

A Fresh Look At The Laurentians

AT the Galerie de la Place this week, three Greeks bearing paintings. The gentlemen in question are Alexandre Alexiou, Nick Tzanoff and Paul Soulikias and the exhibition which they represent is a very curious thing indeed. What distinction it has comes from the brush of Mr. Soulikias, whose warm, beautifully colored studies of the Laurentian landscape have a visual dignity and presence quite unlike their neighbours.

Do I hear a groan in the back-ground? Haven't the Laurentians been painted right out of existence by now? Well, I might have thought so too but for the fact that in these canvases a fresh eye is brought to bear and the familiar is rendered unfamiliar, the commonplace unusual.

MR. SOULIKIAS was born in the small Greek sea-town of Volos in 1927 and came to Canada six years ago. He spent about a year in Saint John, New Brunswick, before settling in Montreal and until earlier this year had done no painting for a considerable time due largely to the fact that he was too busy earning a living and getting accustomed to his new environment. Last spring a friend drove him up north for the day and Soulikias got his first look at the country around Piedmont, St. Adele and St. Sauveur.

He was enchanted. The hills and valleys were just bursting into green and the artist went to work in a flash. Within the space of two months or so he

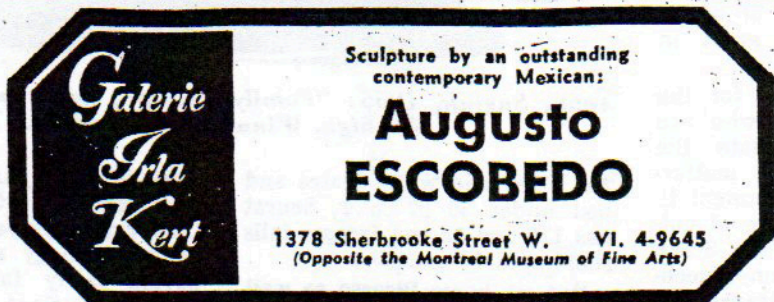
By Michael Ballantyne

completed more than thirty pictures, all variations on the theme of greenness, which avoid monotony through the skill, of his palette. — The harmonies in the best of these works are quite ravishing; hill, tree, house quite ravishing.

His companions suffer, I'm afraid, by comparison. Mr. Alexiou offers a series of strident canvases with rather pretentious titles like "Imagination eternelle" or "Vie dans le Cosmos" which are constructed with great technicolor swirls, swoops and squiggles, lines exploding all over the place. Looked at with the worst will in the world they resemble the creation of a demented finger-painter. If Mr. Alexiou could bring himself to be a little less frantic then I

think he might make more serious demands on our attention.

If you penetrate to its furthest recesses you will find another one-man show, this one featuring the work of John Davies, an artist whose traditional landscapes and figure studies can be very appealing. This time, however, he has launched himself quite literally into a kind of celestial orbit with a collection of paintings based on a quasi-mythological view of the solar system. "Neptune the Mystic," "Saturn, Bringer of Old Age" and "Uranus the Magician" do not, unhappily, live up to the grandeur of their titles. They lack the dark, brooding mystery of Gustav Holst's Planets Suite and, in the Uranus for example, slip too easily into a kind of disagreeable cuteness with Uranus coming on like Casper the Friendly Ghost.



*Galerie
Irla
Kert*

Sculpture by an outstanding contemporary Mexican:

Augusto ESCOBEDO

1378 Sherbrooke Street W. VI. 4-9645
(Opposite the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)

ORIGINAL OIL PAINTINGS

Large assortment at very low prices
and fine Gallery Frames.

A beautiful Christmas Gift that lasts a lifetime.

MONTREAL PICTURE FRAME