

Robert Scott with his painting, Pearl Jazz, at his downtown studio.

# Going with the flow

Given the fierceness and length of this recent unseasonal cold snap, one can understand why Robert Scott's thoughts have been drifting down to balmy Mexico.

Mind you, there's more to Scott's Mexican meditations than just longing for a warm weather sojourn to his second home by the shore, the holding he maintains in our southernmost NAFTA partner. The prolific modernist painter and sculptor has also been thinking back to Latin American visits in a definite artistic light.

For sure, the southern influence is easily evident in the large abstract canvas called *Mayan Ocean/Mayan Night* (Scott has yet to fix on a final title for the piece) with its dramatic double horizon line and what could certainly be interpreted as two pre-Columbian pyramids, but that Mexican influence can also be felt in a series of unique sculptures that the 60-year-old practitioner has been working on.

Using hydrostone-infused foam, Scott has been experimenting with the novel form and is pleased with these initial results he's displaying at his annual open studio exhibition.

"I like the fact that I only have limited time to work with the form, about 20 minutes, before it hardens," says the artist, who strives for a spontaneity of expression in all his work. "The last time I felt this kind of fluidity was this workshop I did where we worked with clay."

"These works are quick like my paintings."

Scott loves the lightness and flexibility of the material. "It can so easily trap volume and address surfaces, yet it never feels hollow. It's altogether the same feeling you get from a shell," he contin-

## PREVIEW

### Robert Scott Studio Show

**Showing at:** Great Western Saddlery Building, 2nd Floor, 10137 104th St.

**When:** Saturday through March 30, noon to 5 p.m. (Meet the artist at opening reception, Saturday from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.)

ues, noting that he's been reminded of Mexican coral reefs, sea-life structures and underwater caverns as he's been playing with the new medium in his cavernous studio in the Edwardian-era Great Western Saddlery Building smack dab in the heart of Edmonton's downtown.

That being said, the curiously organic feel of the porous surface of the pieces can also be equated

to a cross-section of a large dried bone that's been roughly sectioned as much as a chunk of reef.

The aquatic/natural organic references having been made, Scott is also quick to point out now the material also reminds him of still-life work and long-admired classical sculptures. In particular Scott relishes the deftness with which the ancient Greeks could incorporate the naturalistic feel of fabric in their marble statues and with the flow and sweep of line they were so famous for.

"I'm very much working or attempting to build out of that movement," says Scott. "I like the delicate arches, the domes of some of the pieces and the architectural feel I get with the layering as well."

As you can tell from even a short conversation with the long-established painter, Scott doesn't care where his inspiration comes from as long as the energy of the referent work is high and as vibrant as the colour palate he leans toward.

"It doesn't matter where it comes from, be it a de Kooning abstract or the Nike of Samothrace (the canonical headless winged victory by Pythokritos of Rhodes), as long as it has that feeling, an energy so strong it can speak to another time," says the nationally exhibited artist with countless major shows under his belt. "Ultimately I want my works to be mine and to be true to the world I live in."

Hydrostone works aside, his limited-run studio exhibit features few linear series of work.

"I've long wanted to avoid logo paintings and knocking work off. Though, that being said, there is stuff repeating itself in painting after painting."

Gilbert A. Bouchard



RICK MACWILLIAM, THE JOURNAL

Robert Scott in his studio.