique, dit Jean Cassou", *Le Droit* (October 29, 1960); "Two Pellan Exhibits for Art Fares", *Ottawa Citizen* (November 2, 1960); "Rétrospective Pellan", *La Presse* (December 23, 1960); "Exposition rétrospective de l'œuvre de Pellan", *Le Devoir* (October 11, 1960); Paul Dubois, "Artist of 1,000 Styles in One-Man Show", *Ottawa Citizen* (October 14, 1960); Carl Weisberger, "His Nude Stirred Up a Storm", *Ottawa Citizen* (October 14, 1960); W. Q. Ketchum, "Bold, Revolutionary, Poetic", *Ottawa Journal* (October 14, 1960); "Exposition de l'œuvre d'Alfred Pellan", *Le Devoir* (January 4, 1961); Jean Sarrazin, "Rétrospective Pellan", *La Presse* (January 14, 1961); André Jasmin, "Le peintre canadien Alfred Pellan", *Vie étudiante* (April 1, 1961); Jules Verteuil, "À propos de Pellan", *Le Devoir* (January 20, 1961); "Grand hommage à Pellan au Musée des beaux-arts", *La Presse* (January 4, 1961); "Exposition rétrospective Pellan", *L'Action catholique* (January 4, 1961).

150. *Pellan*, exhibition catalogue (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1960); "Exposition rétrospective des œuvres du peintre surréaliste Alfred Pellan", *Le Soleil* (February 17, 1961); Jean Paré, "À l'occasion de la rétrospective Pellan, le maire de Montréal réclame un mécénat gouvernemental", *La Presse* (January 6, 1961); Pierre Saucier, "Un grand-prêtre de notre peinture, Alfred Pellan", *L'information médicale et para-médicale* (February 7, 1961); Manuel Maitre, "La peinture moderne abonde en fumistes (Alfred Pellan)", *La Patrie du Dimanche* (January 1, 1961).

151. Robert Ayre, "Our Canadian-Born Picasso", *The Montreal Star* (January 7, 1961).

152. Dorothy Pfeiffer, "Pellan Retrospective", *The Gazette* (January 14, 1961); D. Pfeiffer, "At Galerie Dresdnere", *The Gazette* (June 3, 1961).

153. Jean Sarrazin, "Rétrospective Pellan", *La Presse* (January 14, 1961).

154. Claude Picher, "Rétrospective Alfred Pellan", *Le Soleil* (January 21, 1961).

155. Paul Gladu, "Celui qui a révolutionné la peinture canadienne", *Le Petit Journal* (January 8, 1961).

156. Pearl McCarthy, "Rare Love of Life in Modernist", *The Globe and Mail* (April 23, 1961).

respected leader, both here and elsewhere, despite the fact that "much has been made of Borduas recently".¹⁴⁴ [Translation] However, in the English-language press, Dorothy Pfeiffer and Robert Ayre continued to assiduously support and encourage the artist's visual experiments.¹⁴⁵ For this reason, the theme of the "conspiracy of silence", which appeared in an article by Guy Robert published in the January 1963 issue of *Maclean's*,¹⁴⁶ primarily targeted French-speaking rather than English-speaking critics. Despite this, after having recalled Pellan's Parisian triumph in 1955, Robert noted that with a few rare exceptions—which he fails to specify—"no one in Canada seemed to be interested in this painter, who was in the process of forging a solid reputation for himself in Paris and throughout Europe".¹⁴⁷ [Translation] He added that, at that point in the early 1960s, this situation had not yet changed. Robert emphasized this aspect even more in his monograph published the same year on Pellan as both man and artist and the poetry of his œuvre and, enraptured and awestruck by the painter's fantastic images, he repeated his accusation concerning the artist's exile in his own homeland, despite the extraordinary power of his imagery.¹⁴⁸

At the time, however, this affirmation proved to be somewhat exaggerated; it showed that the artist and his friends tended to disregard certain facts. The "conspiracy" was waning, as witnessed by the Pellan retrospective staged by the National Gallery in Ottawa, which subsequently travelled to Montréal, Québec City, and Toronto between January and May 1961, and received abundant coverage in the Canadian press.¹⁴⁹ This event enabled critics from Québec—and now Ontario—to write in glowing terms about the artist's draftsmanship and use of colour, while casting a selective glance back on his achievements through the most complimentary fragments of criticism compiled since the 1930s. The catalogue for this event, which included 58 paintings and drawings (a mere third of what had been exhibited in Paris in 1955), included an article on this "man of a thousand techniques" by Donald W. Buchanan, and a testimony by Paul Gladu on this artist who had "revolutionized" Canadian painting.¹⁵⁰

In Québec, Ayre claimed to recognize in Pellan "the Picasso of Canadian painting" who, working his breathtaking magic, changed like Protheus;¹⁵¹ Pfeiffer hailed his immense experimental and decorative qualities which, in her opinion, nonetheless remained less profound than those of the Cubist master.¹⁵² At the same time, on a negative note, contrary to what he had written the previous year, Sarrazin proclaimed that Pellan was a mere decorator "à la Picasso", and suggested that the Limoilou-born painter's second-hand abstract Surrealism did not measure up to the universal classicism of his drawing.¹⁵³ Claude Picher, in *Le Soleil*, went even further, claiming that Pellan had remained in Paris, immersed forever in a European context, thereby cutting himself off from the lifeblood of Québec painting.¹⁵⁴ Once again, of the French-speaking critics, only Paul Gladu wholeheartedly praised Pellan in *Le Petit Journal*.¹⁵⁵

At the same time, in Toronto, Pearl McCarthy of *The Globe and Mail* gave a positive reception to Pellan's skills as a colourist;¹⁵⁶ but the most well-known and respected of the English Canadian critics, Robert Fulford, wrote in the *Toronto Daily Star* of his profound boredom with the artist's extremely limited Surrealism and post-Cubism, which resulted in a patchwork, outdated style from the perspective of Greenberg's self-referential modernism.¹⁵⁷ In light of the "failure" of Pellan's most recent creative works, Fulford concluded, like Rodolphe de Repentigny before him and contemporary colleagues such as Guy Viau, that "the earlier the Pellan, the better".

Of course, this was mainly in reference to his Parisian works of the 1930s using flat paint, as well as his production of the early 1940s. However, his later work met with disfavour because his new “matérialiste” space was no longer two-dimensional, according to the North American formalist credo which was enjoying a certain measure of renown in English Canada and Québec.¹⁵⁸

As a preliminary consequence of this criticism, which was much more severe than in earlier years, as of the early 1960s, Pellán’s work increasingly took second place, in the eyes of Québec and English Canadian critics, to the painter’s “mythical” personality, to quote Toronto and Montréal titles of articles by Robert Fulford and *Le Devoir*, which both portrayed Pellán as “Merlin the enchanter” with witch-like powers, but for diametrically opposed reasons.¹⁵⁹ From this moment on, the figure of Pellán was to re-emerge in art criticism solely for the purpose of certain retrospective or commemorative events such as the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto,¹⁶⁰ the exhibition *A Century of Canadian Art, 1863-1963*, presented in London in 1964,¹⁶¹ the *Cinq Peintres Canadiens* exhibition presented at the Musée Galliera in Paris,¹⁶² and the exhibition inaugurating the new Musée d’art contemporain in 1965, or on the occasion of certain of Pellán’s activities outside the realm of painting such as mural art, stained glass, graphic arts, mixed media, etc.¹⁶³ In mid-decade, in the rare articles devoted to the painter, for example those by Claude Jasmin and Laurent Lamy,¹⁶⁴ the focus is placed on the painter’s facility with various disciplines, in a generally favourable light despite the prevailing context of modernist ideology. It appears that Québec critics were determined to use Pellán’s more recent Surrealist paintings replete with essentially sculptural values, his recent muralist experimentation with vast decorative surfaces which recalled architecture, his stained-glass windows designed and created for certain public buildings, his later cutout shapes, and his theatre sets and costumes for the 1946 production of Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*, later mounted by the Théâtre du Nouveau Monde in 1968,¹⁶⁵ to show that Pellán, the man, still excelled at turning his subjects of interest into poetry, whereas Pellán, the artist, “is getting old”, [Translation] in Jasmin’s disrespectful words.¹⁶⁶ In other words, although in 1968 Jasmin compared him to his contemporaries and concluded that he was no longer a painter of the modernist avant-garde, but rather “solitary, undoubtedly a bit of a misanthrope, with a tendency to bask in his legend”,¹⁶⁷ [Translation] he still noted in passing that Pellán was an innovator because he had broken down the boundaries between disciplines to work with several media at a time. As was his habit, Gladu went further, speaking enthusiastically of the extraordinary versatility of Pellán’s practices, which also included theatre.¹⁶⁸ However, Montréal theatre critics were much more circumspect and critical on the subject of Pellán’s incursion into the world of the dramatic arts.¹⁶⁹

Thanks to the prestigious event entitled *Voir Pellán*, held at the Musée d’art contemporain in 1969 to display Pellán’s projects executed for the theatre and celebrate the launching of the film on the artist by Louis Portugais—a carnivalesque, psychedelic, multidisciplinary happening which received extensive coverage in the local press¹⁷⁰—the dawn of the 1970s appeared the perfect moment to acknowledge and celebrate the artist’s decisive role in the field of culture. For example, in *La Presse*, Normand Thériault commented on the “not overly tranquil” nature of the celebration organized at the Musée d’art contemporain as a tribute to Pellán’s “talent and spirit”, [Translation] and hailed the drawings exhibited, the *Polychromées*

157. Robert Fulford, “The Myth of Pellán”, *Toronto Daily Star* (April 22, 1961).

158. Marie Carani, *L’œil de la critique*, *op. cit.*

159. Robert Fulford, “The Myth of Pellán”, *Toronto Daily Star* (April 22, 1961); Jules Verteil, “À propos de Pellán”, *Le Devoir* (January 20, 1961); “Pellán : l’homme”, *Le Devoir* (April 21, 1962).

160. “La peinture canadienne vue par *Avanti*”, *La Presse* (September 1, 1962).

161. “Panorama canadien”, *Perspectives* (February 8, 1964).

162. “Cinq peintres”, *Le Petit Journal* (January 12, 1964); “Les œuvres de trois peintres québécois exposés au Musée Galliera à Paris”, *Le Soleil* (December 28, 1963); François Hertel, “Cinq peintres canadiens au Musée Galliera”, *Les Débats* (January 14, 1964); “La presse parisienne loue des peintres canadiens”, *Le Devoir* (February 4, 1964).

163. Gilles Hénault, “Pellán dénonce les trucs en peinture. Il croit à l’alliance de la peinture et de l’architecture”, *Le Devoir* (April 27, 1960); “Place des Arts Work-Pellán Goes to Glass”, *The Gazette* (June 5, 1963); “Alfred Pellán décorera un bar de la salle de concert par un vitrail”, *Dimanche-Matin* (June 2, 1963); Dusty Vineberg, “Poster Distribution Curbed”, *The Montreal Star* (December 22, 1966); Luc Benoit, “Des bâtiments signés Pellán”, *Perspectives* (April 4, 1970).

164. Laurent Lamy, “Pellán, à la galerie Libre”, *Le Devoir* (October 12, 1963); Claude Jasmin, “Un Pellán qui fait ses gammes avec grande fantaisie”, *La Presse* (October 5, 1963); Claude Jasmin, “Peinture et commerce, Bellefleur et ses exégètes”, *Sept-jours* (December 28, 1968).

165. Charles Bolster, “A Vital Force in French Canada”, *The Montreal Star* (September 6, 1969); Jacques de Roussan, “Alfred Pellán et La Nuit des rois”, *Perspectives* (December 14, 1968); “Des costumes et des décors époustouffants”, *Le Nouveau Samedi* (December 21, 1968); “TNM Reviving Original Pellán Designs for ‘La Nuit des rois’”, *The Montreal Star* (November 16, 1968); Martial Dassylva, “‘La Nuit des rois’ au TNM ou l’épiphanie de Pellán”, *La Presse* (December 14, 1968); “La Nuit des rois”, *Echos-Vedettes* (December 28, 1968).

166. Claude Jasmin, “Peinture et commerce; Bellefleur et ses exégètes”, *Sept-jours* (December 28, 1968).

167. *Ibid.*

168. Paul Gladu, “Un hommage à Alfred Pellán et à son merveilleux talent”, *Le Petit Journal* (May 22, 1966).

169. Martial Dassylva, “Shakespeare et la peinture n’ont pas fait bon ménage”, *La Presse* (December 21, 1968); “Une Nuit des rois sinistre”, *Le Petit Journal* (December 22, 1968); Jean Basile, “Théâtre : au TNM, ce n’est plus une question de pièce mais de politique”, *Le Devoir* (December 17, 1968).

170. Normand Thériault, “Vivre Pellán”, *La Presse* (May 10, 1969); Luc Perrault,

"Entrevoir Pellan", *La Presse* (May 1, 1969); Robert Ayre, "Pellan: the Old Enchanter", *The Montreal Star* (May 10, 1969); "Society Joins the Acid Scene", *The Montreal Star* (April 30, 1969); "Voir Pellan : une soirée pas très tranquille", *La Presse* (April 30, 1969); "Une soirée Voir Pellan au Musée d'art contemporain", *Le Devoir* (April 28, 1969); "Alfred Pellan Premières", *The Gazette* (May 1, 1969); Jacques Thériault, "Un cyclotron culturel en délire : image, son, danse, couleur", *Le Devoir* (May 1, 1969); "Une nuit Pellan du tonnerre!", *Echos-Vedette* (May 10, 1969).
171. Normand Thériault, "Vivre Pellan", *La Presse* (May 10, 1969).

172. Paquerette Villeneuve, "Un grand peintre toujours en avance sur son temps", *Châtelaine* (April 1970), p. 34-37 and 60-63.

173. François Hertel, "De Pellan", *Le Devoir* (April 13, 1971); "Des costumes conçus par Pellan en 1946 font l'objet d'une exposition à Paris", *Le Droit* (March 29, 1971); "Exposition Pellan", *L'Action* (March 29, 1971).

174. Paul Dumas, "Consécration d'Alfred Pellan", *L'information médicale et paramédicale* (December 19, 1972).

175. Denys Morisset, "Salut Alfred", *Le Soleil* (September 9, 1972).

176. Laurent Lamy, "Pour les peintres du Québec, celui qui fut une source sûre de l'art moderne : Pellan", *Forces*, No. 23 (1973).

177. Germain Lefebvre, *Pellan* (Montréal: Les Éditions de l'Homme, 1973), 162 p.; *Pellan* (La Prairie: Éditions Marcel Broquet, 1986), 216 p. (preface by Paul Dumas).

178. Gilles Toupin, "Les coups de chapeau du sorcier", *La Presse* (November 4, 1972).

179. Jacques de Tonnancour, "Propos sur un sorcier", *Amérique française*, Vol. 1, No. 2, (December 24, 1941), p. 16.

180. Claude Jasmin, "Je suis un sorcier", *La Presse* (July 14, 1962).

181. Catherine Bates, "Quebec's Alfred Pellan Still Leads", *The Montreal Star* (October 21, 1972).

182. Michael White, "Lavish Display of Surrealist Alfred Pellan's Work", *The Gazette* (October 21, 1972); M. White, "Pellan: An Exciting Painter, an Overwhelming Spectacle", *The Gazette* (November 4, 1972).

[Polychrome series], which were variations on a sketch of the female body.¹⁷¹ An article in *Châtelaine* praised this "great painter always ahead of his time".¹⁷² [Translation] An exhibition of his theatre costumes at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris was reported with great fanfare here by François Hertel in *Le Devoir*.¹⁷³ At the time of the Pellan retrospective in 1972 organized jointly by the Musée du Québec and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, and later presented in Ottawa, the hesitations and doubts raised regularly throughout the 1950s and 1960s concerning Pellan's exaggerated use of textural effects and technical over-indulgences were forgotten. Previous instances of negative attitudes were also forgotten. Paul Dumas could thus truthfully state that this retrospective "smacks of a veritable triumph" [Translation] and finally secured recognition for the painter in his own country.¹⁷⁴ Pellan's close friend Denys Morisset published a message of admiration and acknowledgement on behalf of all his contemporaries.¹⁷⁵ Laurent Lamy highlighted the outstanding moments of his career.¹⁷⁶ After Maurice Gagnon and Guy Robert, Germain Lefebvre published a third monograph on the artist in 1973, which was updated and reprinted in 1986.¹⁷⁷ Pellan also carried out a joint project with poet Claude Péloquin. The press remarked on his presence at the *Québec Fête* event in summer 1975 on Mount Royal during the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations, as well as his participation in the exhibitions *Dix peintres du Québec* at the Musée du Québec, and *Trois générations d'art québécois* and *Tendances actuelles au Québec* organized by the Musée d'art contemporain. The threat of domestic exile so feared by the painter, which had begun to wane during the 1960s, now definitely seemed to be a thing of the past. It was therefore in this new context of public recognition that critics decided to take a long look back—respectfully this time—at the development and various ups and downs of Pellan's artistic career. These critics made a point of commenting warmly on the honours and various awards which Pellan had accumulated throughout the decade, such as the Centennial Medal, the Prix Philippe-Hébert of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, the Molson Prize in 1973, the Companion of the Order of Canada, honorary member of *Vie des Arts* magazine, Grand Montréalais in the field of the fine arts, and three honorary doctorates awarded by the University of Ottawa, Université Laval, and Sir George Williams University.

Unfortunately, critics still tended to fall back on Pellan's biography and general style rather than conduct a true analysis of his work, which contributed to the artist's taking second place to Borduas, something he sensed without fully grasping or understanding the implications. In 1972, commenting in *La Presse* on Pellan's second retrospective which included 176 paintings, costumes, multi-coloured masks, and stones embellished with drawings, Gilles Toupin fell back on the oft-used term "sorcerer" and its symbolical, esoteric, and shaman-like connotations,¹⁷⁸ initially used by Jacques de Tonnancour in 1941¹⁷⁹ and quoted by Pellan himself with regard to his work at the dawn of the 1960s.¹⁸⁰ Recalling the theory of cultural catch-up which had become inextricably linked to Pellan, Toupin described in detail the "formal" value and reality of his work, which had made it the first contemporary pictorial style to emerge on the Québec arts scene. While the *Montreal Star* eloquently titled one of its articles "Quebec's Alfred Pellan Still Leads",¹⁸¹ Michael White, in *The Gazette*, expressed his appreciation of Pellan's startling new combination of the referential form of the image with the proto-surrealist psychedelic content.¹⁸² In this sense, his most recent experimentation with various media was as up to date as that of the young

painters of the counterculture. Without drawing definitive conclusions from this, White did bring up in his article Pellán's ambiguous relationship with Borduas and the Automatiste movement which, according to critics, needed to be studied in depth in order to clear up the mystery surrounding it.

In *Le Devoir*, Jean T. Bédard began his article by underlining the popular success of this new retrospective.¹⁸³ However, here again, he launched immediately into the still-unsolved problem of Pellán's complex socio-esthetic relationship with Borduas. He wondered, quite rightly, whether this exhibition would succeed in "ending this prejudice born of the quarrel between Pellán and Borduas and which attributes to this oeuvre [that of Pellán] the sole value of catalyst in the Québec community of the era, in short, the bearer of tidings from the school of Paris", [Translation] at the expense of the original, innovative creative effort specific to Borduas's automatist approach. Highly sympathetic to Pellán's semi-abstract and semi-figurative art,¹⁸⁴ Bédard chose to sing the praises of his artistic thought process, which was not a way of "referring to other works to support his own", [Translation] but a true "synthesis" of modern formal discoveries. Contrary to the general interpretation among modern critics and in French-speaking Québec during the preceding decade, Bédard wrote that "rejecting (in an exemplary fashion) predetermined systems, the artist allowed himself to be guided by colour and the quest for an ever-more-refined beauty". [Translation] Hence the "flowers of medium and explosions of colour" in a space which, although expanded, "remained two-dimensional" (contrary to the writings of Rodolphe de Repentigny and other critics during the 1960s) and which "possessed a character which was more symbolic than realistic", posing as "the (ideal) balance between light and medium".¹⁸⁵ [Translation] Between 1958 and 1969, the many *Jardins* series which, through their formal simplification and breakdown into countless networks of tensions operating in and on the surface of the canvases, were to be the outcome of Pellán's formal experiments with basic structures of natural shapes, bore witness to this.

A few years later, in Toronto, an article in *The Globe and Mail* also referred to the Pellán-Borduas conflict and to Pellán's increasingly appreciated and positive jack-of-all-trades reputation, free of rigid systems.¹⁸⁶ Henceforth, Pellán's explosive, contradictory relationship with Borduas was no longer a taboo subject, as it had seemed to be in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s; this second conspiracy of silence (which followed the one surrounding his oeuvre as such) caused Pellán to state publicly, on more than one occasion, that he felt increasingly neglected and abandoned in Québec in favour both of the esthetic emergence and the socio-esthetic triumph of the Automatistes in Canada. In reaction to the Automatiste reign, which Montréal and Québec City critics were to continue supporting, Pellán even ended up, during the 1970s, insisting more fervently than ever on the fact that his form of surrealist automatism had appeared on the esthetic scene before that practised by the Surrationalists.¹⁸⁷ For he seemed to have a great deal of difficulty accepting both his entrance into our museum of contemporary art and his cultural, conceptual, and formal ranking behind Borduas. When François-Marc Gagnon stated his intention in 1973 behind interpreting the neo-liberal, anarchist ideologies present in the two vanguards confronting each other on the subject of cultural Québec's move toward modernity beyond a strict personality conflict or a simple opposition of artistic interests, independent of Pellán's stances and of the arguments and invectives exchanged by the friends and companions of the two painters,¹⁸⁸ the historian

183. Jean T. Bédard, "La longue maturation de l'œil et de la main", *Le Devoir* (November 11, 1972).

184. Marie Carani, "Le corpus Pellán: une relecture sémiotique", *Protée*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (Fall 1986), p. 15-25.

185. Jean T. Bédard, "La longue maturation de l'œil et de la main", *Le Devoir* (November 11, 1972). See also by the same author: "La sauvagerie apprivoisée de Pellán", *Culture vivante* (September 26, 1972), p. 2-11.

186. Adele Freedman, "Once a Hero, Pellán Commands a World Full of Color", *The Globe and Mail* (April 14, 1979).

187. "Pellán parle", *Liberté*, loc. cit.; "La queue de la comète. Alfred Pellán. Témoin du surréalisme", *Vie des Arts* (Fall 1975), p. 18-21.

188. François-Marc Gagnon, "Pellán, Borduas and the Automatistes. Men and Ideas in Quebec", *Artscanada*, 174-175, (December 1972 – January 1973), p. 48-55.

189. Gilles Daigneault, "Les fils de Borduas et de Pellan", *Le Devoir* (November 19, 1983).

190. Francine Dufresne, "Pellan avait rompu le silence bien avant le *Refus global*", *Le Devoir* (September 20, 1978); Yves Dumouchel, "Pellan vs Borduas", *Le Devoir* (October 14, 1978); Robert Lapalme, "Pellan avant Borduas", *Le Devoir* (November 19, 1979).

191. See, in particular, the works of Jean-René Ostiguy, Reesa Greenberg, François-Marc Gagnon and Fernande Saint-Martin.

192. Yvonne Bligné, "Forces nouvelles", *Le Peintre* (March, 1980), p. 15-16; Pierre Mazars, "Sous le froc et la discipline", *L'Aurore* (February 16, 1980); Pierre Cabanne, "Forces nouvelles: un feu de paille", *Le Matin* (March 8, 1980); Claude Dorval, "Le retour du sujet", *Profils* (March 13, 1980); Pierre Masteau, "Un retour au métier consciencieux de la tradition", *Aspects de la France* (March 6, 1980); Jean-Marc Champagne, "Forces nouvelles et le jeune Degas", *Nice-Matin* (March 20, 1980); "Forces nouvelles", *L'Express* (February 16, 1980).

193. Jacques de Roussan, "Pellan en noir et blanc", *Perspectives, Le Nouvelliste* (December 6, 1980); Gilles Toupin, "La face cachée de l'œuvre", *La Presse* (June 13, 1981); Normand Biron, "Les dessins de Pellan", *Vie des Arts*, Vol. 102 (Spring 1981), p. 39-42; René Viau, "Pellan: en attendant l'histoire", *Le Devoir* (June 13, 1981); Lawrence Sabbath, "Pellan's Drawings Exhibit Timely Techniques", *The Gazette* (June 13, 1981); Martin-P. Côté, "Pellan à travers ses dessins", *Le Journal de Montréal* (May 30, 1981); Susan Mertens, "From the Surreal to the Macabre ...", *Vancouver Sun* (February 17, 1981); Eileen McDermitt, "Pellan's Two Current Shows", *Ottawa Revue* (December 4-10, 1980); Rosalie Smith McCrea, "National Gallery Shows Pellán's Versatility, Vision", *The Ottawa Citizen* (November 29, 1980).

observed that both Pellán and Borduas shared the same basic concern: to bring Québec society out of the forced confinement which repressed it and curbed both its cultural and political development, and enable individuals to fulfil themselves more completely, free of these constraints. However, this concern was based on two irreconcilable visions of the world.

While it succeeded in finally resituating Pellán's esthetic debate within contemporary Québec history, Gagnon's interpretation may have exaggeratedly polarized the Québec arts scene since that time, reducing it to nothing more than a confrontation between right and left, between the progressive orientation of Borduas and Pellán's more traditional approach. Although, for convenient interpretation, we can maintain this antagonistic dimension of Québec's art history, the reality of Pellán's body of work seems to me to be much more complex. The painter's varied reception by critics, highs and lows, seems to account for this fact, especially given that in the space of twenty years, between 1940 and 1960, critical manifestations ranged from euphoric enthusiasm to an awkward, complacent silence which both acknowledged and confirmed his second-place ranking as an artist. In this respect, we know full well that it is Borduas whom modern Québec artists adopted in the 1960s as their common forefather, rather than Pellán; it was the subversive orientation of the *Refus global* which successive generations of Québec creators from Post-Automatistes to Post-Plasticiens, from Pop artists to conceptualists, cited when fighting their own battles,¹⁸⁹ with Québec art critics accompanying them, and disseminating and applauding their choices (mainly, it must be confessed, from Borduas' standpoint), especially in the late 1970s, when the Borduas-Pellán debate once again stole the limelight.¹⁹⁰ Hence a double motive for frustration and resentment on Pellán's part during the last two decades of his life.

Around 1975, living virtually as a recluse in Sainte-Rose near Montréal, exhausted and often ill, Pellán cut back considerably on his artistic activities. He had in recent years focused his painting and drawing efforts on the *Bestiary* series, and had accumulated quite a number of them. Mere coincidence or, more probably, a brutal realization of this new reality, it was also around 1975 that Pellán's œuvre moved definitively from the forefront of Québec's art scene to the annals of art history, which began to question, quite apart from the monumental nature of his character, his original formal contribution in relation to his contemporaries such as Borduas, or to younger artistic generations.¹⁹¹ Strangely enough, when Québec art historians began to focus on the key components of Pellán's formal work, they tended to merely follow in the footsteps of critics who—with rare exceptions such as Jean Paul Lemieux, Reynald, Charles Doyon, Marcel Parizeau, and Rodolphe de Repentigny—had often been content to sum up the painter's career based on press clippings amassed by Pellán himself; a telling testimony, as Pellán's career drew to a close, to the lack of discussion and analysis of the formal œuvre itself, as compared to the emphasis placed on the role of catalyst attributed to the artist in Québec's sociocultural setting. A study of the body of criticism of Pellán shows, in the numerous articles published since the 1920s, a clear lack of serious, in-depth interpretation of his artistic work. This may explain the unpleasant impression, long harboured by the artist, that Québec critics had abandoned him, especially in light of the fact that Borduas' work was seen, reported on, interpreted and understood with more perspicacity and on a more regular basis than his own over the years.

However, the exhibition of Pellán's drawings mounted by Reesa Greenberg and sent on tour by the National Gallery of Canada in 1981,

gave impetus to a more profound analytical discussion on the Limoilou-born painter. The preceding year, in Paris, the retrospective exhibition of the Forces nouvelles group at the Musée d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris stirred up interesting esthetic debates and propelled Pellan anew into the European limelight.¹⁹² Here again, while the likes of Jacques de Roussan, Gilles Toupin, Normand Biron, René Viau, and Lawrence Sabbath in Montréal, and their counterparts in the rest of Canada dusted off the same old quotes from the painter's journal and recounted, for the benefit of new generations of Canadians, his legendary skirmishes with Borduas and the Automatiste movement¹⁹³—which, near the end of his life, Pellan often mischievously embellished—the rediscovery of this hidden aspect of his œuvre encouraged a number of specialists in artistic production to take a closer look at it. Furthermore, a research group in the field of visual semiotics at the Université du Québec à Montréal analyzed his work between 1983 and 1986, marking the first study of its kind.¹⁹⁴ Subsequently, the very nature of events such as the publication of a book on art with serigraphs by Pellan,¹⁹⁵ the launching of a film by André Gladu on the silence surrounding an artist “who is so renowned that people forget to talk about him”,¹⁹⁶ [Translation] the controversial awarding of the Borduas prize to Pellan in 1986,¹⁹⁷ the artist's death two years later,¹⁹⁸ and the first posthumous group exhibition at the Maison des arts de Laval,¹⁹⁹ became, for local critics (and to a lesser extent, critics throughout Canada), ideal occasions to settle old scores with “the history of Pellan”, and with our cultural history as a whole, as if they felt somewhat guilty for having ostracized the artist without, in retrospect, being able to explain why, and were trying one last time to restore to the painter his rightful place in the pantheon of Québec art beside Paul-Émile Borduas. The recent debates in 1992 on Québec painting, which are still ongoing, have not put an end to this discussion; on the contrary, they have fuelled it and re-established Alfred Pellan, yet again and for all time, as a landmark figure in our cultural history.

194. See the special issue entitled *Sémiologies de Pellan* from the Québec journal of semiotics *Protée*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Fall 1986).

195. Jocelyne Lepage, “Deux joyeux drilles, Pellan et Vigneault”, *La Presse* (August 4, 1984).

196. Luc Perrault, “Un personnage haut en couleur”, *La Presse* (September 27, 1986); Léonce Gaudreault, “Un documentaire sur Pellan le libérateur”, *Le Soleil* (October 1, 1986).

197. Gilles Daigneault, “Les Prix du Québec 84. Alfred Pellan: ‘Réflexion faite, je l’ai accepté’”, *Le Devoir* (October 27, 1984); Lawrence Sabbath, “Painter Pellan Wins \$15,000 Borduas Prize”, *The Gazette* (November 3, 1984); Jocelyne Lepage, “L’occasion d’un règlement de comptes”, *La Presse* (October 27, 1984); Gilles Daigneault, “Pellan. Les années 80”, *Vie des Arts* (March 1987), p. 30 and 60-61.

198. Robert Lévesque, “La peinture est en deuil d’Alfred Pellan”, *Le Devoir* (November 2, 1988); Arthur Gladu et France Pilon, “Pellan 1920-1988. Propos sur un sorcier”, *Le Devoir* (November 5, 1988); Pierre Roberge, “Le peintre Alfred Pellan n’est plus”, *Le Nouvelliste* (November 2, 1988); Paul Villeneuve, “Alfred Pellan est décédé”, *Le Journal de Montréal* (November 2, 1988); “Pioneer of Quebec Modern Art Painter Alfred Pellan Dies at 82”, *The Gazette* (November 2, 1988); “Quebec Artist Considered One of Province’s Greatest”, *The Globe and Mail* (November 2, 1988).

199. Marie Laurier, “À Laval, coup de maîtres”, *Le Devoir* (November 19, 1988); J. P. Charbonneau, “Pellan, Fortin et Gagnon à la Maison des arts”, *La Presse* (November 19, 1988); Ann Duncan, “A Timely and Fitting Tribute to Alfred Pellan”, *The Gazette* (November 19, 1988).

**TECHNICAL INFORMATION
ON WORKS SHOWN**

WORKS REPRODUCED

1906 - 1940

1

Les Fraises

[Strawberries], 1920

Oil on plywood

33 × 43 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

2

Le Port de Québec

[Port of Québec], 1922

Oil on canvas mounted on hard backing

36.8 × 74.2 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

3

Un coin du Vieux Québec

[A Corner of Old Québec], 1922

Oil on canvas glued to board

89 × 57 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

4

Nature morte à l'assiette

[Still-Life with Plate], 1922

Oil on canvas mounted on board

41.5 × 48.2 cm

Pierre Saint-Georges, Verdun, QC

5

Autoportrait

[Self-Portrait], 1928

Oil on board

30.5 × 23.3 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

6

Tête de femme

[Head of a Woman], 1931

Oil on board

34 × 25.5 cm

Private Collection, La Macaza, QC

7

Femme au peignoir rose

[Woman in Pink Robe],

ca. 1931

Oil on canvas

48 × 39 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

8

M^{lle} Geneviève Tiro

[Mademoiselle Geneviève

Tiro], 1932

Oil on canvas

41 × 33.3 cm

John Bennett, Montréal, QC

9

Nature morte à la lampe

[Still-Life with Lamp], 1932

Oil on canvas

65.5 × 81.5 cm

Musée national d'art moderne, Paris,
France

10

Instruments de musique – A

[Musical Instruments – A],

1933

Oil on canvas

132 × 195.5 cm

Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley,
Mass.

11

Tête rectangulaire

[Rectangular Head], ca. 1933

Oil on canvas

46 × 68.2 cm

Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC

12

Jeune Fille aux anémones

[Girl with Anemones], ca. 1933

Oil on canvas

116 × 88.8 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

13

Les Pommes rouges

[Red Apples], ca. 1933

Oil on plywood

46.2 × 60.8 cm

Private Collection, Markham, Ont.

14

Fruits au compotier

[Fruit in a Fruit Bowl], ca. 1934

Oil on plywood

79.9 × 119.8 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

15

La Table verte

[Green Table], ca. 1934

Oil on canvas

54.3 × 81 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

16

Jeune Fille au col blanc

[Young Girl with White Collar],

ca. 1934

Oil on canvas

91.7 × 73.2 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

17

Bouche riieuse

[Laughing Mouth], 1935

Oil on jute

55.1 × 46 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

18

L'Heure inhumaine

[The Inhuman Hour], ca. 1935

Oil on canvas

130 × 162.5 cm

F. David Gooding, Vancouver, BC

19

Hommes-Rugby

[Footballers/Rugby Players],
ca. 1935

Oil on canvas

54.2 × 64.2 cm

CPC Collection, Montréal, QC

20

Le Panier de fraises

[Basket of Strawberries], ca. 1935

Oil on canvas

81 × 101 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

21

Peintre au paysage

[Artist in Landscape], ca. 1935

Oil on panel

82.2 × 180.3 cm

Art Gallery of Windsor, Windsor, Ont.

22

La Fenêtre ouverte

[Open Window], ca. 1936

Oil on canvas

44.5 × 81.3 cm

Hart House Permanent Collection,
University of Toronto, Toronto, Ont.

23

Jeune Comédien

[Young Actor], 1935-1948

Oil on canvas

100 × 80.9 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

24

Alpinistes

[Mountains Climbers], ca. 1936

Oil on canvas

22.2 × 33 cm

Private Collection, Charny, QC

25

Nature morte à la palette

[Still-Life with Palette], 1933

Oil on canvas

46 × 55 cm

Ministère de l'Éducation nationale
et de la culture – Fonds national d'art
contemporain – Paris, France

26

Untitled, ca. 1936

Oil on canvas

81 × 100 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

27

Pensée de boules

[Bubble Thoughts], ca. 1936

Oil on panel

165 × 90 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ont.

28

Au clair de lune

[In the Light of the Moon], 1937

Oil on canvas

161.8 × 97.1 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

29

Les Oranges

[Oranges], ca. 1937

Oil on canvas

53 × 80 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

30

Sous-terre

[Underground], 1938

Oil on canvas

33 × 55 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal,
Montréal, QC

31

Terrasse de café

[Café], ca. 1938

Oil on canvas

21.3 × 32.3 cm

Private Collection, Saint-Lambert, QC

32

Trois Femmes dansant

au crépuscule

[Three Women Dancing
at Dusk], 1938

Oil on canvas

22.2 × 33.3 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal,
Montréal, QC

33

Vénus et le Taureau

[Venus and the Bull], ca. 1938

Oil on canvas

73.5 × 50 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

34

La Spirale

[Spiral], ca. 1939

Oil on canvas

73 × 54 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

35

Le Fluide du coudrier

[Fluid of the Hazel], 1939

Oil on canvas

81 × 64.8 cm

La Laurentienne Vie inc., Québec City, QC

36

Mascarade

[Masquerade], 1939-1942*

Oil on canvas

130.5 × 162.2 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal,
Montréal, QC

* This painting dates from Paris ca. 1939
and was exhibited at the Art
Association of Montreal in 1940.
It was later retouched (this version)
and dated by the artist in 1942.

37

Fleurs et dominos

[Flowers and Dominoes],
ca. 1940

Oil on canvas

115.9 × 89 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

38

Nature morte à la palette

[Still-Life with Palette], 1940

Oil on canvas

64.8 × 80.7 cm

Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton, NB

1941-1957

39

Nu à la catalogue

[Nude on Rag Rug], 1941

Oil on canvas

43.2 × 48.2 cm

Roy L. Heenan, Montréal, QC

40

Fillette en rouge

[Young Girl in Red], 1941

Oil on canvas

56 × 43 cm

Private Collection, Laval, QC

41

Fillette aux lunettes

[Young Girl with Glasses], 1941

Oil on canvas

56 × 43 cm

Private Collection, Ottawa, Ont.

42

Maisons de Charlevoix

[Houses in Charlevoix], 1941

Oil on canvas

63.6 × 91.4 cm

Power Corporation of Canada/Power Corporation du Canada Collection, Montréal, QC

43

Cordée de bois

[Cord of Wood], 1941

Oil on canvas

43.1 × 58.7 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

44

Lampe à pétrole

[Oil Lamp], 1942

Oil on canvas

91.5 × 63.7 cm

P. Gauvreau, Sainte-Foy, QC

45

Nature morte aux deux couteaux

[Still-Life with Two Knives], 1942

Oil on canvas

101 × 76.2 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montréal, QC

46

Le Couteau à pain

[Bread Knife], 1942

Oil on canvas

91.5 × 63.5 cm

The Hiram Walker Group, Windsor, Ont.

47

Panier de fraises

[Basket of Strawberries], 1942

Oil on canvas

91.5 × 63.5 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

48

Tête de femme sur fond fleuri

[Head of a Woman on Flowered Background], 1942

Gouache on paper glued to board

64.6 × 48.9 cm

Hélène and Jean-Marie Roy, Québec City, QC

49

Homme et femme [petit]

[Man and Woman (small)], ca. 1943

Oil and ink on paper glued to plywood

17.4 × 19.7 cm

Private Collection, Charny, QC

50

Surprise académique

[Academic Surprise], ca. 1943

Oil, silica and tobacco on canvas

161.6 × 129.5 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

51

Nature morte au verre de cristal

[Still-Life with Crystal Glass], ca. 1943

Oil on canvas

63.5 × 59.5 cm

Private Collection, Outremont, QC

52

Symphonie

[Symphony], ca. 1943

Oil on canvas

129.5 × 161.5 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

53

Quatre Femmes

[Four Women], 1944-1947

Oil on canvas

208.7 × 167.6 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montréal, QC

54

Les Nymphomanes

[The Nymphomaniacs], ca. 1945

India ink, oil (or coloured ink) on paper glued to wood

20.3 × 17.6 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

55

Calme obscur

[Dark Calm], 1944-1947

Oil, silica and slag on canvas mounted on plywood

208 × 167.3 cm

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Montréal, QC

56

Conciliabule

[Secret Conversation], ca. 1945

Oil on canvas

208 × 167.5 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

57

Sur la plage

[On the Beach], 1945

Oil on canvas

207.7 × 167.6 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

58

Fruits, cuillère, verre

[Fruit, Spoon and Glass], ca. 1945

Oil, silica and tobacco on canvas

100.5 × 81 cm

Private Collection, Hampstead, QC

59

Le Petit Avion

[Small Plane], ca. 1945

Oil and sand on canvas

91.5 × 155.3 cm

Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg, Man.

60

Fauconnerie

[Falconry], ca. 1946

Oil on paper glued to plywood

20.3 × 35.5 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

61

La Veuve Bergère

[The Widow Shepherdess], ca. 1946

Watercolour (or oil) on paper glued to wood

20 × 35 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

62

Femme d'une pomme

[Lady with Apple], ca. 1946

Oil on canvas

160 × 129.7 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ont.

63

Magie de la chaussure

[Magic of Shoes], 1946

Oil on canvas

213.5 × 95 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

64

Citrons ultra-violets

[Ultraviolet Lemons], 1947

Oil on canvas

208 × 167.3 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

65

Portrait de Nanette

[Portrait of Nanette], 1947

Oil on canvas

161.3 × 129.5 cm

Mr. and Mrs. Jules Loeb Collection,
Toronto, Ont.

66

L'Homme A grave

[Man Engraving], ca. 1948

Gouache and ink on paper

29.8 × 22.8 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

67

Évasion

[Escape], ca. 1950

Oil on canvas

153 × 90.9 cm

Art Gallery of Hamilton, Hamilton, Ont.

68

Fabrique de fleurs magiques

[Magic Flower Factory], ca. 1950

Oil on canvas

180.3 × 144.8 cm

Toronto Dominion Bank/Banque
Toronto-Dominion, Toronto, Ont.

69

À vol d'oiseau

[As the Crow Flies], 1952

Mixed media on hard backing

32.9 × 45.1 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

70

La Chouette

[The Owl], ca. 1954

Oil, sand and various materials on canvas

208 × 167.5 cm

Musée national d'art moderne, Paris,
France

71

L'Amour fou

[Mad Love], 1954

Oil on canvas

115.5 × 81 cm

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,
Montréal, QC,

Purchase, Horsley and Annie Townsend
Bequest

72

Fleur du mal

[Flower of Pain], ca. 1956

Oil on canvas

93 × 76.2 cm

Private Collection, Monaco

73

Icare

[Icarus], ca. 1956

Mixed media on canvas mounted

on hard backing

47.5 × 37.4 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

74

L'Affût

[The Stalker], ca. 1956

Oil on canvas

88.8 × 130.2 cm

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

75

La Femme usine

[Factory Woman], ca. 1956

Oil on velvet paper

25.5 × 33.3 cm

Gaétane and Jean Mathieu, Verdun, QC

76

Fées d'eau

[Water Fairies], 1957

Oil on paper glued to board

36.8 × 26.7 cm

Richard Grenier, Sillery, QC

77

Vertige du temps

[Temporal Vertigo], 1957

Oil and ink on paper glued to board

28 × 33 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

78

Le Sablier

[The Hourglass], 1957

Oil on paper glued to hard backing

27.8 × 32.7 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

79

La Brise

[Breeze], 1957

Oil and ink on paper glued to wood

32.3 × 24.7 cm

Martha and Peter Duffield,
Westmount, QC

1958 - 1973

80

La Maison hantée

[Haunted House], 1958

Oil and ink on paper glued

to hard backing

29.2 × 45.9 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

81

Jardin rouge

[Red Garden], 1958

Oil and polyfilla on canvas

104.7 × 186.4 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

82

Jardin vert

[Green Garden], 1958

Oil and polyfilla on canvas

104.6 × 186.3 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

83

Chez le fermier

[At the Farmer's], 1959

Oil on wood panel

22.3 × 50.2 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

84

Et le soleil continue

[And the Sun Shines On],
ca. 1938-1959

Oil, silica and tobacco on canvas

40.6 × 55.8 cm

Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

*Pellan kept a photograph of the first

version of this canvas (painted

ca. 1938) in his inventory.

He eventually modified

its composition in 1959.

85

Mirage

[Mirage], 1959

Oil and silica on canvas

91.5 × 63.5 cm

John and Molly Pollock, Toronto, Ont.

86

Jeunesse

[Youth], 1960

Oil and ink on paper glued to plywood

28.6 × 21.6 cm

Mr. and Mrs. Louis-Jacques Beaulieu,
Montréal, QC

87

Danseuses en coulisse

[Dancers in the Wings], 1960

Oil and silica on paper glued to plywood

28.5 × 22 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

88

Repos

[Resting], 1960

Oil, ink and silica (or tobacco)
on paper glued to plywood
32.8 × 25.7 cm
Private Collection, Lennoxville, QC

89

Luna Park

[Luna Park], 1960

Oil and silica on canvas
94 × 73.5 cm
The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery,
Kitchener, Ont.

90

Croissant de lune

[Crescent Moon], 1960

Oil and India ink on paper glued
to plywood
29.5 × 21.5 cm
Musée d'art de Joliette, QC

91

Jole de vivre – B

[Joy of Living – B], 1961

Oil on paper glued to hard backing
33 × 25.5 cm
Private Collection, Laval, QC

92

Phosphorescence

[Phosphorescence], 1961

Oil and silica on canvas
116 × 128.5 cm
ICI Canada Inc., Toronto, Ont.

93

Germination

[Germination], 1961

Oil, silica and tobacco on canvas
86.3 × 73.6 cm
The Edmonton Art Gallery Collection,
purchased in 1965
Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton,
Alberta.

94

L'Aube magique

[Magic Dawn], 1961

Oil on canvas
86.8 × 74 cm
With permission from the Drabinsky
Gallery, Toronto, Ont.

95

Miroitement

[Shimmering], 1961

Oil, silica and glass on board
76 × 54 cm
Roberts Gallery, Toronto, Ont.

96

Joyaux aquatiques

[Aquatic Gems], 1962

Oil and silica on plywood
36.9 × 184.3 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

97

Adam et Ève et les diables

[Adam, Eve and the Devils],
1962

Oil on canvas mounted on wood
23 × 33 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

98

Le Champ

[Field], 1964

Oil, silica and polyfilla on plywood
70.5 × 121.9 cm
Mackenzie Art Gallery, University
of Regina, Regina, Sask.

99

Végétaux marins

[Aquatic Plants], 1964

Oil and silica on plywood
122.5 × 81.5 cm
Collection of the City of Kingston,
Kingston, Ont.

100

Jardin mécanique

[Mechanical Garden], 1965

Acrylic and plastic on wood
121.9 × 121.9 cm
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC

101

Le Buisson ardent

[Firethorn], 1966

Oil and silica on plywood
32.7 × 55 cm
The Gallery at Arts Court/La Galerie à la
Cour des arts (Firestone Collection),
Ottawa, Ont.

102

Les Carnivores

[The Carnivores], 1966

Oil and silica on plywood
66 × 46.5 cm
Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax, NS

103

Sioux! Sioux!

[Sioux! Sioux!], 1969

Oil and polyfilla on plywood
34 × 35.5 cm
Private Collection, Outremont, QC

104

Environnement

[Environment], 1969

Oil, silica and tobacco on plywood
31 × 45.5 cm
Private Collection, Outremont, QC

105

J'herborise

[I Herbalize], 1969

Oil, silica and glass on plywood
34.5 × 36.5 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

106

Série noire – B

[Black Series – B], 1970

Oil and silica on canvas mounted on
plywood
45.5 × 33 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

107

Naissance de Vénus – B

[Birth of Venus – B], 1970

Oil and silica on paper glued
to hard backing
29.3 × 37.7 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

108

Oniromancie

[Oneiromancy], 1970

Oil, ink and silica on paper glued
to plywood
35 × 30.6 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

109

Ripolinade

[Ripolinade], 1970

Oil, ink and silica on paper glued
to plywood
32.5 × 30.5 cm
Private Collection, Outremont, QC

110

Pop Shop, 1970

Oil, ink and silica on paper glued
to plywood
32.6 × 30.6 cm
Quebecor Inc., QC

111

Baroquerie

[Baroquerie], 1970

Oil and silica on canvas
91.5 × 63.5 cm
Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Ont.

112

Série noire – C

[Black Series – C], 1971

Oil on canvas mounted on hard backing
36.8 × 68.5 cm
CPC Collection, Montréal, QC

1974 - 1988

113

Bestiaire 2^e

[Bestiary 2], 1974

Oil and India ink on board
26.4 × 36.8 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

114

Bestiaire 3^e

[Bestiary 3], 1974

Oil and India ink on board
26.3 × 37 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

115

Bestiaire 4^e

[Bestiary 4], 1974

Oil and India ink on velvet paper
50.8 × 60.5 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

116

Bestiaire 5^e

[Bestiary 5], 1974

Oil and India ink on paper
21.6 × 35.4 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

117

Bestiaire 6^e

[Bestiary 6], 1974

Oil and India ink on canvas
27.2 × 44.9 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

118

Bestiaire 17^e

[Bestiary 17], 1976

Oil and India ink on canvas mounted
on board
27 × 34 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

119

Bestiaire 18^e

[Bestiary 18], 1976

Oil, India ink and pencil on paper
mounted on board
21.9 × 35 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

120

Fleurs - D

[Flowers - D], 1978

Glue, acrylic and India ink on velvet paper
66 × 51 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

121

Gymnastique - B

[Gymnastics - B], 1980

Oil on linen
121.9 × 121.9 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

122

Bestiaire 23^e

[Bestiary 23], 1981

Oil and silica on plywood
121.9 × 121.9 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

123

Bestiaire 24^e

[Bestiary 24], 1981

Oil and silica on plywood
121.9 × 121.9 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

124

Bestiaire 26^e

[Bestiary 26], 1984

Oil and oil pastel on canvas
121.9 × 121.9 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

WORKS NOT REPRODUCED

125

Jeune Fille au collier vert
[Young Girl
with Green Necklace], 1930

Oil on canvas mounted on wood panel
40.5 × 31.7 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

126

Les Pensées
[The Pansies], ca. 1935

Oil on canvas
81.5 × 100.7 cm
The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts,
Montréal, QC,
Purchase, Harriette J. MacDonnell Bequest

127

**Village de la Petite-Rivière-
Saint-François**
[Village of Petite-Rivière-
Saint-François], 1941

Oil on canvas
58.5 × 43 cm
Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

128

La Lecture
[Reading], 1944

Oil and watercolour on paper glued
to board
64.2 × 48.6 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

129

Floraison
[Blossoming], ca. 1944

Oil and ink on board
19.8 × 17.8 cm
Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

130

Les Îles de la Nuit
[The Islands of the Night],
ca. 1944

Oil on canvas
116 × 89 cm
Collection de l'Université de Montréal,
Montréal, QC

131

Science fiction
[Science Fiction], ca. 1944-1955

Pen and black ink, brush and coloured
ink, varnished on paper glued
to board
20.1 × 17.4 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

132

Calme obscur
[Dark Calm], ca. 1945

Pen and black ink, brush and coloured
ink, varnished on paper glued to panel
20.3 × 17.6 cm
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.

133

Homme et femme
[Man and Woman], ca. 1945

Oil on canvas
167.5 × 208 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

134

La Pariade
[The Pairing], ca. 1945

Oil and India ink on paper glued
to plywood
19.7 × 34.6 cm
Musée du Québec, Québec City, QC

135

Le Modèle
[The Model], ca. 1945

Oil on canvas
167 × 208 cm
Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, Ont.

136

La Voie lactée
[The Milky Way], ca. 1953

Oil on board
21 × 18 cm
Private Collection, Charny, QC

137

Météore sept
[Meteor Seven], ca. 1954

Oil and tobacco on canvas
114 × 89 cm
Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal,
Montréal, QC

138

Le Temps
[Time], 1957

Oil and ink on paper glued to board
28 × 33 cm
Private Collection, Montréal, QC

139

Jardin orange
[Orange Garden], 1958

Oil and polyfilla on canvas
104 × 186.5 cm
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, BC

140

Les Mécaniciennes

[The Mechanics], 1958

Oil, silica and polyfilla on canvas
mounted on board

28 × 43.2 cm

Concordia Art Gallery/Galerie d'art
Concordia, Montréal, QC

141

Fond marin

[Sea Floor], 1962

Oil on wood panel

31.4 × 45.4

Art Gallery of Hamilton Collection,
Hamilton, Ont.

142

Le Grand Champ

[Large Field], 1964

Oil on panel

84.7 × 203.8 cm

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Ont.

143

Fond marin

[Sea Floor], 1969

Oil, silica and glass on plywood

31 × 37.8 cm

Hélène and Jean-Marie Roy,
Québec City, QC

144

Discothèque

[Discotheque], 1970

Oil and silica on canvas

58.5 × 68.7 cm

CPC Collection, Montréal, QC

145

Embranchement

[Junction], 1970

Oil, ink and silica on paper glued
to plywood

33.5 × 28.5 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

146

Série noire – D

[Black Series – D], 1971

Oil on canvas

76.2 × 109.4 cm

Private Collection, Outremont, QC

147

Fleurs d'yeux

[Flowers of the Eye], 1972

Oil and silica on canvas mounted
on plywood

50.7 × 60.7 cm

Private Collection, Westmount, QC

148

Bambin

[Young Child], 1973

Oil and India ink on velvet paper

33.3 × 25.4 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

149

L'Élève

[The Student], 1973

Oil and ink on velvet paper

33.3 × 25.4 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

150

Bestiaire 19^e

[Bestiary 19], 1977

Glue, acrylic and India ink on velvet paper

66 × 51 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

151

Bestiaire 20^e

[Bestiary 20], 1978

Glue and India ink on velvet paper

66 × 51 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

152

Bestiaire 21^e

[Bestiary 21], 1978

Acrylic and India ink on paper glued
to plywood

81.1 × 111.5 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

153

Fleurs – H

[Flowers – H], 1978

Glue, acrylic and India ink on velvet paper

66.5 × 51 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

154

Voltige d'automne – B

[Autumn Acrobatics – B], 1979

Oil on canvas

121.9 × 121.9 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

155

Bestiaire 25^e

[Bestiary 25], 1982

Oil and silica on canvas mounted
on plywood

121.9 × 121.9 cm

Private Collection, Montréal, QC

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF WORKS SHOWN

Bold print indicates works reproduced in the catalogue.

À vol d'oiseau

[As the Crow Flies] (Cat. No. 69)

Adam et Ève et les diables

[Adam, Eve and the Devils]
(Cat. No. 97)

Alpinistes

[Mountains Climbers] (Cat. No. 24)

Au clair de lune

[In the Light of the Moon]
(Cat. No. 28)

Autoportrait

[Self-Portrait] (Cat. No. 5)

Bambin

[Young Child] (Cat. No. 148)

Baroquerie

[Baroquerie] (Cat. No. 111)

Bestiaire 2^e

[Bestiary 2] (Cat. No. 113)

Bestiaire 3^e

[Bestiary 3] (Cat. No. 114)

Bestiaire 4^e

[Bestiary 4] (Cat. No. 115)

Bestiaire 5^e

[Bestiary 5] (Cat. No. 116)

Bestiaire 6^e

[Bestiary 6] (Cat. No. 117)

Bestiaire 17^e

[Bestiary 17] (Cat. No. 118)

Bestiaire 18^e

[Bestiary 18] (Cat. No. 119)

Bestiaire 19^e

[Bestiary 19] (Cat. No. 150)

Bestiaire 20^e

[Bestiary 20] (Cat. No. 151)

Bestiaire 21^e

[Bestiary 21] (Cat. No. 152)

Bestiaire 23^e

[Bestiary 23] (Cat. No. 122)

Bestiaire 24^e

[Bestiary 24] (Cat. No. 123)

Bestiaire 25^e

[Bestiary 25] (Cat. No. 155)

Bestiaire 26^e

[Bestiary 26] (Cat. No. 124)

Bouche riieuse

[Laughing Mouth] (Cat. No. 17)

Calme obscur

[Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 132)

Calme obscur

[Dark Calm] (Cat. No. 55)

Chez le fermier

[At the Farmer's] (Cat. No. 83)

Citrons ultra-violets

[Ultraviolet Lemons] (Cat. No. 64)

Conciliabule

[Secret Conversation] (Cat. No. 56)

Cordée de bois

[Cord of Wood] (Cat. No. 43)

Croissant de lune

[Crescent Moon] (Cat. No. 90)

Danseuses en coulisse

[Dancers in the Wings]
(Cat. No. 87)

Discothèque

[Discotheque] (Cat. No. 144)

Embranchement

[Junction] (Cat. No. 145)

Environnement

[Environment] (Cat. No. 104)

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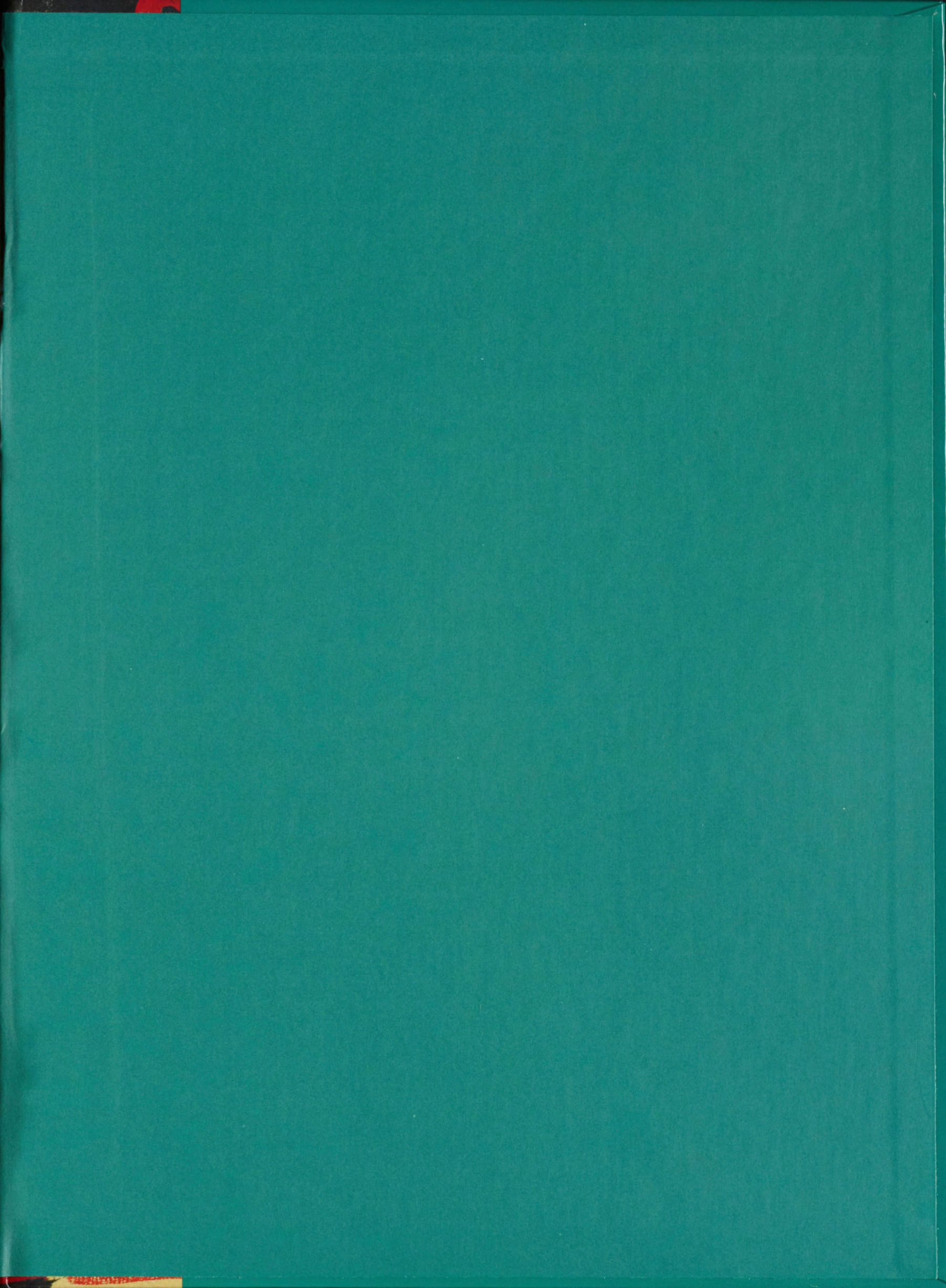
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Born in Québec City, Alfred Pellán ranks with Jean Paul Lemieux, Jean-Paul Riopelle, and Paul-Émile Borduas as one of the dominant and virtually legendary figures of modern Québec art. His revolutionary style of painting influenced his contemporaries as early as the 1930s, and with the onset of the 1940s, Jean-Charles Harvey was already referring to him as the "master of Canadian painting." Pellán, who studied in Québec City, Montréal, and Paris, mastered his trade to the extent of ranking alongside the great figures of the French art scene of the era, including Picasso, Miró, and Matisse.

Dubbed the "magician of colour", Pellán transformed Québec painting through his innovative vision. The quality of his draftsmanship and his imaginative use of colour have always proved a source of fascination for viewers.

Coordinated by Michel Martin, curator at the Musée du Québec, and Sandra Grant Marchand, curator at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, this volume, which is also the catalogue for the exhibition presented in Québec's two state museums in 1993, includes colour reproductions of more than 120 of the artist's works. Essays analyze Pellán, his approach to Cubism, his artistic development, and critics' reception of his work.

A joint Musée du Québec and Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal production, this publication sheds new light on the artist and underlines the importance of Pellán's works in Québec art history.

