

Edmonton's Duke of Abstraction

Profile of an Artist: Robert Scott

Something quite incredible happened in the art world of the Seventies. In some unpredictable turn of fate, Edmonton worked its way up from the far end of the provincial territories and obtained status as a major art centre in Canada. The city was suddenly recognized for producing cutting edge art influenced by prevailing art theories of the time, a fact that the "pope of formalist abstraction" himself, Clement Greenberg, acknowledged.

Greenberg, the most influential art critic at the time and a fierce advocate of abstract art in New York since the 1940s, visited Edmonton and liked what he saw—so much so that it kept him coming back for years. One of his favorite discoveries was Robert Scott's bold gesture abstractions. "We were interested in the same kind of painting," remembers Scott. "Mr. Greenberg worked hard in the studio and took his time to look at every painting."

Greenberg's critique of Scott's work was taken to heart, and the results garnered instant attention. Scott's work was featured in solo exhibitions at the Edmonton Art Gallery in 1978, 1986 and 1993, along with solo exhibitions at the prestigious Gallery Moos in Toronto, New York and Calgary. He was also recognized in several group surveys including *Certain Traditions: Recent British and Canadian Art* (1978), *Aspects of Contemporary Painting in Alberta* (1987), *Survey Alberta '88*, *Casa de Caritat in Barcelona* (1987), and the *Tupelo Workshop Exhibition*, in Johannesburg, South Africa (1990).

Scott's 1993 exhibition at the Edmonton Art Gallery was reviewed by hard-to-please *Globe and Mail* critic, John Bentley Mays, who described Scott as, "A virtuoso, holding something like ducal status among Edmonton's abstractionists," and called this exhibition, "nearness to a culminating moment in Canadian abstract art."

On my recent visit to Scott's studio, I had the pleasure to witness some of the finest abstract paintings done anywhere in this post-modern world. Still wet.

—GORDAN NOVAK

Robert Scott



Birthplace:
Melfort, Saskatchewan, 1941

Resides: Edmonton, Alberta

Education:
Alberta College of Art and Design, Calgary (1969)
Master of Visual Arts, University of Alberta, Edmonton (1976)

Mediums: Acrylic

Price Range: \$3,000 - \$25,000. For more information contact the Peter Robertson Gallery, Edmonton, or the artist directly at: robertaustinscott@shaw.ca.

Collections: Alberta Art Gallery, Edmonton, AB; Glenbow Art Gallery Calgary, AB; Art Gallery of North York, North York, ON; Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax, NS; Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; University of Alberta Archives, Edmonton AB; University of Athabasca, Athabasca, AB; University of Lethbridge, Lethbridge, AB; Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa, ON. As well as many private and corporate collections.