

Greek-born artist gaining recognition

By HELEN K. LEGGE

Living in relative obscurity in Pointe Claire is a Greek-born painter and his wife and little dark-haired daughter Klea.

His work, however, is slowly becoming known, and hangs in Montreal and Ottawa galleries where it is attracting considerable attention.

Ottawa's Wallack Gallery sponsored a one-man show of the work of Paul Soulikias last summer at the University of Ottawa from July 20 to Aug. 17, and some of his paintings hang now in the Wallack Gallery.

In Montreal his work may be seen at Galerie L'Art Francais as well as at Galerie Gauvreau, and the former plans to present him as one of a four-man show this February, with the prospect of a one-man show later in the year.

Paul Soulikias prefers to paint in oil, though he works in all other media. Mainly a landscape artist, nevertheless he creates charming and lively pastel portraits of children as well as doing still life studies.

Strongly individualistic, his paintings, have a certain fresh, almost primitive quality while avoiding the flat, dead look of American Gothic. He brings with him the vivid glow of Greek life and transfers this to the Canadian landscape, using a wide spectrum of color which brings it to life in an unusual way.

The directness and almost child-like innocence with which he approaches his subject he transmits to his work, and his composition is balanced and pleasing.

SINCE 1959

Paul Soulikias is one of three sons and a daughter born to a Greek family in the small sea town of Volos in 1926. After many vicissitudes he arrived in Saint John, N.B., in 1959 and settled in with a brother who had preceded him to Canada.

He had early shown his love of and talent for painting, but it was only after the second world war that he began to study art and, he says, attended art school in Athens "for a few months."

Largely self-taught, he doesn't like to follow any set style or system but studies nature for what he wants. According to the art critic, "he could not have learned his lessons better from a professional."

Before he was 20 the young Greek participated in a contest from which his drawing was considered the best entry from all over Greece. His paintings became very popular in his native Volos.

In 1956, after he had served three years in the Greek army, he took his savings and went to Paris where for over four months he visited every art museum and gallery to study the great masters.

In Saint John, N.B., he couldn't settle to painting because he was too busy assimilating atmosphere and earning a living. One of his reasons for coming to Canada was he wanted to see other countries, but he had to absorb some of Canada's texture before he could paint it. He started to paint in earnest in 1962.

The girl he married here? in

Canada. Helen Kantza, had preceded him from Greece by two years.

She laughingly refers to their first meeting as an illustration of her husband's absent mindedness.

Paul had gone to the Laurentians one weekend to paint but "he forgot his brushes so I met him". He was on his way back to Montreal and Helen was also on the train, returning from a weekend's rest after finishing her BA degree at Sir George Williams University. She had been a teacher in Greece and wanted to continue here.

"He forgets to eat sometimes," she added.

Paul Soulikias' paintings reveal his love for the Canadian landscape, and many mirror the Laurentian area and the North Shore's Ile Bizard. He has painted in the Eastern Townships, as well as in Rockport, Mass., this past summer where he participated in an exhibition after being made a member of the Rockport Artists' Association.

He sent paintings to Greece this year that were exhibited in the Intellectual and Cultural Centre in Athens, where they were received with en-

thusiastic acclaim by art critics, fellow artists, and the dean of the School of Fine Arts alike, according to art magazines in Athens.

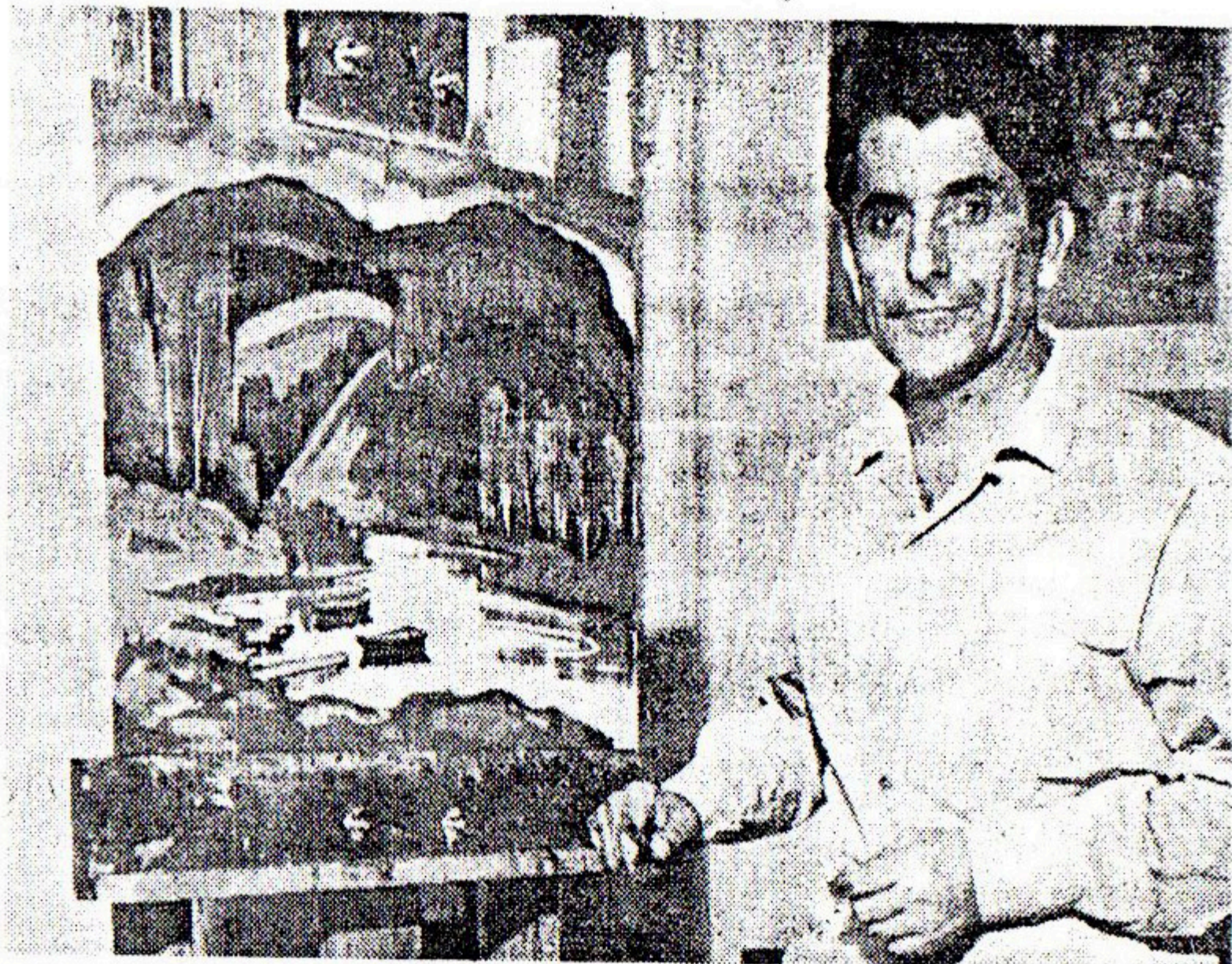
BEST LANDSCAPE

In 1965 he participated for the first time in Canada in a Montreal-based contest for new Canadians and his landscape was judged the best painting from over 200 entries.

At that time a well-known Montreal art critic wrote, "... the outstanding picture in the exhibition was Paul Soulikias' 'Landscape', a richly textured canvas with a very assured and subtle handling of color", while another praised the beauty and architecture of the painting.

In December of the same year he was one of three Greek artists to be featured in a show at the Galerie de la Place, when a Montreal reviewer devoted almost his whole article to praising Mr. Soulikias' paintings.

The artist left Montreal in 1967 to live for two years in the Ottawa valley, where his wife started to work as a school teacher. He continued to paint the Laurentians and



Canadian scene

Greek-born painter Paul Soulikias puts the finishing touches to a recent landscape in his studio at Pointe Claire.

devoted more and more time to his art. In 1969 he was given a show by the Artists' Society of Chicoutimi and his

work was well received there. While living in Ottawa valley the artist met Mr. Wallack who was the first gallery

man to appreciate and buy Soulikias paintings, and ever since that time the Wallack Gallery in Ottawa has continued to show his work.

This year found the artist back on the Montreal scene and maintaining a studio in Pointe Claire. He has been honored by the City of Montreal and was invited by the mayor to sign the Golden Book.