

Philip Surrey, Artist: A Newsletter for Collectors

A Field Guide to Surrey's Artworks (continued)
Part 4

May 2019
Issue No.6

PHILIP SURREY, ARTIST: A NEWSLETTER
FOR COLLECTORS
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T.F.R.

Note: This issue of my Newsletter – “Philip Surrey as Curator of his Works: His Ultimate Retrospective” – and the three to follow will continue and complete my “Field Guide to Surrey’s Artworks.”

- Issue No. 7 will examine the history behind Surrey’s selection of the 61 drawings for the publication of Philip Surrey, *Présences du reel: Soixante et un dessins accompagnés d’un texte de Claude Beausoleil* (Éditions du Noroît 1983) and consider some of those that weren’t included. It will consider his “nudes” at some length.
- Issue No. 8 will consider Surrey’s relationships with dealers & galleries, list the various solo, duo and group exhibitions of his works, record his post-1983 output, survey his printmaking & highlight some notable sales in posthumous auctions of his works.
- Issue No. 9 will conclude this Field Guide and be an argumentative essay, “Curating Surrey in the 21st Century.”

- The web site will be expanded to include new findings after two decades of research as well as a collection of essays – *Some of my Favourite Surreys*.

Philip Surrey as Curator of his Works: His Ultimate Retrospective

Synopsis:

Philip Surrey had neither the instincts of a collector, the greediness of a hoarder nor the patience of an archivist. Whatever records he kept were generally in response to some external demand with the exception of the twelve Workbooks he compiled (more or less diligently but often ambiguously and with some crucial gaps) between 10 November 1963 and April 24, 1989. They are included among the contents his donation to the National Archives in MG30 D368, Volume 1: A summary of what they list in the way of works completed between 1964 and 1983 appears at the appropriate place in the following narrative as an Editorial Note on pages 30 and 31.

Between 1979 and 1989, Surrey was involved in 5 separate book projects, only one of which came to fruition: *Présences du reel: Soixante et un dessins accompagnés d'un texte de Claude Beausoleil* (Éditions du Noroît 1983). Two of the projects provided the external stimuli he needed to sit down and consider which works best represented his lifetime achievement. *Philip Surrey as Curator of his Works: His Ultimate Retrospective* presents the background that led him to compile two lists of his best works and then my annotated list of his first selection of 171 works (the second list of 103 is to be found in Appendix 1).

The list has been broken into 12 parts for two reasons: This is a reference tool and this approach makes scrolling easier and it has allowed me to insert important historical context in appropriate places.

The Backstory: O.J. Firestone, Guy Robert, Alain Stanké, Gilles Corbeil, Robert Gladu 3

Philip Surrey's List of Works Selected for the Stanké Project (in 12 parts)

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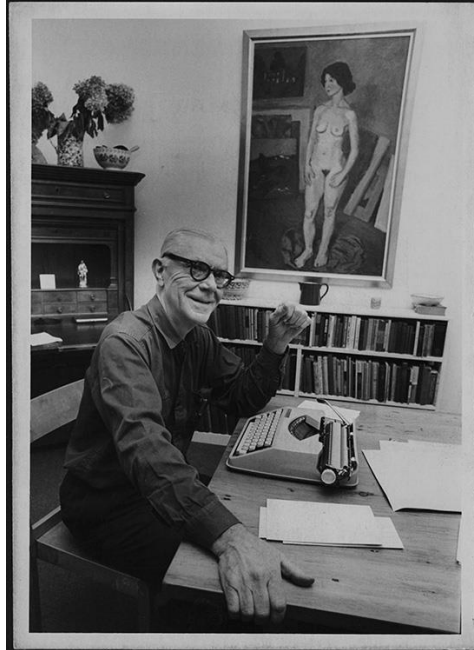
1. Prelude: The O.J. Firestone Purchase

Philip Surrey's paintings are as much Montreal as Wyeth's are Pennsylvania or Vermont, and Colville's are New Brunswick. Since the thirties, he has drawn and painted *hundreds* [my emphasis] of works The basic theme, with variations, remains the same. . . . The style and technique, however, has undergone . . . changes and enrichment through the decades. He has remained loyal to the classic materials of watercolours and oil paint, but his approach to composition, texture and especially colour, has become increasingly personal and evocative.

Paul Duval, *Four Decades: The Canadian Group of Painters
and their contemporaries – 1930 – 1970*

In July 1975, while recovering from a disabling injury to his right arm that prevented painting, Surrey started listing in chronological order a selection of works in his private collection that he was willing to sell to O.J. Firestone, a vigorous collector, who proposed a bulk purchase a few days earlier – at least one work from

each year of Surrey's six decades (1927—1975) as an artist.. Surrey continued working on this sporadically until Firestone came to see him and bought more than he'd expected on October 31. After that sale was completed, Surrey began making an inventory of paintings he still owned on February 29, 1976 and revised his prices upward. This boost in self-esteem led to much reflection and by August 1977, Surrey had resolved to write an autobiography: on August 9, he noted (in the current workbook) his response to the widely reported results of a national poll of high school students that registered their abysmal ignorance of history and lack of interest in current affairs, “. . . it occurs to me that Can. students' lack of interest in history may be due to utter ignorance and indifference to the lives, ambitions, hopes, fears, disappointments of their own parents.” After nearly eighteen months of note-making, he began writing an account of his own life and the ways in which the two World Wars, the Cold War and Quebec's Quiet Revolution and the Separatist Movement shaped his hopes, fears and ambitions as a painter. He started it on January 11, 1979 and completed the first full draft on January 20, 1981.



Philip Surrey with Goodridge Roberts' *Standing Nude* (1978)

© Estate of Sam Tata, Used with permission

It's impossible to say now what that text contained because of later revisions, many by his wife Margaret. Surrey was working on his manuscript in the Research department of Westmount Public Library when we were introduced to one another by Norah Bryant, the Chief Librarian. Surrey had come to the Information desk while she was on duty and asked some questions that she thought I was better equipped to answer because she knew I was writing a novel narrated by a Roman Catholic priest. Surrey confessed that he knew very little about the dominant religion of Quebec after 40 years of residence because he only ever seemed to make friends with "priest-haters" such as his friend, the NFB filmmaker Jean Palardy. Among several questions he had, one concerned the Dominican priest, Père Marie-Alain Couturier, the friend of many of the famous French painters – notably Georges Rouault, Maurice Denis and Henri Matisse – who had come up from New York to deliver public lectures at the invitation of the Contemporary Arts Society on two occasions during the War. Père Couturier visited Surrey's studios each time and, as Surrey notes in his autobiography "was very encouraging and it meant a lot to be encouraged by a man who knew all the great Paris painters." What Surrey wanted to know from me was if it was true that it was Couturier who persuaded Matisse to decorate a chapel at Vence. That's what he'd been told and firmly believed but he'd heard another pietistic version (derided by Palardy) in which it was a nun who was responsible. (Sister Jacques Marie in her 1992 book *Henri Matisse: La Chappelle de Vence* and in the 2003 documentary film *Model for Matisse* claimed the principal role for herself and relegated Père Couturier to secondary status.) As it happens, I'd met one of Couturier's relatives during my seminary years and, on the basis of what I'd been told, I could verify Couturier's major role and offer some insight into what the painter and the priest gained in the way of social and political rehabilitation from this collaboration.

2. Guy Robert

While Surrey was considering what to do with his autobiography in 1981, the poet, literary and art critic Guy Robert came to him with a proposal to write a book devoted to his work. A whirlwind of entrepreneurship, Robert had published books on Surrey's friends Alfred Pellan (1963), Jean-Paul Lemieux (1968 & 1975), Paul-Émile Borduas (1977) and had just completed one on Jean Dallaire (1980). Robert was really on a roll:

he'd published a book on Jordi Bonet in 1975 in addition to Lemieux. Between Borduas in 1977 and Dallaire, he'd published a book on Rousseau in 1979 and in 1981 was in the process of a final edit for his book on Riopelle to be published later in the year and reaching the end of his book on Fortin for publication in 1982 – massive undertakings. When he gave a copy of Dallaire to Surrey, it was to show him what he could do. Surrey didn't require much persuading. Robert's book on Surrey's good friend Lemieux had been so convincing to so many that his work was suddenly very pricey and so popular that some framers were cutting reproductions from the book, framing them inexpensively and selling them for up to \$100 which had led to suits for breach of copyright.



Guy Robert, undated

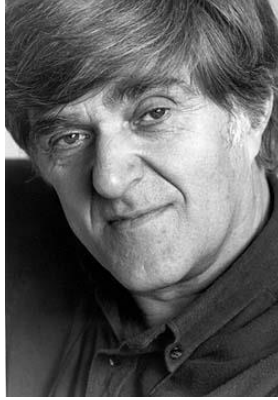
Robert's many books on disparate artists all had this in common: Robert chose painters, living and dead, who he admired and considered undervalued and wrote with deep feeling and great erudition. He was a brilliant man with highly respected literary and esthetic credentials and his vast and intimate knowledge of contemporary art and art publishing was unequalled in this country. He also knew how to make money in the art world both for himself and the artists he chose to write about in several different ways, all legitimate. One way, infrequently used but most likely in Surrey's case, was that Robert would take extensive personal interviews, all the writing, the expenses for getting the photographs, pay for the printing (even with France-Amérique) and in return, the artist would sell him several paintings at deep discounts. When the book was

finished and distributed, the price of the paintings climbed tremendously and both Robert and the artist profited.

This was the sort of business arrangement Surrey liked very much: he avoided paying cash whenever possible and regularly bartered paintings for uninsured medical and dental care in addition to his standing agreement with Gemst Art Supplies to pay for all his art papers, stretchers, brushes, paints and framing services. Surrey sought and received his dealer Gilles Corbeil's approval: It was reluctantly given. Corbeil considered himself "*the* authority on Surrey" and wanted to do the book himself but couldn't spare the time while his gallery was riding the rollercoaster inflation rates of the period. Surrey agreed to whatever proposal Guy Robert put to him and proceeded to co-operate with him from 1981 to 1983 with many private meetings and phone calls. Margaret was not happy with this because she was shut out of these discussions and Surrey had provided Robert with a copy of the autobiography. She feared the birth of his book might well mean the death of "theirs." Then in February 1984, Robert lost his publisher (France-Amérique) and decided to negotiate with Les Éditions Stanké.

3. The Stanké List

When Guy Robert approached Alain Stanké in the winter of 1984, the agreement with France-Amerique was nullified and he had to renegotiate his contract with Surrey. It's quite possible that Gilles Corbeil saw this as an opportunity to cut Robert out of the picture entirely. It's either that or Stanké wanted a very different book than the one Robert proposed, one along the lines of the one his eponymous publishing house had just published on the art of Antoine Dumas by Beurnouf Roland: it was 239 pages in length and featured 135 reproductions, 60 in colour and sold for \$95.00, a luxury item. For one reason or another, Éditions Stanké signed a contract directly with both Surreys in May because Margaret was to provide the text!



Alain Stanké circa 1990

Those who consider Gilles Corbeil a master manipulator might well imagine that he was the driving force in making this deal and got it done by getting Surrey on-side in cutting out Guy Robert by offering Margaret the opportunity to write the text. Once the Surreys had been won over in this way, Corbeil may well have offered Stanké the full co-operation of his gallery with selecting pictures, photographing them, etc. and subsidizing the book in just the way Guy Robert had done. Corbeil knew that Margaret knew nothing about art and wouldn't be able to deliver a publishable text and when that point was reached, he'd step in and save the book by providing his own text. In the meantime, Margaret could play with the text as Surrey compiled a master list of possible illustrations. This is speculation on my part.

From notes Surrey made in his Workbook covering this period, it's clear that he was studying his studio notes to select and date post-1963 works for a very ambitious book. When completed, his chronological list ran to 4 full and one partial 8x10 lined pages and contained 171 works with a notation alongside *The Underpass* (1962) adding 15 studies of it! This list also designated his selections for mono reproduction. It's not clear from the Workbooks precisely when he completed it but Surrey does note the following details related to the project: during the first two weeks of August, he compiled lists of exhibition catalogues, sales, shows and collections in which he was represented. As he worked on those lists, he drew his proposed cover for the book, a study of two young women at Place Ville Marie which he composed and drew in

pastel on 8x10 paper from August 6 – 9. From 14 – 16, he edited Margaret's manuscript. He redrew the cover as a 12x20 pastel on brown paper on September 3 – 5 and completed with finishing touches on September 30. He set it aside to paint in acrylic on board (an intention unfulfilled, it would seem).

Surrey's workbook entries for August and the first 6 days of September make it clear that Margaret's manuscript was not intended to be the final text in the book, that an unnamed editor at the publishing house was amalgamating textual content from multiple sources that Surrey was supplying that included clippings, catalogues and reviews. Surrey also noted some of the visual materials he supplied at this point: 8x10 colour enlargements of *Telephone Booth*, *Beside the Richelieu*, *Commuters* (24x30), *The Underpass*, *Evening in Percé* (1 figure), *Laurentian Hotel* (gouache), *The Brown Van*, *Three Girls Menaced by Automobiles*, *Sherbrooke Street with Three Girls* (48x72), *Place Ville Marie*, *Commuters* (watercolour), *Bacchantes*, *Go Go Girls*, *The Trophy* (drawing), *The Highway* (drawing), *Tavern*, *Hockey Boys* and *Parking* as well as 4 contact sheets. Then, inexplicably, the workbook is silent until a Note is made that the entries for Friday, September 21 through to Monday, September 24 were recorded on the 24th. He had been informed on Friday that Galerie Gilles Corbeil had closed except for sales by appointment.

Four days later, he noted that he telephoned one of Gilles assistants and bought back two paintings *April Showers* (16x24) for \$7500 and *Brown Van* (12x16) for \$4500 less his of 33.3% for \$8000. Unable to reach Gilles by phone either in the city or in the country, Surrey had driven out to Gilles rural retreat and was told by the housekeeper that M. Gilles had not been there recently and wasn't expected. He finally made telephone contact with Corbeil on the following Friday who told him he'd been in New York City and would come and bring his pictures on Tuesday, October 2. There are 9 inconsequential notes on such things as a movie and a play spread out between October and December 21.



Gilles Corbeil at the Piano

© Nicholas Simpson

What happened? What went wrong? Whatever it was that the two old friends talked about caused Surrey to clench and grind his teeth with such force that he fractured a couple of teeth and broke his partial denture plate. When he resumed writing in his Workbook, his sporadic notes are almost exclusively about his dental problems. But by Monday, January 21, 1985, he'd been busy in the studio working on two of his Florida pictures when Stanké phoned to say the publication of the book had to be postponed due to the unfavourable economic climate and insufficient funds. Surrey's response, *C'est beaucoup?* (Is it a lot?)

Ten days later, Stanké cancelled the book entirely via an intermediary, Paul Gladu, who came bearing both the bad news from Stanké and a new proposal for his own large format Surrey book for the publisher Michel Broquet. Gladu and Broquet had everything worked out in advance and evidently wanted to forestall any reappearance by Guy Robert. Surrey was more concerned with selecting a dealer to replace Corbeil: would he be happier with the Klinkhoff Gallery or with Jean Pierre Valentin's? This preoccupied him much

more than the book proposal and he signed the contract offered on February 25 without due diligence. Surrey kept himself busy with new painting through the rest of 1985 while Broquet brought his current work-in-progress to fruition: *Pellan, sa vie, son art, son temps* by Germain Lefebvre. Surrey thought it very well done and was happy to begin working with Gladu whenever he was ready.

In the meantime, he knew he had to cut the number of reproductions to 100 but they would all be colour. Instead of writing out the new list, he took a copy of the one prepared for Stanké and placed check marks alongside the works that he considered his “Top 100” in terms of illustrating the range and depth of his art while reflecting its “changes and enrichments” through the decades. And he designed a cover in crayon on brown paper: When Surrey ultimately discovered that his own colour photographs of his works were sub-standard and that the contract he’d signed without due care made him responsible not only for locating the 100 works that he most wanted included and but also arranging for professional colour photographs at his own expense, he began having second thoughts. He found these conditions tiresome and decided ultimately to cancel the contract in 1988 and paid the expenses for doing so.

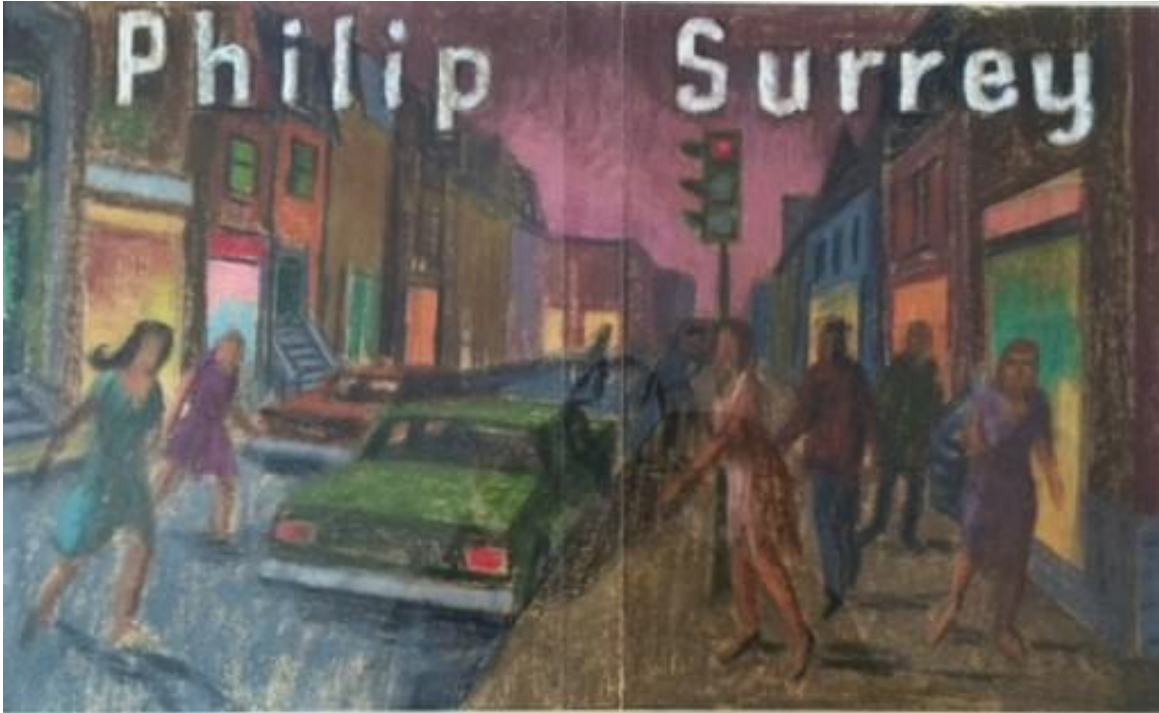
4. The Stanké List with Some Annotations

Surrey’s “wish list” for the Stanké book was very ambitious and any book resembling it was unlikely to be published at that time by Stanké or any other Montreal publisher, given the financial upheavals and constitutional politics of the era and it’s even more unlikely these days except as an internet project. I’ll take up that issue and include more extensive annotations on several key works from the 1960s and 1970s in the concluding section of my Field Guide – “Curating Surrey in the 21st Century” – in Newsletter #9.

Do bear in mind in what follows that size doesn’t always matter, bigger isn’t always better with Surrey: once this artist captured the essence of the initial pulsations of light, colours, shapes, movement that impelled him to roughly sketch (with graphite on paper or oil on panel), his drive toward *lucidité* (transparent, luminous,

articulate sanity) led him to create multiple studies in a variety of sizes. He wanted the book to present two examples of this: the 15 unspecified “studies” that culminated in *The Underpass* (1962) and 4 specific precursors of the nine or more of his largest work, *March Wind* (1980) aka *April Showers* aka *The Crossing* aka *St Jacques West of St Remi* (for which there are also 12 or so drawings, pastels, mixed media). Surrey was a superb miniaturist (who took immense pride in being the descendent of Richard Crosse cf. the catalogue for the AGO’s 1981 exhibition, *The English Miniature*) and frequently created a “little gem” out of a larger work after its completion. In practical terms this means that astute collectors can still find affordable works of considerable value.

In what follows, I’ve presented the selections for the Stanké book in their entirety as a table, adding a column in which I *check off* the smaller number of works he selected for Gladu. *Within the table which has been sub-divided, I’ve **bolded works** that were exhibited in the 1971/72 retrospective with catalogue numbers and incorporated an MQ and catalogue number for works exhibited in Quebec City in 1966* because Surrey accepted most (but not all) of the judgements of the curators of those shows. I’ve departed from Surrey’s original document by withholding the names of private collectors with an NW (with the exception of works owned by fellow artists and dealers). These days, many fewer private collectors want to publicize their ownership with explicit citations in catalogues. Understandably so and it is unfair and unwise to “out” them on the internet. In studying the list over many years, I’ve found it too much to absorb in one go so it’s presented here with subdivisions of my own making. I’ve also added Notes where further clarification or comment seems justified. Here, then, is Surrey’s vision for a book that would faithfully record his major artistic accomplishments in chronological order, more or less: Surrey did not date his works accurately (and sometimes was deliberately mischievous).



**Untitled crayon on brown paper mock-up dust jacket
prepared for Gladu/Broquet
© Nicholas Simpson**

Photographs:

KAS (his mother) in Poland; KAS, PHS (himself) and HPS (his father) in Java [This is likely the formal family portrait by the in-house photographer at the Raffles Hotel, Singapore)

PHS at easel, 1948 (Cf below)

PHS in Arctic

PHS by Gabor Szilasi (Which one? There are many.)

Drawings:

(a) Winnipeg (1927—1929)

2 pen portraits of William Winter

2 pencil drawings of horses

(b) Vancouver (1930—1936)

1 pencil of Bill Wells & wife; 1 pencil of Vernon van Sickle; 1 charcoal & wash of hiker;

1 charcoal of mountains; 2 mixed media of mountains;

1 Fred Varley laughing

(c) New York (1936—1937)

1 nude on brown paper; 1 nude man; 1 girl with hat;

Bowery sketches & Other New York figures

(d) Montreal (1937—1986)

Thelma & Bob Ayer

Illustrations for Ayer's *Sketches*

F. Rinfret

2 cripples fighting

5 o'clock study

Hockey sketches

Sketch of Group 80 classmates

Life drawings

2 Charlevoix landscapes

3 girls – charcoal & wash 16x24 (Le Noroît)

Highway

Daigneault

Bonenfant drawings – 3 nudes & slight sketches

Book Jacket

Sherbrooke Street to be repainted 18x28

End papers

Philip Surrey's List of Selected Works for the Stanké Project (in 12 parts)

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12. Montreal: 1981—1983	41

1. Winnipeg & Vancouver: 1927—1936

Consult Newsletter #1 for a fuller treatment of Surrey's Vancouver years.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
1	1927	<i>Chinese Café</i>	NW	check
2	1928	<i>Workmen in Street Car</i>	NW	check
3	1930	<i>KAS</i>		

4	1930	<i>John Varley</i>		
5	1931	<i>The Pool</i>	PHS	check
6	1932	<i>North Shore Mountains</i>	Firestone	check
7	1934	<i>The Milkman</i>		
8	1935	<i>Fred Varley at Piano</i>		check
9	1935	<i>Nox Noctis</i>	NW	check
10	1936	<i>Going to Work</i>	National AG	check
11	1936	<i>Lynn Valley Road</i>	PHS	

Notes:

#1 & #2: *Chinese Café* and *Workmen in Street Car* were part of Firestone's original purchase but were removed from the donation to the Ottawa Art Gallery. Surrey dated *Chinese Café*, May 1, 1927 but the date is likely symbolic. In the labour unrest in Winnipeg during the years of his apprenticeship, Surrey openly sided with workers right to unionize to the dismay of his employer.



Philip Surrey in Vancouver c. 1932

#3 & #4: *KAS* and *John Varley*. Surrey wrote “drawing” alongside *KAS* and “oil” alongside *John Varley* which reverses (I think accidentally) the media of his first two exhibited works. Cf. Newsletter #1

#5 *the Pool*, All Canadian Exhibit, Vancouver Art Gallery 1932

#6 *North Shore Mountains*, All-Canadian at National Gallery, Ottawa 1933

#7 *The Milkman* & #9 *Nox Noctis*: Surrey's notes on his Vancouver years go into great detail about his living arrangements up until he sold his house. He wrote nothing (I've found so far) that indicates how he came to rent a larger house in Point Grey that was less than a five minute walk from the house owned by his lover's husband. I've found circumstantial evidence that suggests the husband decided to allow their affair run its course after Surrey did not back away from threats of physical injury and allowed her to move back to their family home and re-unite with their children. In the meantime, he established very profitable businesses out of province and moved back to Vancouver and reconciled with her in 1936. All we know for certain is that Surrey signed an agreement brokered by the husband's lawyer that allowed the affair to continue but imposed some restrictions. The one with direct bearing on these two pictures would seem to be an injunction against him having any contact with their children. Surrey noted of this period that he spent most evening attending classes, lectures, musical evenings at the Vanderpant gallery or in violin practice or teaching himself to play the clarinet and then spent the night with Sheila, returning home before daybreak. Cf. Newsletter #1 for image of *Nox Noctis* (literally, "the night of the night") which has been variously translated as "seize the night", "the night is ours" and so forth. It bears repeating here that the title is a phrase within Psalm 19 (18 in the Greek notation) but Surrey is invoking the poem of that name by William Habington (1605—1659). It was exhibited at B.C. Artists 5th Annual Exhibition 1936 and then offered for sale at 1938 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association along with #5, #6, and #7.

#8 *Fred Varley at Piano* & #11 *Lynn Valley Road* Surrey was one of the few people Fred Varley welcomed to his house in Lynn Valley. Surrey was more than a casual visitor. He owned an Austin automobile and when he wasn't earning money as a commercial artist paid by piecework, he and Vera Weatherbie collaborated in helping Varley with his Lynn Valley landscapes. Lynn Valley Road was shown at the B.C. Artists 5th Annual Exhibition, 1936.

#10 *going to Work* is caustically intended. After he'd failed in his attempt to paint a throng of unemployed young men in downtown Vancouver which had too much the look of American Social Realism and destroyed it (a drawing survives), he came up with the brilliant notion of painting a single figure on his way to work. It was offered for sale at the 1938 Canadian Group of Painters, Toronto and Montreal and in Ottawa at *Philip Surrey: Exhibition of Paintings in Oil and Gouache, February 14 to 28, 1942*, Contempo Studios – his second solo show (hereafter abbreviated Contempo) Contempo 5.

Chronological Note:

During his interlude in New York City taking classes at the Art Students League (1936—1937), Surrey seems to have produced mostly life drawings and given most of them away to his models and friends. He did keep a couple of drawings that will be considered in the next Newsletter.

2. Montreal 1937 – 1944

Consult. Newsletter #3 for a fuller treatment of Surrey's war years and for an image of his poster *Every Canadian Must Fight*.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
12	1937	<i>Noumenal Construction</i> aka <i>Thelma</i>	Etherington	
13	1938	<i>Boardwalk, Verdun (26x34) #1</i>	Québec Musée	check
14	1939	<i>Sunday Afternoon</i>	A.Y.Jackson	check
15	1939	<i>Red Portrait</i>	National AG	check
16	1940	<i>Crocodile (34x27) #4</i>	AGO	check
17	1940	<i>Listening to Music</i>	Firestone	check
18	1940	<i>Self Portrait</i>	PHS	
19	1941	<i>Pink Sweater</i>	M. Corbeil	check
21	1941	<i>Night (The Alley) (33x26) 1939 #3</i>	MMFA	check
20	1941	<i>Black Portrait</i>		
22	1942	<i>The Smoker (38x46) 1941 #5</i>	MMFA	check
23	1944	<i>Youville Tavern (20x24) 1945 #6 /MQ #2</i>	Gemst	scratch

Surrey's 3rd Solo Show was held in October 1945 at Galerie l'Art Français, Montreal, abbreviated GAF. A copy of the one page catalogue appears below on page 19.

#12 Surrey's exquisite portrait of Thelma Ayer (the spouse of his friend from Winnipeg days, the art critic Robert Ayer was first exhibited with the title *Noumenal Construction* at the 1938 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association. Surrey hereafter referred to it as *Thelma*

#13 *Boardwalk, Verdun* was exhibited at the 1939 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association. Contempo 3. GAF #2

#14 *Sunday Afternoon* was exhibited at the 1939 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association and at the New York World's Fair by the Canadian Group of Painters. It was applauded by some, condemned by others as the work of a "primitive." Surrey wrote of it, "Jean Palardy . . . and his wife . . . Jori Smith . . . had a tiny, one-room house at St. Urbain, near Baie St. Paul. Their warm . . . invitation to visit them . . . a marvellous experience. . . I was just in time to see the end of the old habitant life that had been almost unchanged for 200 years. They were still amusing themselves by themselves, singing their own beautiful, old songs, square dancing to music played by a fiddler, having their "veillées", (parties), at each other's houses. I made an oil painting of one of the "veillées" when I got back to Montreal. It was exhibited at the New York World's Fair. It has now some historic interest." A.Y. Jackson bought the painting. Contempo 7.

#15 *Portrait in Red* now in the National Gallery was Contempo 4.

#16 *Crocodile* (aka *La procession*) is an illustration of a story of her childhood that Mavis Gallant (then a 19 year old Mavis Young, a recent arrival from New York) told to a spellbound audience at one of the Friday Night "potlucks" that Jori Smith hosted in the artists' commune on Ste Famille. The smallest child is Mavis. I was seated two rows behind Surrey at a reading Mavis Gallant gave at McGill and watched him draw at least twenty quick sketches of her. When I asked him if I could see them a couple of days later, he told me he'd destroyed all of them. "She's too damned elusive," he said of his former assistant at *The Standard* and Margaret's lifelong friend and weekly correspondent. In 1941, it was hung in the Contemporary Arts Society Exhibitions at Morgan's in Montreal and in Quebec City at the Municipal Gallery and again in 1945 at the Collectors' Exhibit, Art Gallery of Toronto. In 1982, it was included in the Edmonton Art Gallery's C.A.S. Travelling Show.

#17 *Listening to Music* is an interesting contrast to *Fred Varley at Piano*. Here, Goodridge Roberts is enraptured as an unseen phonograph or radio plays. He's not alone – his spouse and Margaret Surrey are seated to his left. GAF #1

#21 *Night* was initially exhibited as *The Alley* but that was too vulgar for its purchaser, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, which insisted on a more poetic title. It was exhibited there once again in 1974 with 7 other Surrey works and in 1982 in the Edmonton Art Gallery's C.A.S. Travelling Show. That show also included Surrey's *The French Novel* from 1944. Contempo 2.

#22 *The Smoker*, Contempo 10. I'm surprised that Surrey didn't include at least one of the 20 or so gouaches in his first solo exhibition. They are small scale but remarkable comments on the lives of "little men", greatly admired by Molly Lamb Bobak among others. I'm at even more of a loss when it comes to the exclusion of *Taverne Gilt Edge* which was MQ #1 was excluded from the list. A patient John Lyman fiddles with his pipe and nurses his beer while he waits (for Surrey?).



Taverne Gilt Edge

© Nicholas Simpson

#23 *Youville Tavern* is a more complex rendition of one of F.W. Varley's preferred drinking places, frequented by merchant seamen and Customs House workers near the waterfront. It was first exhibited in 1942 as Contempo 11, in 1945 as GAF #5 and in 1946 at the Contemporary Arts Society's 7th Annual Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings Feb 2 to 14, MMFA. A brilliant watercolour sketch for it is among the Surreys held by the Windsor Art Gallery.

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Galerie l'Art Français Catalogue

Philip Surrey Peintures, Gouaches, Dessins, October 1945

Surrey OCT 45

CATALOGUE

<i>OILS — PEINTURES</i>		<i>OILS — PEINTURES</i>	
1.—Listening to music	\$160.00	30.—The willows	\$ 40.00
2.—Boardwalk	160.00	31.—Near the dam	40.00
3.—Hotnight	100.00	32.—Green landscape	40.00
4.—Bathers	250.00	33.—Composition	125.00
5.—Tavern Youville	75.00	34.—After swimming	40.00
6.—Black portrait	65.00	35.—Desmarais's field	40.00
7.—Flowers	75.00	<i>GOUACHES</i>	
8.—Grey Portrait	150.00	35.—Jeanne Mance Street	25.00
9.—Street scene	60.00	37.—Street light	25.00
10.—Ryan's Hotel	40.00	38.—Winter on Bleury	35.00
11.—Three Girls	40.00	39.—Evening on the River	35.00
12.—Orford Lake	40.00	40.—Outwalking	35.00
13.—Mont Chagnon I	45.00	41.—Leaving Montreal	25.00
14.—The Hay field	45.00	42.—Children at Night	50.00
15.—The Lovers	45.00	43.—Soaring Angel	50.00
16.—Kent Club	45.00	<i>DRAWINGS — DESSINS</i>	
17.—The cloud	40.00	44.—Conversation	10.00
18.—Beside the railway	40.00	45.—Tavern scene	15.00
19.—Rintoul's place	40.00	46.—The waitress	15.00
20.—Reading outdoors	45.00	47.—Lunchtime I	20.00
21.—Ferguson's Rock	45.00	48.—Lunchtime II	15.00
22.—Distant Mountain	40.00	49.—Men running	15.00
23.—Evening in the Country	45.00	50.—Old woman	10.00
24.—The garden	40.00	51.—Pedestrians	10.00
25.—French Novel	75.00	52.—The sailor	10.00
26.—Summer Clouds	75.00	53.—Two men	10.00
27.—Road to Magog	40.00	54.—Café scene	15.00
28.—Mont Chagnon II	40.00	55.—Eagle café	15.00
29.—Grey Mountain	40.00	56.—Nude (study)	10.00

SURREY OCT 45

© Jean Pierre Valentin

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3. Montreal & the Eastern Townships: 1944 – 1947

Surrey's first summer holiday in the Eastern Townships established a pattern that he and Margaret followed as often as circumstances permitted: keeping living arrangements as simple and frugal as possible by renting properties that lacked indoor plumbing and electricity, he sketched and painted *en plein air* and she went swimming and devoured literary classics. He produced enough "holiday painting" that his reputation as an Eastern landscape artist has a more or less separate identity. He saw his rural works as complementary to his urban ones. Until recently, most Montrealers/Montréalais identified strongly with one part of Québec/Quebec or another.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
24	1944/7?	<i>The White Hat</i>	Shell	check
25	1944/7?	<i>The Garden</i>	St. Catherines	check
26	1944/47	<i>The Willows</i>	PHS	check
27	1944/47	<i>Ferguson's Rock</i>		check
28	1944/47	<i>The Red Rock</i>	PHS	check
30	1944/47	<i>Near the Dam</i>		check
29	1944/47	<i>The Cloud</i>		
31	1944/47	<i>The Hayfield</i>	PHS	
32	1947	<i>Bank Girls MQ #3</i>	PHS	check
33	1947	<i>Tavern (Leo Henry)</i>	PHS	

#25 *The Garden* was GAF #24

#26 *The Willows* was GAF #30

#27 *Ferguson's Rock* was GAF #21

#29 *The Cloud* was GAF #17

#30 *Near the Dam* was GAF#31

#31 *The Hayfield* was exhibited as GAF #14 in 1945 at the Canadian Club, New York in 1948 and included in the Magog Centenary of 1988 as *Hayfield Near Mount Orford*.

#32 Surrey's position as Photo Editor at *The Standard* meant that he was among the first civilians to see the Soviet and then the British and American Army photographs taken in the concentration camps as they were liberated between July 24, 1944 and May 1945 and then those of the aftermath of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Given this, it's not in the least surprising that he couldn't accurately remember when he painted what in the period 1944—1947. His most fertile periods for painting were the summer vacations he took in 1944 and 1945 at Lake Orford in the Townships where he tried to help Goodridge Roberts recover from his experiences as a war artist. While at work, he found release (not quite relaxation) in sketching the young women who crowded St James Street outside his office, especially as they entered and exited a nearby bank. The result was #32 *Bank Girls* which marks the beginning of a remarkable sequence of major works centred on groups of urban working women.

At the 1946 C.A.S. 7th Annual Exhibition, in addition to *Youville Tavern*, he showed *The Letter, Evening in the Country* (all oils) and the gouaches *Winter on Bleury Street, Evening on the River*. In 1947 at the Canadian Society of Graphic Arts Exhibition, he showed *Sidewalk in Summer*.

Historical Note #1: Omission of work from 1948—1950.

Surrey exhibited *Summer Dresses* at the 1948 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association and the pen and wash drawing *Street Fight* at the 1950 iteration of the show.

In the fall of 1948 Surrey was sent to London to select illustrative material from Winston Churchill's private archives for *The Standard's* serialized publication of lengthy extracts from the first volume of Churchill's *The Second World War*. It was a tremendous publishing coup: J.W. McConnell personally secured exclusive rights from Churchill himself and insisted on Surrey being given full access to illustrative material in the author's archive and full co-operation from Churchill's private secretaries (to their dismay). This was Surrey's first visit to England in almost 30 years but he still knew how to speak "posh" in the accents of the Marlborough Old Boy that he'd spared from becoming. Here is some of what is in the autobiography of that business trip and what followed:

I was away a month and got much that was valuable including drawings and paintings by British artists, many unpublished photos and paintings by Canadian war artists. Five days was the limit one

could stay in a hotel so I had to keep moving. . . . There were still shortages of light and heat everywhere and in Paris, where I spend a weekend, it was worse, a dark autumn and a Louvre with almost no light at all. . . . Early 1949 we bought a house. Margaret was frightened but I was not. . . . We had to get out of those two rooms we had been living in for so long. Now we had sun, eight rooms, a fireplace. We did not have enough furniture nor money to buy any. . . . In our two rooms I had always painted with Margaret right there. All of a sudden she was downstairs, a long way from me. . . . We were always wandering about looking for one another. By now we were terribly poor with a mortgage over our heads We couldn't afford to keep our Austin and sold it. . . . For three years I spent all my holidays at home and we paid off the mortgage in six years. Margaret didn't mind the economies. The Depression had marked her. She had a terrible fear of destitution and of 'dying like a dog in the streets' as she put it.

What's missing from this but uncovered from other sources make it clear that, in fact, the house they bought was in "turn-key condition", lacking only new screen windows (that Margaret replaced one by one out of her housekeeping) and was filled piece by piece with museum quality antiques salvaged at low cost by Jean Palardy (who included some of them in his magisterial *Les Meubles anciens du Canada français*). Nonetheless, Surrey's mother remained totally dependent on her son. She'd been content to live in a bedsitter at Dorchester and Greene as long as her son and his wife were cramped together in a one bedroom apartment but as soon as they rose in the world, she expected to do likewise. The upside was that she wanted to move to Toronto. Once that was sorted, Margaret's fear of destitution empowered and enriched Surrey's painting.

Spending all his holidays at home meant spending more time at his easel at a critical juncture in North American cultural life that silenced some painters, crippled others and compromised the many who simply surrendered their aesthetic independence to a cabal of New York critics. Never a social realist, always a self-described Trotskyist who insisted upon bringing a common touch to an inherently populist art form, he began to capture actual rather than theoretical physiological dynamics in the second half of twentieth century urban experience. What is also missing from his account of this period is the collapse of The Contemporary Arts Society in 1948 and the formation of Prisme d'Yeux, a group that included three friends – Alfred Pellán, Goodridge Roberts and Jeanne Rhéaume – who seemed to him wrong-headed, effete, naïve and mindless in their pursuit of "...a painting liberated from all contingencies of time and place

. . . conceived without literary, political, philosophical or any other interference which could adulterate expression and compromise its purity.” For Surrey as for Poussin, his touchstone, authentic painting is a social intervener in fractious times, a measured assertion for balance and harmony in the pursuit of liberty and equality and empathy.



PHS with *Pedestrians* 1948

© Nicholas Simpson

3. Montreal, Nova Scotia, the Gaspé, 1951 – 1958

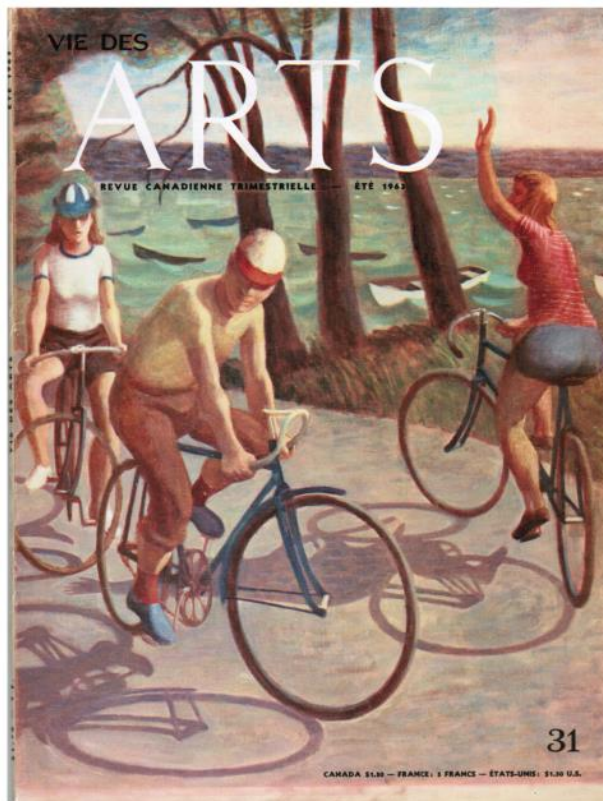
Once they had paid off their mortgage and felt free to holiday once again in the summer, the Surreys started exploring heretofore unknown parts of Canada – first Nova Scotia in 1952, then the Gaspé in 1955.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
34	1951	<i>Pedestrians</i> (40x48) 1952? #7 / MQ #5	NW	check
35	1952	<i>Joueurs de Baseball</i> (20x24) 1953 #10 /MQ #7	G. Corbeil	check
36	1952	<i>Lockport I</i> (6x8)		check
37	1952	<i>Lockport II</i> (6x8)		check
39	1952	<i>Les Cyclistes</i> (26x34) #9 / MQ #8	M. Corbeil	check
38	1952	<i>Commuters</i>	NW	
40	1953	<i>Dominion Square</i> (26x40) #11 /MQ #6	NW	check
41	1955	<i>Gaspé Cabins I</i> / MQ #18	PHS	check
42	1955	<i>Gaspé Cabins II</i>	NW	
43	1956	<i>5 O'Clock</i>	NW	check
44	1956	<i>Westmount Park I</i>		check
45	1956	<i>The Corner Store</i> (20x24) 1957 / MQ #12 1959	NW	check
46	1957	<i>The Lovers</i> (24x18)	Hamilton AG	
47	1958	<i>Tourist Rooms</i> (16x24) 1957 #13 / MQ #10	G. Roberts	
48	1958	<i>Westmount Carnival</i> (32x24) #19 1959 / MQ # 14 1962	Concordia	check

#34 is the larger of the two *Pedestrians* I've viewed closely and at leisure. I think of this one as the Sartre and the other as the Camus and am hard pressed to choose between the theatricality of this one and the forcefulness of the other. One or both were shown at the Lyman—Surrey Exhibition at Watson Galleries in 1951. In 1952, the larger was hung at the Spring Show, Montreal Art Association. That same year, *Sorel at Night*, a brilliant gouache was shown in the National Gallery's display of works from the J.S. Maclean Collection.

#35 and #39 were purchased by the Corbeil brothers, the first Surrey in both collections. Under the English title *Softball Players*, it was exhibited at the 1953 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association and as *The Baseball Players* in 1963 at Master Canadian Painters, London Art Museum. In English Canada, viewers were either bemused or angered by the “novelty” of their subject matter. The Corbeil brothers and their many friends across the spectrum of Quebec painters were awestruck by the intricacy of *designo* and technical wizardry underlying works of such singularity. Both works were exhibited in 1974 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

In 1953/4, *Canadian Drawings*, a travelling exhibition that began at Hart House in Toronto and then moved on to Oshawa, Peterborough, London, Hamilton and Windsor included Surrey’s *The Russell Hotel* (10x8) watercolour dated 1951, the earliest reference to what I regard as his most consequential series of tavern sketches. There was oil on board in 1960 and then 18x24 charcoals & pastel drawing (1972), a 32x24 acrylic on canvas (1972) and a further 24x20 acrylic on canvas (1972) as well as a 24x20 pastel drawing (1972).



Les Cyclistes

Image © Nicholas Simpson
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#40 *Dominion Square* was painted after Surrey's return from the Coronation of Elizabeth II and the beyond-all-expectations success of the special edition of *The Standard* that he'd masterminded. He took a wonderful smaller format *Dominion Square* completed earlier in which young women in assorted summer dresses criss cross the diagonal pathways of Dominion Square and dressed them all in white, prefiguring his women of the *Place Ville Marie* series a decade later. It was hung at the 1954 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association. *Study for Dominion Square* gives a tantalizing glimpse of one segment of the whole. Until Place Ville Marie opened and young women claimed its plaza for themselves, they didn't have a safe public space for "girl talk" in downtown Montreal. On Dominion Square, women were beset by cruisers in automobiles whistling, catcalling, propositioning. It was still going on 20 years later when I spent a few days living at the Laurentian Hotel, just opposite. On the back of the copy of *Man Gored by Car* (1954) in the Firestone Collection, there is a note by Surrey, "The automobile has come to be, for me, a symbol of the aggression and impersonal cruelty of our world." The front grills of the cars in *Dominion Square* are shark-like, rapacious.



Study of Dominion Square

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#41 *Gaspé Cabins I* was exhibited in 1957 in *35 Painters*, a remarkable collaboration between McGill and Université de Montréal students at the M.M.F.A. That same year a pastel from 1953, Notre Dame Street was displayed at the National Gallery's 2nd Biennial. *Business Man* (bought by the writer Brian Moore) was Surrey's contribution to the 1957 Spring Show, Montreal Art Association.

#44 *Westmount Park I* was Surrey's contribution to the 1959 Spring Show at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and to the 1962 Twenty Two Canadian Painters at the Beaverbrook Gallery Fredericton, N.B.

#47 *Tourist Rooms* and a small watercolour was the price Surrey paid for Goodridge Roberts' *Standing Nude*.

#48 *Westmount Carnaval* was included in *Twenty Five Quebec Painters*, Stratford, Ontario, 1961.

Historical Note #2: Surrey, *The Standard* and *Weekend Magazine*

When Surrey joined *The Standard* as Assistant Photo Editor in 1938 and was promoted to Photo Editor after two weeks, it was a national (with a wraparound news cover for the Montreal market) weekly with a staff of 40 and a circulation of 73,000 copies. It almost folded but was saved by Surrey's coast-to-coast photo coverage of the Royal Tour of 1939 – the first visit to Canada by our reigning monarch. Circulation tripled to 220,000 copies and was restricted to that number until the end of the war when it jumped to 300,000 copies in 1946 and began re-branding itself. During wartime, it's political stance was pro-Stalin and Soviet-supportive in keeping with Winston Churchill's insistence on Commonwealth unity in this policy. It had been so successful in promoting this mandate that *The Standard* was still regarded as such a "Stalinist rag" that it wasn't allowed into our house – ever.

On September 5, 1945 one month after the atomic bombings in Japan, Soviet cipher clerk Igor Gouzenko had walked away from the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa and defected to the RCMP which began debriefing him two days later on his allegation that a military espionage network was operating in North America. The best analysis of how this defection propelled Western Governments into a fevered hunt for Soviet spies, triggering both a breakdown in international relations and unwarranted violations of civil liberties in Canada and the USA is Amy Knight's *How the Cold War Began* (2005). Given a large story to tell, Knight underplays or overlooks a number of events in Ottawa and Montreal that affected Surrey directly and indirectly.

On December 14, 1945, John McConnell, publisher of *The Standard* sent a memorandum to his father J.W. McConnell, its owner, announcing that in 1946, *The Standard* would be taking its first steps to increase its national circulation from its wartime limit of 220,000 copies to 300,00 almost immediately and to begin replacing sepia photographs with colour ones. In order to surpass Toronto's *Star Weekly*, he required the greater control over production schedules and print quality that only a self-owned and operated printing plant could provide. (He got the okay. They overbuilt, buying the best quality, fastest presses and aimed at creating a well-illustrated supplement that would be included with weekend edition of newspapers across the country.) Everything was in place for the return of Davidson Dunton as its Editor.

Then Christmas Eve 1945, Prime Minister Mackenzie King appointed Davidson Dunton to a newly and secretly created position, full-time chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Dunton had joined the Wartime Information Board in 1942 and was general manager 1944-45. Before that, Dunton had worked as a reporter on the *Montreal Star*. He was the paper's associate editor, 1937-38, and was editor of its weekly sister *The Standard* in 1938. In King's view, Dunton was just the man to keep the Gouzenko story out of Canada's newspapers and off its airwaves until his government secretly set up a Royal Commission on Espionage to hear Gouzenko's testimony and the RCMP was ready to arrest and interrogate suspected spies. Intelligence chiefs and political leaders of Britain, the USA and Canada had been negotiating since September the date for simultaneous action. Those discussions ended on February 3, 1946 when the American journalist Drew Pearson stunned his nationwide radio audience by announcing that a Soviet spy had surrendered to the Canadian government and confessed to a "gigantic Russian espionage network inside the United States and Canada."

The full story of Surrey's role in protecting himself and his colleagues from the madness that ensued is better told elsewhere but the illustrated serialization of Winston Churchill's first volume of *The Second World War* was a powerful tool: it was a major publishing success, doubling the normal print run. By 1951, when it was re-branded as *The Standard Weekend Picture Magazine*, its circulation was 775,000 copies. Surrey's blanket

coverage (he directed a crew of photographers double the size of Time/Life) of the Coronation in 1953 is said to be the first million seller in Canadian magazine publishing. In 1953, it was rebranded once more as *Weekend Magazine* and became a Saturday supplement to newspapers from coast to coast. When it launched its French version *Perspectives* in 1961 with a print run of 354,599, its own circulation was 1,714,386 copies and had a staff of 400 compared to 40 in 1938. At the birth of *Weekend Magazine*, Surrey was promoted from Photo Editor to Features Editor with many consequences, the most dramatic being a much greater degree of attention being focussed on smaller numbers of paintings.

5. Montreal, Arctic, Percé, 1958 – 1962

In 1958 Surrey was invited by the Department of Transport to go to the Arctic aboard the ice-breaker, d'Iberville, escorting three freighters bound for Resolute Bay with supplies for several settlements. In 1962, the Surreys summered at Percé.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
49	1958	<i>Arctic Sketch I</i>		check
50	1958	<i>Arctic Sketch II</i>		
51	1958	<i>Arctic Sketch III</i>		
52	1958	<i>Arctic Sketch IV</i>		
53	1959	Street Flares (24x18)#22	NW	check
54	1960	<i>Westmount Park II</i>		
55	1960	L'école des Beaux Arts (30x20) 1959 #18 / MQ #11	Mutual Life	check
56	1961	Variations on a Theme by Poussain (16x24) #24 1962	Hamilton AG	check
57	1961	<i>Plaza Café II</i>		
58	1962	<i>Evening at Percé I</i> / MQ #19 1957		check
59	1962	<i>Evening at Percé II</i>		check
60	1962	Winter Traffic (20x30) #49 / MQ # 21	NW	
61	1962	<i>The Underpass</i> & 15 studies	NW	check

#49 – #52 The d'Iberville was crowded with thirty-five stevedores and thirty-five University of Montreal students who were going to help them at Resolute. He began painting 6x8 oil sketches and soon ran out of pre-prepared panels. The ship's carpenter made him more from plywood tea chests. The colours of sea and sky and icebergs ranged from coldly subtle to harshly brilliant. In all, he created forty 6x8 oil sketches and a book of pen drawings. On the first day out it rained and the grey sea melted into grey fog: Surrey made a study of the cold and warm whites of a lifeboat, *Arctic I*. In 1976, he painted a series of 6x9 oil sketches based on some in the original series that were damaged in his basement storage area. Both series will be discussed when I consider his relationship with Galerie Gilles Corbeil in issue Number 8.

#55 *L'école des Beaux Arts* & #56 *Variations on a Theme by Poussain* (discussed in detail in Newsletter No.5) were included in *Twenty Two Canadian Painters*, Beaverbrook Gallery, Fredericton 1962 as *Gas Station*.

#57 *Plaza Café II*. Plaza Café on the south side of Sherbrooke Street just west of Victoria Avenue was a fascinating example of the Greek-Italian-Canadian counter and booths restaurant. It offered souvlaki, pizza, Montreal BBQ chicken, all day breakfasts, Espresso (sic) coffee, individual juke boxes at the booths, a first generation Greek owner behind the counter and Ellie, a camp survivor with a numbered tattoo, as the waitperson with a heart of gold. Surrey and I met there a few times for coffee. There were mirrors everywhere and his series of paintings play with indoor and outdoor light, customers and their reflections. His first study for the paintings, a large pastel, appeared at the 1960 Spring Show, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts alongside *Bus Travellers*. Later that year, he contributed two charcoal and wash *Place d'armes* and *Saint Antoine Street* to the Canadian Society of Graphic Art Exhibition.

#61 *The Underpass* is the current co-favourite of the owner of many Surreys now held in the pre-eminent private collection. And the couple of studies I've seen in other private collections are very highly prized. If there are 15, where are the others lurking? Surrey doesn't seem to have kept any record and made only one comment to the effect that the longer he looked at this final iteration, the more he became aware that something essential was missing. Finally he figured it out: the painting called for Willie, his beloved dachshund. It was included in *Twenty Two Canadian Painters* at the Beaverbrook Gallery in 1962 and the 1963 Spring Show, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.



Pastel Study for The Underpass (16x32)

© Nicholas Simpson

Historical Note #3: The Studio Workbooks:

Surrey began keeping Work journals or Workbooks at 9:30PM on 10 November with a drawing (12x18) on grey paper for “Place Ville Marie” and concluded the twelfth of them on April 24, 1989, one year to the day before his death. All twelve volumes are deposited at Archives Canada. Anyone considering cleaning or restoring a post-1963 Surrey is well advised to consult them. He prided himself on his varnished finishes and expected them to last at least 200 years. All he recommended was careful washing with a diluted detergent such as Spic’n’Span and careful rinse and blow dry (with a hand held hair dryer on a low setting) to remove smokers’ grime. But following the injury to his right hand in 1975, Surrey turned increasingly away from canvas and panel to working on papers of several kinds and employed many new techniques made available through acrylics and nupastels that are not, to my knowledge, noted elsewhere. Among those techniques there are two particularly tricky ones – the dry and wet mounting of Turner papers on panel.

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Surrey's Workbooks are endlessly fascinating. He drew his inspiration from a wide range of everyday urban experience including amateur and professional athletics and summer automobile holidays in Quebec, the Maritimes, the New England coast and winter holidays in Martinique, Mexico and Florida. The majority of his Montreal works can be broadly divided between "pedestrians" and "passengers" and a minority with exteriors and interiors of "places of pleasure" – taverns, cafes, cinemas, shops. I'm unaware of any Canadian artist as diverse in subject matter or as committed to exploring *events* with rigorous attention to social context.

Surrey repeatedly said that every painting began with the way natural or artificial light illuminated something he'd not seen in just that way. From that initial inspiration, his creative energies prodded him so gently sometimes that all that resulted was a small sketch but more often than not, those energies pricked and kicked him to explore and explore some more. The Workbooks are very good at illustrating where a work begins and how it develops, sometimes over a period of years and its completion date. As far as I'm aware, I'm the only person so far to have analyzed them quantitatively. I wanted to know, in the first instance, what sort of choices presented themselves while he was selecting works for the big book: *How large was the body of work from which he selected his final 106 pieces and what sort of variety did it offer?*

The answers are quite straightforward, bearing in mind that (1) due to some silences (e.g. the weeks of the October Crisis), these are *minimums* and (2) he records the destruction of only two works but may well have overpainted some others, specifically sketches on small panels. Between November 1963's *Evening in Saint Henri* and *Yellow Truck* in February 1983, he completed (A) at least 352 works in oils, acrylics, or oils and acrylics on canvas or panel of which (B) 207 were oil sketches on 6x8 panels and (C) 40 on 8x11 panels. (D) At least 85 of the 6x8s were enlarged to 12x16, 3 on canvas and the rest on panel. (E) His favorite sizes were 12x18 (39), 16x20 (29), 18x24 (24), 20x16 (21), 20x30 (14), 24x32 (11), 24x36 (12). (F) He produced at least 53 paintings 24x36 and larger (imprecision is due to the fact that he did not record the size of half a dozen works).

Surrey's output was remarkably consistent between 1965 and 1974, varying from 20 to 34 works of 12x16 and larger, averaging 23.5. His most productive years, in terms of completed canvases and panels were 1972 and 1974 and 1964 and 1968 in terms of 6x8 sketches on panel. After compressing the ulnar nerve in his right arm in 1975 and returning to painting prematurely and too vigorously in 1977 and 1978 and reinjuring it so that he was unable to paint as easily, Surrey turned more and more to working with nupastels, watercolours and gouaches and produced well over 150 works on paper exclusive of his printmaking. His drawings must have numbered in the hundreds, many of which he destroyed. Further information appears, where relevant, in what follows.

6. Montreal, Martinique, Townships 1963—1966

Consult. Newsletter # 2 for full coverage of the Martinique pictures

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
62	1963	<i>Evening in St Henri</i>	NW	check
63	1963	<i>Three Bacchantes</i>	NW	
64	1964	Windsor Station (36x24) #30 1965	NW	check
65	1964	<i>Martinique at Night</i> /MQ # 15	PHS	check
66	1964	<i>By the Richelieu</i>	PHS	scratch
67	1964	Place Ville Marie I (24x36) #26 / MQ #16		
68	1964	The Telephone Booth (32x24) #27 / MQ # 22	Dofasco	check
69	1965	<i>Place Ville Marie</i> colour sketch		scratch
70	1965	Place Ville Marie II (30x40) # 28 (32x48)	NW	check
71	1965	<i>The Taxi</i>		check
72	1965	<i>Old Houses</i>	PHS	check
73	1965	<i>By the Richelieu</i>	NW	
74	1965	Place Ville Marie III (30x40) #31	NW	
75	1965	<i>Grosvenor Avenue</i> (40x60)	NW	

76	1965	<i>Victoria & St Catherine</i> (36x24)	NW	
77	1965	<i>Place Ville Marie IV</i> (32x48)		
78	1966	<i>Nymphs and Faun</i> (40x60)	Windsor AG	check

#67, #69 and #74 are three of the 7 big oils in a series that contains triple that number of drawings, pastels and smaller oil studies.

#67 was painted as a Thank You gift for John McConnell whose patronage allowed Surrey to paint full time at full salary for the next 11 years. It's extraordinary a work in itself and influential in ways that go beyond the PVM series to encompass #78 *Nymphs and Faun*, a splendid work in the Windsor Art Gallery collection together with some preparatory drawings.

7. Montreal, Île Bizard 1966—1969

Surrey recovered from the success of his December 1965 exhibition at Galerie Martin and prepared for even more successful 1977 show at the same locale by spending from May to September secluded on Île Bizard (an island near the Island of Montreal in the Hochelaga Archipelago region) where he had space and time to undertake a major project (#83 & #84) among much painting of various kinds.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
79	1966	<i>Little Club</i> (12x16) #29 1965	NW	check
80	1966	<i>Green Cityscape</i> (36x48)#33 / MQ #17 1965	Joliette	check
81	1966	<i>Winter Evening</i> (24x36) #40 1968	NW	check
82	1966	Back Porch (32x48)		
83	1967	<i>Desmoiselles du Village</i> (32x48) #36	National AG	check
84	1967	<i>La Plage</i> (32x48) #34 1966		check
85	1967	Plaza Café (16x24)	NW	check
86	1967	<i>Sherbrooke Street</i> (40x30) #37	NW	
87	1968	<i>Fur Hat</i> (16x204)		scratch

88	1968	<i>Fur Hat</i> (32x24)	NW	check
89	1968	<i>Brown Van</i> (30x40) #39	CIL	check
90	1968	<i>Red Decarie Boulevard</i>		
91	1969	<i>Rose Fur Hat</i> (24x20) #46	NW	check
92	1969	<i>Snowy Street</i> (24x32) #45	NW	check
93	1969	<i>Three Girls menaced</i> (48x72) #50 1968	NW	check
94	1969	<i>Evening on the River</i> (48x64)	Northern Gas	check
95	1969	<i>Blue Decarie Blvd</i>		
96	1969	<i>Painter in the City</i> (32x24) #38	G. Corbeil	

81 *Green Cityscape* was displayed at The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 1974 in a grouping of 7 Surreys.

#83 & #84 are companion pieces, a diptych, that ought never to have been sold separately but the National Gallery could either only afford #83 or found #84 too vulgar.

#92 *Snowy Street* is the most widely reproduced of Surrey's works, appearing as an UNICEF Christmas card.

#91 *Rose Fur Hat* was also offered to UNICEF.

#96 *Painter in the City* is a tribute to John Lyman as well as the poster illustration for the Montreal/Paris one man retrospective of 1971—1972.

8. Montreal, Baie St Paul, Alma N.B. , New York City 1970—1973

In 1971, Surrey's retrospective *Le peintre dans la ville* is impossible to divorce from the October Crisis of 1970. The exhibition catalogue was monolingual French and its two venues – Musée de art contemporain, Montréal (then located at Cité du Havre) and Centre Culturel Canadien, Paris – were out of the English mainstream. Of the 50 paintings curated for exhibition by Giles Corbeil, 23 were selected from the preceding six years and included the work he turned to on November 8, 1970, the day of the Rose brother's

arrest – *Hockey Game with Self-Portrait* – which Surrey painted specifically for Dr. Harvey Evans, a psychiatrist who treated both Margaret and himself. Surrey omitted it and included *Hockey: Detroit vs Montreal* (20x30) as the sole representative of his 3 NHL hockey paintings.

In 1972, the Surreys holidayed July 5 through July 23 in the Maritimes at Alma, NB, on the Bay of Fundy before proceeding to Cape Breton.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
97	1970	<i>Victoria Square</i> (24x36) #44 1969		check
98	1970	<i>Girouard & Sherbrooke</i> (32x24)		
99	1970	<i>Girouard & Sherbrooke</i> (24x20)	NW	check
100	1971	<i>Jetty, Baie St Paul</i> (18x27)		
101	1971	<i>Maxicoat</i>	NW	check
102	1971	<i>Sheds</i> (30x40)	NW	
103	1971	<i>Poster</i> (60x40)		check
104	1971	<i>La Boheme</i> (18x24)		
105	1971	<i>The Blue Window</i> (16x20)		check
106	1972	<i>Grosvenor Ave [Pink Umbrella]</i> (24x20)		check
107	1972	<i>People in the Wind</i> (24x36)		check
108	1972	<i>Grosvenor Ave [Snowy Street]</i> (32x24)		check
109	1972	<i>Marcil & Sherbrooke</i>	NW	check
111	1972	<i>Hockey: Detroit vs Montreal</i> (20x30)	Windsor AG	
112	1972	<i>Near Loyola</i>		check
113	1972	<i>Metcalf & St Catherine</i> (18x24)		
114	1972	<i>Alma Motel</i> (8x10)		
115	1973	<i>Museum Girls</i> (12x18)		check
116	1973	<i>Museum Girls</i> (24x36)		check

117	1973	<i>Adolescents</i> (30x40)		check
118	1973	<i>Go-Go Girls</i> (24x32)		check
110	1972	<i>Bishop & St Catherine (Unisex)</i>		check

#100 *Jetty, Baie St Paul* My assumption is that Surrey meant the 18x27 acrylic on panel that he created for Don Robinson. There is a pastel of the same dimensions.

#102 *Sheds & #117 Adolescents* along with *Delmos* were included in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts 1974 Surrey mini-exhibition.

#103 is the single copy poster hung in the window of Gilles Corbeil's Crescent Street Gallery announcing Surrey's solo exhibition at Galerie Gilles Corbeil, *Peintures et Gouaches* (August 2—November 20) 1971. It's whereabouts are unknown.

#111 *Hockey: Detroit vs Montreal aka Detroit Hockey Game (with Red Kelly)* was a reimagining of the 1960 painting in the Firestone Collection.

#117 *Adolescents* will be discussed in relationship to #123 *Crepuscule Bleu* in Newsletter #9.

#118 *Go-Go Girls* is one of a sequence of paintings of the dancers/strippers at a New York City club in the notorious Hotel Metropole just off Times Square that Surrey travelled to that city to paint for reasons he never disclosed.

Historical Note #4: Surrey at Galerie Gilles Corbeil

Between 1970 and 1983, Surrey had a “first right of refusal” contract with Galerie Gilles Corbeil. It was not exclusive. Surrey retained the right to accept and fulfil commissions from a small number of private collectors. Corbeil wanted only the best works Surrey produced and in return gave them wonderful exposure in his gallery, hosting 5 solo exhibitions: *Philip Surrey: Peintures et Gouaches* which ran more or less simultaneously with the retrospective *Le Peintre dans la ville* at Musée d'art contemporain (1971); *Philip Surrey: Dessins, Gouaches, Aquarelles, Lavis* (1973); *Philip Surrey: Oeuvres récentes* (1974); *Philip Surrey: Paysages d'hier et d'aujourd'hui 1936—1976*, a celebration of his four decades of painting in Quebec (1976); and *Philip Surrey* (1980) and including Surrey in 5 of the most important group shows (1972, 1977, 1980, 1983). A full list of

dates (but not of works presented) is easily found in the “Annexe: Liste des artistes exposés et dates des expositions Galerie Gilles Corbeil” to Laurier Lacroix’s 2009 *Gilles Corbeil (1920-1986), un ‘passeur’ tranquille* in *Les Cahiers des dix*, (63), 217–255. <https://doi.org/10.7202/039918ar>. Initially, Corbeil took little interest in anything other than Surrey’s paintings (oils and gouaches) and more or less ignored the artist’s interest in small format sketches, drawings, printmaking and mixed media but his tastes broadened as the 70s progressed. I’ll deal with all of this at greater length in Newsletter #8. Here, it’s sufficient to note that the majority of works listed from this point forward were first exhibited at the Galerie Gilles Corbeil

9. Montreal, Philadelphia, Mexico 1974

Surrey travelled to Mexico alone and was the house guest of Maurice Oulimar, a long time collector of his work, from December 11, 1973 to January 2, 1974), who had retired to Mexico.

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
119	1974	<i>Chez Suzie</i> (32x24)		
120	1974	<i>Ti-Gars</i> (20x16)		
121	1974	<i>Mexican</i> (12x18)		
122	1974	<i>Mexican</i> (12x18)		
123	1974	<i>Crepuscule Bleu</i> (40x60)		check
124	1974	<i>Last Chance Tavern</i>		
125	1974	<i>Commuters</i>		
126	1974	<i>Tourist Bus</i> (20x30)		
127	1974	<i>Cinema Clarence</i>		
128	1974	<i>Beaver Lake</i> (20x30)		check
129	1974	<i>Beaver Lake</i> (40x60)	NW	check
130	1974	<i>rue Decelles</i>		
131	1974	<i>Parking: Tavern and Hockey</i>		check
132	1974	<i>Taxi!</i> (20x16)		check
133	1974	<i>La fin de l'ete</i>	NW	check

#121 & #122 *Mexican* refer to 2 of the 4 12x18 panels he painted after returning from Mexico. but he doesn't specify which two. Surrey also created 5 small format sketches on panel as well as two watercolours, a pastel and at least three mixed media studies.

#126 *Tourist Bus* is set on the banks of the Delaware River. From February 22 to 25, 1974 Surrey was in Philadelphia & New York, travelling by tour bus between the two and sketching some scenes so that on his return he began two works *Bus Interior* and *Airport*. His journey was part of a tour of the Barnes Collection organized by the National Gallery.

#129 *Beaver Lake* exists in this version and in another half its size. Surrey often said that if he'd wanted to become wealthy from painting, all he'd had to do was keep painting this picture. Gilles Corbeil fended off all requests. Even so, Surrey told people who were cheeky enough to ask him directly that they should buy a Molly Lamb Bobak.

#133 *La fin de l'ete* is discussed in Newsletter #9



Philip & Margaret Reading 1975

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10. Montreal, Baie St Paul, Alma, New York City 1976—1977

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
134	1976	<i>Canicule</i> [<i>Heat Wave</i>](30x40))		check
135	1976	<i>Canicule II</i> (18x24)		check
136	1976	<i>Visite Dominicale</i> [<i>Sunday Visit</i>](24x20)		
137	1976	<i>Sheds</i> (changed sky) 30x40		check
138	1976	<i>Sky over Bedford</i> (24x32)	PHS	check
139	1977	<i>North Hatley Bathers</i>		check
140	1977	<i>Evening at Crescent Beach</i> (12x16)	PHS	check
141	1977	<i>Portrait of Gilles</i> (12x15 pastel)	PHS	check
142	1977	<i>Portrait of Gilles</i> (20x30 oil)		check
143	1977	<i>Crescent Street</i> (16x24)		check
144	1977	<i>Paris Metro Entry</i> (12x16)		check
145	1977	<i>St Augustine & St Ambroise</i> (20x16)		
146	1977	<i>Rue Roy</i>	NW	check
147	1977	<i>Rue de Courcelle</i>		

#136 *Visite Dominicale (Sunday Visit)* is the inspiration underlying the *March Wind* series and connected to #150, #152,#153,#156, and #170. Cf. Newsletter #9 and my essay on *March Wind* in *Some of My Favourite Surreys*.

11. Montreal & Seal Island, 1978—1980

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
148	1978	<i>The Green Scarf</i> (20x16)		check
149	1978	<i>Seal Island Motel</i>		
150	1978	<i>March Wind</i> 16x24		
151	1978	<i>Bus Interior</i> (16x24)		
152	1978	<i>March Wind</i> (20x30)		
153	1978	<i>March Wind</i> (24x42)		
154	1979	<i>Kiosk</i> (16x20)		
155	1980	<i>Seal Island Motel</i>		
156	1980	<i>March Wind</i> (48x84)	NW	check
157	1980	<i>Snowy Night, Sherbrooke St</i> (24x32)	NW	check
158	1980	<i>Red Raincoat</i> (16x12)		
159	1980	<i>Girl & White Hat</i> (16x12)		
160	1980	<i>Tavern</i> (16x12)		

#150, #152, #153, #156, and #170 are all connected to #136 *Visite Dominicale (Sunday Visit)* which is the inspiration underlying the *March Wind* series. Cf. Newsletter #9 and my essay on *March Wind* in ***Some of My Favourite Surreys***. In his list Surrey refers to the series consistently as *March Wind*. In his Workbooks it

12. Montreal 1981—1983

CAT #	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE	GLADU
161	1981	<i>Texaco Gas</i> (20x16) pastel		
162	1981	<i>Joggers at Lookout</i> (14x21) pastel		
163	1981	Silkscreen for Autistic Children		
164	1982	<i>Sherbrooke St Fresh Snow</i> (16x20)		
165	1982	<i>Sherbrooke St Fresh Snow</i> (16x22)		
166	1982	<i>River from Pine Avenue</i> (24x16)		
167	1982	<i>Motel Room</i> (pastel)		
168	1982	<i>Snow Storm, Sherbrooke St</i> (18x24)		check
169	1982	<i>Green Tavern Sign</i> (20x16)		
170	1983	<i>March Wind</i> (12x21)		check
171	1983	<i>Yellow Truck</i> (18x24)		

#163 *Silkscreen for Autistic Children* was commissioned by Gilles Corbeil to raise funds for the Autism Society of Montreal. Corbeil took a very active role in promoting the print both in the media and in his gallery. One of his nephews was autistic..

**APPENDIX 1. THE 103 WORKS PHILIP SURREY CHECKED OFF FOR COLOUR REPRODUCTION
IN NOVEMBER 1985 FOR THE GLADU/BROQUET BOOK PROJECT**

#	YEAR	TITLE	SOURCE
1	1927	Chinese Café	NW
2	1928	Workmen in Street Car	NW
5	1931	The Pool	PHS
6	1932	North Shore Mountains	Firestone
8	1935	Fred Varley at Piano	
9	1935	Nox Noeti	NW
10	1936	Going to Work	National AG
13	1938	Boardwalk, Verdun (26x34) #1	Québec Musée
14	1939	Sunday Afternoon	A.Y.Jackson
15	1939	Red Portrait	National AG
16	1940	Crocodile (34x27) #4	AGO
17	1940	Listening to Music	Firestone
19	1941	Pink Sweater	M. Corbeil
21	1941	Night (The Alley) (33x26) 1939 #3	MMFA
22	1942	The Smoker (38x46) 1941 #5	MMFA
24	1944/7?	The White Hat	Shell
25	1944/7?	The Garden	St. Catherines
26	1944/47	The Willows	PHS
27	1944/47	Ferguson's Rock	
28	1944/47	The Red Rock	PHS
30	1944/47	Near the Dam	
32	1947	Bank Girls	PHS
34	1951	Pedestrians (40x48) 1952 ? #7 / MQ #5	NW
35	1952	Joueurs de Baseball (20x24) 1953 #10 /MQ #7	G. Corbeil
36	1952	Lockport I (6x8)	
37	1952	Lockport II (6x8)	

39	1952	Les Cyclistes (26x34) #9 / MQ #8	M. Corbeil
40	1953	Dominion Square (26x40) #11 /MQ #6	NW
41	1955	Gaspé Cabins I / MQ #18	PHS
42	1955	Gaspé Cabins II	NW
43	1956	5 O'Clock	NW
44	1956	Westmount Park I	
45	1956	The Corner Store (20x24) 1957 / MQ #12 1959	NW
48	1958	Westmount Carnival (32x24) #19 1959 / MQ # 14 1962	Concordia
49	1958	Arctic Sketch I	
50	1958	Arctic Sketch II	
51	1958	Arctic Sketch III	
52	1958	Arctic Sketch IV	
53	1959	Street Flares (24x18)#22	NW
55	1960	L'ecole des Beaux Arts (30x20) 1959 #18 / MQ #11	Mutual Life
56	1961	Variations on a Theme by Poussain (16x24) #24 1962	Hamilton AG
58	1962	Evening at Percé I / MQ #19 1957	
59	1962	Evening at Percé II	
61	1962	The Underpass & 15 studies	NW
62	1963	Evening in St Henri	NW
64	1964	Windsor Station (36x24) #30 1965	NW
65	1964	Martinique at Night /MQ # 15	PHS
68	1964	<i>The Telephone Booth</i> (32x24) #27 / MQ # 22	Dofasco
69	1965	Place Ville Marie II (30x40) # 28 (32x48)	NW
70	1965	The Taxi	
71	1965	Old Houses (Beside the Richelieu)	PHS
78	1966	Nymphs and Faun (40x60)	Windsor AG
79	1966	Little Club 12x16) #291965	NW
80	1966	<i>Green Cityscape</i> (36x48)#33 / MQ #17 1965	Joliette
81	1966	<i>Winter Evening</i> (24x36) #40 1968	NW
83	1967	Desmoiselles du Village (32x48) #36	National AG
84	1967	<i>La Plage</i> (32x48) #34 1966	
85	1967	Plaza Café (16x24)	NW
86	1967	Sherbrooke Street (40x30)	NW
88	1968	Fur Hat (32x24)	NW
89	1968	Brown Van (30x40) #39	CIL

91	1969	Rose Fur Hat (24x20) #46	NW
92	1969	Snowy Street (24x32) #45	NW
93	1969	<i>Three Girls menaced</i> (48x72) #50 1968	NW
94	1969	Evening on the River (48x64)	Northern Gas
95	1969	Painter in the City	G.Corbeil
97	1970	Victoria Square (24x36) #44 1969	
97	1973	Adolescent (30x40)	
98	1973	Go-Go Girls (24x32)	
99	1970	Girouard & Sherbrooke (24x20)	NW
101	1971	Maxicoat	NW
102	1971	Sheds (changed sky) 30x40	NW
103	1971	Poster (60x40)	
105	1971	The Blue Window (16x20)	
106	1972	Grosvenor Av [Pink Umbrella] (24x20)	
107	1972	People in the Wind (24x36)	
108	1972	Grosvenor Av [Snowy Street] (32x24)	
109	1972	Marcil & Sherbrooke	NW
110	1972	Bishop & St Catherine (Unisex)	
115	1973	Museum Girls (12x18)	
116	1973	Museum Girls (24x36)	
117	1973	Adolescent (30x40)	
118	1973	Go-Go Girls (24x32)	
123	1974	Crepuscule Bleu (40x60)	
129	1974	Beaver Lake (40x60)	NW
131	1974	Parking: Tavern and Hockey	
132	1974	Taxi! (20x16)	
133	1974	La fin de l'ete	NW
134	1976	Canicule (30x40))	
137	1976	Sheds (changed sky) 30x40	
138	1976	Sky over Bedford (24x32)	PHS
139	1977	North Hatley Bathers	
142	1977	Portrait of Gilles (20x30 oil)	
143	1977	Crescent Street (16x24)	
144	1977	Paris Metro Entry (12x16)	
146	1977	Rue Roy	NW

148	1978	The Green Scarf (20x16)	
156	1980	March Wind (48x84)	NW
157	1980	Snowy Night, Sherbrooke St (24x32)	NW
159	1980	Girl & White Hat (16x12)	
168	1982	Snow Storm, Sherbrooke St (18x24)	
170	1983	March Wind (12x21)	