

## THE AUDACIOUS Lyse Paquette

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November I was at Galerie Le Bourget to meet Lyse Paquette. As I entered the gallery I was greeted by loud bursts of laughter. Montréal was in the process of having its first real snowfall and I had dressed accordingly, but what I hadn't noticed was that I now looked like a snowman. It was Paquette who greeted me with her warm and vibrant laughter.

Paquette is at the beginning of her career and this is the first interview she has given. She couldn't have welcomed me in a better way because the generosity and audaciousness of her laughter had decided the tone of the interview to come and showcased an important part of the artist's character.

Paintings of fruits sparkling with colour displayed their charms around us. On one side a pear was in the process of seducing a bunch of juicy grapes. On the other, a flower was taking a bow. Paquette likes to amuse herself as she works by imagining the fruits and flowers she paints coming to life. Painting fruits and flowers brings them to life. To meet the challenge Paquette uses acrylics because she finds their rapid drying time indispensable. Rapid execution is important for her. For 30 years she worked as a commercial artist, where deadlines had to be met day after day. Creating a well thought out idea and then rapidly executing it is a discipline she still keeps.

Paquette doesn't work hard now because she is stressed by deadlines. It's more the case that in her middle age she feels that she has a plethora of emotions which need to be liberated and she does that by standing in front of her easel and working. In front of her easel she feels free to do anything she wants to. Sometimes she dances to jazz or blues as she works. Look at the little white bands underlining the shapes of the fruits. Don't



FROM FLOWER TO FRUIT/DE FLEUR EN FRUIT, acrylic, 40 x 50 in.

they provide a sense of movement? They appear to be dancing as well. She builds texture into her work by applying a coat of mortar, the same mortar used

to build brick walls – to her canvas as a base coat – then she applies a coat of Gesso and finishes by using acrylics. The final result is a canvas full of movement.



FALL'S PERFUME/PARFUM D'AUTOMNE, acrylic, 30 x 50 in.



ON THE TERRACE/SUR LA TERRASSE, acrylic, 30 x 30 in.



HEY! KIDS/HE LES ENFANTS!, acrylic, 36 x 24 in.

Paquette has been painting professionally for about a year. She's 50 but doesn't look her age which is another way of saying she hasn't had time to get old. She exudes a sense of youth and wisdom and it shows in her work. As a young girl she cherished the dream of spending some part of her life as a working artist. Now she has the pleasure of seeing her dream realized in splendid form.

Her dream of an artist's life was handed down to her by her mother. When she was a little girl, she would spend hours drawing and painting at the side of her mother and sister. Imitating those next to her, Paquette painted landscapes with oils. Her mother loved classical figurative art and taught that style of painting to her daughters as she herself learned to do it through correspondence school.

While Paquette dreamed of making her living by being an artist her father made sure that her feet stayed firmly on the ground. He didn't want her to have an insecure life. He thought that if his daughter became an artist she would have a hard time making two ends meet. While Paquette's father may have won the day, she didn't lose the battle. In order to maintain some daily contact with art she became a commercial artist.

For a long time she continued to paint but then circumstances forced her to stop for ten years. Then, in the early 90's while working on an advertising project she met an artist named Johanne Corno and remembered that at one time she too had wanted to burn bright with art's passion. She began again by taking courses at the Saidye Bronfman Center. She left oils for the charm of acrylics. Then she bought a small house in Laval to make sure she had a studio with plenty of good light at her disposal. And finally her long and complicated journey into the world of art seriously began. She tried her hand at different styles and several years later she began making the rounds of the galleries with her work. A year ago Guy Bourget offered to represent her.

Sensing that her dream has finally been realized Paquette hasn't been wasting any time. She throws herself into the

composition of large paintings, veritable cornucopias overflowing with fruits and flowers. Success doesn't wait. Time is of the essence. Life has shown her that she can't wait any longer and now she must take the long journey other artists take. She is well aware of this and it allows her to be confident. Reaching for the brass ring has allowed Paquette to leave commercial art behind and dedicate her heart and soul to art.

Paquette told me at one point that she could never return to painting little landscapes in oil. She now works in a much larger format with bold sweeping brush strokes, with an abstract sensibility which provides her with a greater freedom of expression than purely figurative work does. The quality of light in her work is of primary importance. She works from photos and as she progresses she immortalizes that light. She believes that the way she uses light gives her paintings life. Needless to say, her studio is filled with fruits. Nothing like it for rousing up a little inspiration.

I have to admit that I was a little hungry by the time we finished the interview. All those canvases filled with ripe juicy fruits reminded me of Christmas stories illustrated with pictures of children whose eyes are devouring all the



LA POIRE EST DANS LES POMMES, acrylic, 36 x 30 in.



GENTLES COQUELICOTS, acrylic, 24 x 20 in.

cakes behind pastry shop windows. I almost wanted to bite into one of her paintings. I told her and out burst another blast of laughter. We haven't heard the last of Lyse Paquette. She has the boldness to dream and for her the best is still to come. Like a fruit maturing into ripeness. **I**

**Amélie Ménard**

Lyse Paquette is represented by the following galleries: Galerie d'art Le Bourget, Montréal; Galerie Bel Art & Ass., Québec; Galerie Beauchamp, Baie St. Paul.