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Canada

Louis Muhlstock
The Urban Landscape 1930-1950

Monique Nadeau-Saumier

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art History

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
August 1989

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Abstract

Louis Muhlstock
The Urban Landscape 1930-1950

Monique Nadeau-Saumier

The thesis examines the urban landscape as depicted by Louis Muhlstock from approximately 1930 to 1950. In his urban subjects, Muhlstock revealed a deep preoccupation with social issues, primarily in his paintings of empty rooms in abandoned houses and in his drawings of unemployed and homeless people. His references to social problems are however always discreet and somewhat subservient to a larger humanist approach. Comparisons with the work of contemporary artists help to focus on this particular aspect of Muhlstock's approach to subject matter. A study of the artist as a creative observer illustrates how pervasive romantic tendencies can flourish within modern art itself. And to this end, we found it useful to look at the full artistic activities of Louis Muhlstoch during that period.

In addition to general literary references on the subject, the thesis is essentially based on numerous interviews with the artist during the last fifteen years and primary source material graciously put at our disposal by Louis Muhlstock himself.

Acknowledgements

To my thesis director, Sandra Paikowsky, my thanks for her patience, her no nonsense attitude, her perceptive comments and unfailing support without which I would never have found my way out of this.

Even more patient was Louis Muhlstock, who has nurtured this project and given so much of his time. I wish to express my warm gratitute for his generous cooperation in making his paintings and drawings available for study, furnishing biographical information, and supplying data about his pictures. I am forever indepted to this artist from whom I have learned much about art and much more about life which is the lietmotiv of his long artistic career.

I would also like to thank Laurier Lacroix for his early interest in this project and his later assistance with loan of documentation and pertinent suggestions for the text. To my friend, Denyse Roy, who took several of the photographs used in this thesis, a special thanks for the warmth of feeling with which she provided her generous assistance.

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Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the urban landscapes of Montreal painted by Louis Muhlstock during the two decades from 1930 to 1950. It will also be demonstrated that the artist in the role of a creative observer often acts consciously or unconsciously as a catalyst through which one can perceive the different levels of emotions or feelings of humanity.

Muhlstock is not the only painter of his period who found subject matter in his immediate environment. Yet, as this research focuses on his personal interpretation of the milieu as a Jewish immigrant to Montreal, the unique vision of Muhlstock will be exemplified through comparison to work of other artists of the same origin and background dealing with similar themes. Brought as a child to the Jewish ghetto then situated in the centre of Montreal when his family fled the pogroms of Eastern Europe with thousands of others at the beginning of the twentieth century, Muhlstock has always been keenly receptive to the feeling of security provided by his new home. It is probably because of his recollections of childhood memories of the city as haven that Muhlstock's approach to the subject matter transforms an otherwise drab and mundane environment into images invested with a stillness and beauty that few other painters of the Montreal cityscape have captured.

The streets, rooftops, backyards, open doors and empty rooms are almost always presented by Muhlstock as deserted, although

never devoid of human traces. Yet, parallel to these uninhabited cityscapes, a separate series of poignant studies of their occupants emerges, where the artist's attention is focused almost exclusively on the figures with hardly a hint as to their squalid environment. This dichotomy of opposing the actual subject with the painter's interpretation is a key to the urban iconography particular to Louis Muhlstock's images of Montreal, as well as a refereuce to their sociological meaning or intent.

But first, these images must be situated in their proper context and to do so, it is useful to present a brief overview of the urban landscape painting tradition, showing its evolution from picturesque subject matter to a realist rendering of the industrialized city.

The urban landscape as a painting subject is a relatively recent phenomenon. If one does not take into account the large body of works that belongs to the realm of topographical painting, the first urban scenes appear in French painting in the second half of the nineteenth-century. Paris had just undergone an intense urban renewal program realized by Baron Georges Haussmann during the reign of Napoleon III. The bustling life on the wide, open boulevards became a popular theme with the pairters, both among the Salon and the Impressionists. Camille Pissaro, Claude Monet, Pierre Renoir and their lesser-known compatriot, Gustave Caillebotte, painted several overviews of the new spaces and the

bustle of activities in the wide boulevards.[1] However, in their representations of Paris (and also of London in the case of Monet and Pissaro) the Impressionists were generally more concerned with the rendering of light and atmosphere than with the actual cityscape. Moreover, the wide boulevards, the buildings recently erected, the new bridges and railway stations were their favourite motifs; these aspects of Paris were selected in a celebration of the modern city. The emptyness of city life, the isolation and malaise of the urban dweller, already hinted at in some of Edgar Degas' and Gustave Caillebotte's works, will later be addressed in Twentieth Century Paintings, when the Post-Impressionists present a less positive vision of the urban spectacle.

But it is in America, at the turn of the century, that the first realist images of urban landscapes emerged, particularly in the work of the painters of "The Eight" (the Ash Can School). Although several of these American painters had studied abroad, for the most part in Paris, they soon abandoned European subject matter and even style. Upon their return to America, they were the first to create a real interest in the city as a painting subject. Under the influence of strong pragmatic tendencies, endemic to the New World, they set out to produce a new and different record of their country's bustling metropolis and its inhabitants.

---

[1]For an excellent study of several paintings representing the new Paris of Haussmann by Caillebotte and some of his contemporaries, see J. Kirk Varnedoe and Thomas P. Lee's catalogue, Gustave Caillebotte A Retrospective Exhibition, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 1976, pp. 97-99, 110-113, 131-132, 153-154.

Contemporary Canadian paintings show a marked reluctance towards such new subject matter. Far from depicting the urban environment which here, as in the United States, was undergoing tremendous transformation, Canadian art was almost uniquely concerned with unspoiled landscape vistas. Such rare urban scenes that appeared in the exhibitions and Salons at the turn of the century were but reworkings of picturesque aspects of the city in the European tradition, or the genre scenes so popular with Canadian collectors. In Quebec at the time, the Province's monolithic political and religious rule stressed almost exclusively the traditional virtues of rural life. Not surprisingly, the urban landscape as subject matter was almost systematically shunned by French Canadian painters until well into the third decade of the twentieth century.

It is perhaps not a coincidence that this study of Louis Muhlstock's urban landscapes begins at the same period, the end of the third decade of this century. That his painting career started at the beginning of the Great Depression would be reason enough to explain why his works reflect an ensuing rapid crumbling of a "Bright New World." The quest for a "Bright New World" had brought his family and thousand of others to this continent at the start of the century. Through years of unceasing labour these people had managed to realize some of their initial dreams; however these achievements were now in jeopardy. Could this explain Louis Muhlstock's particular presentations of humble city scenes and the precarious living conditions of the slum dwellers?

As several other Jewish painters of Montreal also paid attention to the same socio-economical environment, one could deem that this group felt more acutely the need to create a purposeful art. Louis Muhlstock and his compatriots were certainly among the first to respond to the deterioration of living standards in the Thirties; a time when increasing numbers of artists turned from the consideration of purely formal visual problems to that of man's place in a social order.

Chapter I

An Urban Landscape Tradition

1. In the United States

An industrialized urban environment first appeared in American painting during the last decades of the nineteenth century with the work of Robert Henri (1865-1928). Henri had studied in Paris during the Post-Impressionist period and his paintings of the Parisian city scene were probably influenced by those of his Canadian friend James Wilson Morrice (1865-1924).[2] Both painters presented images of the quays of the Seine, the omnibus and the cafés on the boulevards. On the whole, these subjects did not differ from those favoured by the Impressionists, and if Henri and Morrice can be qualified today as modernist painters, it is through the formal qualities of their paintings and not their choice of urban subjects.

It is only when Robert Henri returned to America and started working with the other painters which made up The Eight[3] that the industrial city became a viable subject matter [Fig. 1]. Here the bustling, thriving urban world is pictured as squalid and dirty as

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[2]Nicole Cloutier, "The Gentleman Painter" James Wilson Morrice 1865-1924 (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1985), p. 22.

[3]The "Eight" or the "Ash Can School" as hostile critics dubbed them were: Robert Henri; William Glackens; John Sloan; George Luks; Everett Shinn; Maurice Prendergast; Ernest Lawson and Arthur B. Davies.

it really existed, without the picturesque overtones that were favoured in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Eight's realist depictions of New York seen from within the boundaries of the ghettos that burgeoned with the massive arrival of immigrants from Eastern Europe, Italy and Ireland, earned the group the name of Ash Can School. This derisive label was intended as a reflection on their subject matter, one not generally appreciated by the public or by some of the art critics.[4]

One could surmise that these painters were leading the way in applying the new vocabulary they now shared with photographers. Already, in the last decade of the 19th century, Alfred Stieglitz (1864-1946) a pioneer of photography as a fine art[5] had started to explore the realities of New York city in a series of photographs whose subject matter, ugly rows of houses, towering skyscrapers and railroad yards, antidated the work of the painters of the Ash Can School [Fig.2].

The "Eight" knew Stieglitz and had seen his work. It is possible that their movement gained some ideas from the acquaintance. But, more important than the influence of photography on their depiction of the streets and life of New

---

[4]Although The Eight's exhibition of 1908 at Macbeth Gallery in New York was a qualified success with several paintings sold, most of the criticism of the show related to the subject matter, which many thought not fit for the living room. Barbara Rose, American Art Since 1900 (Rev. Ed., New York, 1975) pp. 18-20.

[5]For a good study of Alfred Stieglitz as a photographer, gallery owner and supporter of modern art, see Dorothy Norman, Alfred Stieglitz: An American Seer (New York: Random House), 1973.

York, their training as illustrators for the Philadelphia Press certainly gave several members of The Eight, such as William Glackens, John Sloan, George Luks and Everett Shin an affinity for the vibrant, pulsating life of the city. Their work as artist-reporters, linked to the prevalent American democratic tradition, was largely responsible for the fact that these four artists portrayed the urban scene through its inhabitants. By and large, the Eight's response to an increase in industrialization and the absorption of a European immigrant population resulted in an extraordinary record of what then seemed a specifically new mode of American life [Fig. 3].

Robert Henri first taught at the New York School of Art (Chase School) before founding in 1908 the Henri School of Art. Henri was a colleague to his students as well as an instructor; his definition of realism was also to be the realism of his disciples. Of these, perhaps the most important was Edward Hopper (1882-1967), a painter with whom Muhlstock has often been compared because of a shared sensitive pictorial investigation of the barren and lonely city scene. There is a decided affinity between the two painters in the feeling of stillness and arrested time conveyed in their paintings, as illustrated in Hopper's Early Sunday Morning [Fig. 4].

With the Armory Show in 1913, the American public had its first major exposure to contemporary European art. Its most direct impact on American art was the artists' embrace of a modernist attitude to subject matter where content became secondary to form.

Nevertheless, the Henri School tradition of urban themes was revived towards the end of the 1920's by another group of painters, the Fourteenth Street School.[6] Under Kenneth Hayes Miller, several artists, working in and around Union Square recorded the people, the city dwellers [Fig. 5]. Of Miller's followers, certainly the most gifted in the graphic description of crowds was Reginald Marsh [Fig. 6]. With the onset of the Depression, the city came to be regarded mainly as a background for the destitute, the homeless and the unemployed. The Moyer brothers, Isaac, Moses and Raphael, focused on an intimate view of ordinary people in the throes of their daily miseries [Fig. 7]. In his concern for the genuine pathos of routine life, Raphael Moyer, particularly during the Thirties, created a series of sensitive portraits of the New York city dwellers which has strong parallells with Louis Muhlstock's work during the same period.

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[6]Identified as such by Milton W. Brown in American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression (2nd paperback edition; Princeton, N.J.: 1972), p. 183.

2. In Canada

Like the Ash Can School, The Group of Seven were trained as commercial artists and worked in an urban setting. Yet, unlike the "Eight" who responded to Robert Henri's urging that: "All art that is worthwhile is a record of intense life"[7] the Group of Seven largely ignored the urban environment that had served as the catalyst for the work of their American counterpart. Instead, they chose to present the uninhabited regions north of Toronto. If the strong realist tradition in American painting could partially account for the emergence of an art movement based on the depiction of city life, it should be remembered that such a realist tradition was largely absent in Canada.[8]

Yet a few members of the Group of Seven had been inspired by their urban environment. Lawren Harris (1885-1970) and J.E.H. MacDonald (1873-1932) painted images of Toronto early in their career. Of these, one of the most remarkable is Tracks & Traffic, 1912 [Fig. 8], a painting very close in subject matter and formal treatment to the New York scenes painted by Robert Henri upon his return from Europe. The urban subjects of Lawren Harris, particularly his series of dramatic canvases of Halifax slums of the early 1920s, show a certain affinity in visual terms, although

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[7]Mariane Doezema, American Realism and the Industrial Age, (Cleveland: the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1980), p. 71, note 2.

[8]There were few attempts at depicting the city scene, two examples of which are Bell-Smith's Toronto Scene ca. 1890 and William Raphael's Bonsecours Market of 1880. But these paintings are really in the tradition of genre, dealing with the anecdotal and where the urban scene is but a backdrop to the intended subject, the life of its inhabitants.

not by their socio/realist concerns, to the work of the "Fourteenth Street School."

By the 1930's several Canadian art critics were beginning to question the omnipresence of the rugged northern scenery as exemplified by the Group of Seven and its associates. Graham Campbell McInnes, a young Australian-born art critic, wrote in 1936:

> A good native art must be the product of its environment, but it must also be the product of imagination and aesthetic sensibility. True artists can see significant formal relationships all about them. They are not compelled to go far afield to find subjects to paint, though of course some may do so. This genre painting is a sign of weakness, as is also the fact that the pendulum of our art has swung too far in the direction of pure landscape. It is for this reason, while I do not seek to belittle our landscapists, who are many and good, that I feel that those who are, in addition, experimenting with portraiture, still life, formal design, street scenes and figure painting are taking the harder road, and that more is likely, at present, to come from this work. The discoveries of the Group of Seven have been assimilated into the mainstream of Canadian Art; but the leaders of that art are not the large body of painters who seek to perpetuate their methods. These latter are, to paraphrase Hobbes, the ghost of the Group of Seven sitting crowned on the grave thereof.[9]

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[9]G. Campbell McInnes, (who sometimes signed Graham C. McInnes) "Thoughts on Canadian Art", Saturday Night, (Toronto: August 1), 1936.

3. In Quebec

While urban landscapes were rarely represented by English Canadian painters, they were almost systematically avoided in the Province of Quebec. Joseph Légaré (1795-1855) may prove to be an exception, but in his city scenes he is chiefly concerned with the depiction of cataclysms such as fire, epidemics and landfalls [Fig. 9]. Furthermore, these works were totally outside the mainstream of Quebec painting which then concerned itself with religious paintings, portraiture and rural landscapes.

Authorities of the Catholic Church together with political leaders subscribed to an ideology which claimed that the only moral and rewarding lifestyle was that of the rural habitant.[10] This ideology, omnipresent in all aspects of French Canadian culture especially in its literature, was specifically oriented toward chronicling rural life. It is therefore not surprising that French Canadian novels stressed three great themes: "Nature," "Family" and "Religion" all subservient to the primary ideology of fidelity to the past.[11]

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[10] P.A. Linteau, R. Durocher, J.-C. Robert, Histoire du Québec Contemporain, De la Confédération à la crise, (Québec: Editions du Boréal Express, 1979), p. 327.

[11] "L'agriculture ne devient un credo national qu'après la première moitié du XIXe siècle. Parce qu'ils n'avaient pas pu se diriger vers les autres domaines de l'activité économique, les Canadiens ont nourri un amour déréglé de l'agriculture. Ils ont voulu maintenir, coûte que coûte, l'ancien ordre social et communautaire qui leur avait servi de refuge après la conquête... ...Incapables de continuer les traditions commerciales et industrielles des fondateurs de l'Empire français d'Amérique, ils se sont convaincus que la culture du sol leur fournirait les bases économiques d'une société prospère. Obligés de se faire colons et

(continued...)

By and large, the painting tradition in Quebec in the first few decades of the twentieth century was modelled on the same ideology that marked its literature. The romantic vision of the Barbizon school had been imported and transposed into a large body of paintings that stressed the noble labour of the "habitant." To name only a few examples of this iconography, Return from the Harvest Field 1903, by Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté (1869–1937); Oxen Drinking 1899, by Horatio Walker (1858–1938) and in another genre, the mystical still-life Le repas du colon 1893, by Ozias Leduc (1864–1955).

In the years between the first and second World Wars, the Province of Quebec's population became largely urban and industrialized. In 1931, due to immigration and the exodus from an overpopulated countryside, the City of Montreal, with its million people, counted for 35.5% of the province's population.[12] Few Quebec painters attempted to represent urban landscapes and those that did were generally anglophones.

Suzor-Côté and Maurice Cullen (1866–1934) painted cityscapes early in the twentieth century, but for the most part these works were the result of an Impressionistic investigation of smoke and mists in the ports of Montreal and Quebec, rather than a realistic

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[11](...continued)
paysans ils ont conclu, ou plutôt leurs dirigeants ont conclu pour eux, qu'ils avaient une vocation agricole".
Michel Brunet: "Trois dominantes de la pensée canadienne-française, dans La présence anglaise et les Canadiens, (Montréal: Beauchemin, 1964), pp. 124–125.

[12]Linteau, Durocher, Robert, op. cit., p. 45.

look at city life. During the same period, and sometimes working with the two artists just mentionned, a group of French Canadian painters, calling themselves "Peintres de la Montée Saint-Michel" sought to capture some of the picturesque aspects of Montreal.[13]

A survey of titles listed in the catalogues of the annual Spring Exhibitions of the Montreal Art Association (now the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts) during the 1919–1939 period clearly demonstrates the artists' preference for the traditional landscape, portrait and still-life subject matter. The average percentage of urban landscape subject is of roughly 5% for these two decades; from 2.5% in 1919 to a little more than 6% in 1939.[14] Of these renditions of the urban landscape, nearly half represent scenes that can be described as picturesque: representations of old courtyards, horse-drawn calèches, portraits of old houses or churches. In general the artists chose to present a nostalgic past rather than to deal with the present industrialized urban environment.

A quick survey of the Montreal Art Association catalogue for

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[13]Ernest Aubin, Onésime Léger, Octave Proulx, Elisée Martel were the original members, later joined by Narcisse Poirier, Joseph Jutras, Jean-Paul Pépin and Onésime Legault. Very little has yet been written on this Montreal group of painters who were chiefly active in the early decades of the 20th century. As their name indicates, they sought to capture the sylvan aspect of the "Montée St-Michel" then part of the Domaine St-Sulpice, in the North of Montreal, before the urban sprawl claimed this area. The "Montée Saint-Michel" was obliterated in the 1950s with the erection of the Metropolitan Boulevard.

[14]Esther Trépanier, La ville comme lieu de la modernité: sa représentation dans la peinture québécoise de 1919 à 1939. Mémoire de maîtrise en histoire de l'art, Université du Québec à Montréal, 1983, p. 74.

the 57th Spring Exhibition in 1940 shows that some 20 out of the 307 works listed under the heading: "oil paintings, watercolours and pastels," appear to be representations of the urban scene.[15] Of the twenty artists who chose the city as subject matter, only four were francophones. This percentage of roughly 6% is about the same as the percentage of francophone artists in this section of the 1940 Spring Exhibition. Of these, Adrien Hébert (1890-1967) and Marc-Aurèle Fortin (1888-1970) stand out as important recorders of the city.[16] Marc-Aurèle Fortin produced a major series of paintings in the thirties under the title Paysages à Hochelaga, in which he records the port of Montreal and Jacques-Cartier bridge (then referred to as "le pont du havre), under construction at the time. However, Fortin's representation of these urban themes usually includes a nostalgic view of the surrounding countryside still unspoiled by the expanding city.

Adrien Hébert, on the other hand, is an unconditional champion of the cityscape, one of the rare Quebec artists to paint

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[15]It is difficult to identify the subject when the only reference is the titles of the works. Nevertheless, in most instances, the titles are very descriptive and sometimes even pinpoint the exact location of the subject. To cite but a few examples listed in the Montreal Art Association Spring Salon of 1940: Ste-Famille St., Montreal, by Jack Beder; Old Montreal, by Sam Borenstein; Little shops on Guy Street, by M.A. Eastlake; Landscape at Hochelaga, by M. A. Fortin; La pluie, Montreal, by Adrien Hébert; Westmount Station, by Ernst Neumann and Sherbrooke St., 4 o'clock, by Campbell Tinning.

[16]For an excellent study of the works of these two Quebec painters, one should refer to Esther Trépanier thesis: La ville comme lieu de la modernité, sa représentation en peinture québécoise 1919-1939, op. cit.,, chapters 3 and 4.

almost exclusively the urban environment with a strong focus on the port and its industries [Fig. 10]. Here is what Hébert has to say about the city as subject matter:

> Le paysage n'est pas le seul à être beau: la ville aussi a ses charmes. Le rues, les magasins, les tramways, les piétons. Observons certains coins de rue à l'heure où la foule prend les tramways d'assaut et quand il pleut, le miroitement de l'eau sur l'asphalte, les parapluies et les imperméables de couleurs vives ... Notre port est moderne et bien outillé. A certains moments, il y règne une activité fébrile. Allez le visiter un jour de semaine quand le travail y est à son maximum. Écoutez la symphonie sourde des déchargeurs de grains, le bruit des treuils, les filins d'acier claquant contre les mats de charge, les bruits stridents de la vapeur et le dialogue étrange entre le transatlantique en partance avec les remorqueurs.[17]

While the percentage of urban subjects in the AAM Spring Salon of 1940 is about the same as that of the exhibitions of the two preceding decades, interest seems to have shifted from attractive and picturesque aspects to the presentation of the immediate everyday environment. More and more titles refer to such ordinary images as backyards, rooftops, lanes, sheds, streetcar stops, etc.[18]

One can only suppose that young Montreal painters were

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[17]Excerpt from a lecture presented by Adrien Hébert on CBF (Radio-Canada), Montreal, September 4, 1939. This lecture, where Montreal is presented as a city full of interesting painting subjects, was subsequently published under the title: "Sujets de peinture dans la région de Montréal" Technique, décembre 1939, pp. 633-635, 665.
For a good survey of Adrien Hébert's urban painting, one should see J.-R. Ostiguy, Adrien Hébert: Premier interprète de la modernité québécoise, (Montreal, Editions du Trécarré, 1986).

[18]Several such titles in one form or another appear in the Art Association of Montreal Spring Exhibition catalogues for the years 1939, 1940 and 1942.

reacting to the advice of several progressive Canadian art critics who urged them to forsake the noble vistas of the Group of Seven and its offspring, the Canadian Group of Painters, for a subject matter more attuned to the environment of the majority of their compatriots. As stated by Reynald, in an article published in La Presse, in 1935:

> Il faut déplorer l'urbanisation excessive. Mais il n'en reste pas moins que le milieu où nous sommes reste le plus accessible à notre pensée, à notre art et que nous aurions tort de l'ignorer. Le peintre concrétise bien ce qu'il trouve dans l'atmosphère sociale où il se meut. Je m'étonne toujours que trop d'artistes montréalais, par exemple, doivent rechercher des sujets rustiques stéréotypés. Pour nous, bon gré mal gré, c'est la rue qui chante et qui pleure, qui gronde et qui se divertit. C'est là que s'écriront bientôt des pages dangereuses de notre histoire. Si invitants que soient les sujets recueillis au cours de voyages et dans la lecture ou le rêve, rien n'est plus près de nous, citadins, que la cité avec ses gratte-ciels et ses coins encombrés, avec ses parcs et ses clochers, avec ses usines, avec ses chômeurs et ses demi-bourgeois.[19]

Another champion of the need for a change was the Contemporary Arts Society. Founded in Montreal in 1939 by John Lyman (1886-1967), a Canadian painter trained abroad, the C.A.S. attempted to promote in Ouebec the formal, aesthetic and modern preoccupations of the "School of Paris."

"The talk of the Canadian scene has gone sour, the real Canadian scene is in the consciousness of Canadian painters, whatever the object of their thought", wrote Lyman who was also an articulate and outspoken art critic.[20] In his columns published

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[19]Reynald, pseudonym of E.R. Bertrand, La Presse, February 20 1935, in "La vie artistique", p. 9.

[20]John Lyman: "Art", in The Montrealer, February 1, 1938.

weekly in The Montrealer during the 1930s and 1940s, he often questioned the authority and relevance of the predominant Canadian landscape school, the legacy of the Group of Seven.

Created to lessen the autonomy of the Group on Canadian painting, the C.A.S's membership showed a marked predominance of English and Jewish painters.[21] Several of these had a distinct affinity to the urban environment, an affinity that was strongly reflected in their numerous renditions of cityscapes, subjects traditionally neglected by their French-Canadian counterparts.

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[21]For a list of the members of the CAS, see Lise Perreault, La Société d'art contemporain 1939-1948. Mémoire de maîtrise es art (histoire de l'art), Université de Montréal, 1975.

Chapter II

The Formative Years

> Father made us feel rich. We had food on the table, clean beds, a roof over our heads. Montreal became our home and has remained so ever since.[22]

The Early Youth

In 1911, Louis Muhlstock, then seven years old, arrived in Montreal with his grandmother, mother, sister and two brothers. The family had left the small town of Narajow, in Galicia, to join a father who had migrated to Canada three years earlier and who worked in Montreal as an itinerant peddler of fruits and vegetables.[23]

Life had not been easy in Galicia for the Muhlstocks.[24] Louis Muhlstock recalls the house where the extended family, grandfather, grandmother, aunt, uncle, mother and children shared the only two rooms. Sometimes, in the coldest nights of winter, the young calf was taken in the big room where the hearth was, so that the animal, a prized possession and the livelihood of the family (the grandfather was a trader in livestock) would not perish in the freezing stable. The situation of the Muhlstock family was typical of many Jewish communities of Eastern Europe.

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[22]Oral history interview with Louis Muhlstock by Monique Nadeau-Saumier, Tape 1, side 2, Feb. 16, 1984, 00:20, The Montreal Art Community, Concordia University Library.

[23]Unless otherwise indicated, the biographical information in this thesis was recorded by the author during numerous conversations with the artist over the past 15 years.

[24]Then a crown land of Austria, the province of Galicia was annexed to Poland after World War I.

Life was centered around the synagogue, then the only religious, educational, cultural and social centre for the Jewish community. While the industrial revolution had contributed to the emancipation of the Jewish populations of France, Germany and England by allowing them to move outside the ghettos to participate more actively in the economic and political life, the Jews of Eastern Europe continued to live in isolation, having been confined therein for centuries by the feudal system.[25]

When the elder Muhlstock's family joined him in Montreal in 1911, the large majority of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe were settled in what was then known as the Saint-Louis riding of Montreal.[26] This first home, this "roof over our heads" of the Muhlstock family was a basement slum apartment on Saint-Dominique Street in Montreal. The description of this dwelling is a recurring theme that can be found in many of the articles and interviews on the painter's career.

> We first lived in a 14 dollar-a-month unheated house on St. Dominique, in the slum part of the city. Our house was on the West side of the street, and we lived in the basement, where no sunlight ever shone in; and for about 14 years we lived in that kind of ambience. My first images, of course, were those of St. Dominique Street and Demontigny Street, and Cadieux Street, and the lanes

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[25]Alexandra Szacka: "Immigration et démographie" Juifs et réalités juives au québec, Pierre Anctil et Gary Caldwell, editeurs, (Québec: Institut québécois de recherches sur la culture, 1984), pp. 103-104.

[26]Like the Muhlstock, most of these Jewish immigrants came from Poland (54.93% of the total Jewish immigrants from 1926 to 1938) Szacka op. cit., p. 100.

in that slum section.[27]

This is how Muhlstock himself describes the neighbourhood where he grew up. The opposition between the two statements, one recalling a warm, safe place, and the other referring to a dark, dank basement on the lower part of Saint Dominique Street is an indication of Louis Muhlstock's sometimes sentimental and sometimes realist feelings about his childhood environment. These sensations were later transposed into his rendition of the urban landscape of Montreal.

What was it like to be a young Jewish immigrant growing up in the slums of Montreal in the first decades of the twentieth century? Louis Muhlstock has often recalled that for most of these children, Yiddish was the mother tongue; they learned English at school and Hebrew at the synagogue. As for the lanes and backyards where they played, Muhlstock is always very discreet about his childhood recollections of these unsavory neighbourhoods, mentioning only a few of the favourite games.

Ted Allan, in an article entitled "Cadieux Street Childhood," published in the New Frontier in April 1937, describes an environment of garbage cans that reek, flies buzzing in the hot summer air, gangs with secret hiding places. The favorite games were stealing fruit from the stalls of an exploiting landlord, fighting "the Frenchies" and pestering the

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[27]Louis Muhlstock et al in "They could split rock..." Norman Bethune his time and Legacy, David A.E. Shepard and Andrée Lévesque, editors, (Ottawa: The Canadian Public Health Association, 1982), p. 114.

whores. Cadieux Street, (later called de Bullion) was situated in the red light district of Montreal, in the same neighbourhood where Louis Muhlstock grew up. While such recollections are probably shared by Muhlstock, he seldom refers to them, preferring instead to dwell on the happy incidents and the warm and affectionate family life that compensated for the poor lodgings on Saint Dominique Street.

Muhlstock would, however, agree with Ted Allan's conclusion to his article on Cadieux street:

> It always puzzles me when I read that prosperity came a few years after the war and continued until 1929. I was brought up on Cadieux Street during those years and I don't remember there being prosperity.[28]

Nevertheless, the Muhlstock family found its lot tremendously improved, when after fourteen years in their somber lodgings, they were able to move to what Louis refers to as "Upper St. Dominique" near Duluth, in a much brighter and sunnier apartment, situated on the second story of the building at 3997 St. Dominique street.

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[28]Ted Allan, "Cadieux Street Childhood" New Frontier, Vol. 1, No. 12, (April 1937), pp. 10-11.

1. The Initial Stages

Louis Muhlstock has always felt the urge and need to draw. As a child, he found his inspiration in the colouring books that were displayed in the windows of the variety stores of his neighbourhood. With whatever material he had at hand and encouraged by his family, he began to draw the familiar objects of his immediate environment. This facility did not go unnoticed for he was soon asked to decorate the blackboard of his school on special occasions. It is not surprising therefore, that at fourteen, adding a few years to his age in order to be admitted, Muhlstock studied in the evening classes at the Board of Arts and Manufactures, situated in the Monument National (on St. Lawrence Blvd.). He drew first from the cast, then from live models under the guidance of Edmond Dyonnet and his assistant, Joseph Saint-Charles. He eventually joined the evening classes at the Art Association, where he studied from 1920 to 1928 with William Brymner, one of the many visiting teachers. From 1926, he also found time to attend the evening classes at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. By that time Muhlstock had graduated from high school and was working as a bookkeeper with a firm of importers of fruits and vegetables.[29]

In 1928, having managed to save the sum of $2,400.00, he left to fulfill his dream: study painting in Paris. Upon his arrival, Muhlstock first enrolled at the atelier of "La Grande Chaumière"

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[29]Louis Muhlstock first attended Alexander Public school on Sanguinet Street, then in 1918, he enrolled in the Montreal High School on University Street, graduating in 1922.

where, for five francs, he worked all day from the live model. He then studied with Louis-François Bilhoul becoming his studio assistant within the year. His formal art training with the academician painter consisted exclusively of figure studies, done in the studio. However, in his spare time, Muhlstock chose Paris and its suburbs for his plein-air studies and it was there that he first began to paint urban landscapes.

Recalled to Montreal in 1931, because of his mother's illness, Muhlstock had booked a return passage on the Cunard Line, expecting to use the return portion of the ticket in the near future. It was not to be so, the lack of funding, a chronic problem for most artists at the time and even more acutely felt during this period of economic crisis, prevented the young artist from ever going back to his art studies in Paris.

Nevertheless, Muhlstock was determined to keep on painting even under these difficult conditions. After all, he had managed to live and study in Paris on his meager savings for three years. This experience as well as the fact that he could reside in the family apartment on St. Dominique Street, made it possible for him to launch a full-time painting career upon his return to Montreal.

In the portfolio of drawings and paintings that he brought back from France were several oil sketches of Paris and its "banlieues," painted during his leisure time and seemingly for his own enjoyment.[30] One painting entitled Gentilly, aux environs

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[30] Oral history interview with Louis Muhlstock by Monique Nadeau-Saumier, Tape 1, side 1, Nov. 9, 1983, 12:05, The Montreal Art Community, Concordia University Library.

de Paris, c. 1930, [Fig. 11] is still in the possession of the artist. Already, in one of his first cityscapes, Muhlstock adopted the compositional system that he used over and over again in several of his urban scenes[31]. The vertical elements of the lampost and building in the left foreground, repeated in the buildings at the right, help stabilize the composition. The central area opens in a diagonal veering from right to left, this shape is quoted again in the triangle of the sky. The colours are warm, muted gradations of beige and ochre, the contrast of light and shadow accentuates the forms while the caligraphic quality of the strong outlines reveals Muhlstock's draughtmanship.

Shortly after his return home, Louis Muhlstock exhibited two more of these oil sketches: Vue sur le parc Monsouris, Paris[32] and Boulevard Jourdan, Paris at the Fifty Second Exhibition of the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, held in November 1931 at the Art Association of Montreal (MMFA). As usual, the R.C.A. exhibition had its stars and crowd pleasers, such as F. S. Coburn, Maurice Cullen and the president of the Royal Canadian Academy, Sir E. Wyly Grier. Also exhibiting were former members of the Group of Seven A.Y. Jackson, Franz Johnston, J.E.H. Macdonald and Frederick Varley. Although such grand company would overshadow any young artist's work, Muhlstock was nevertheless pleased with this first

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[31]For example, Groubert Lane, c. 1939, [Fig. 45]; Rue de Bullion coin Sherbrooke, c. 1940, [Fig. 21] and Sunday, Point St. Charles, c. 1946, [Fig. 18].

[32]Monsouris, as listed in the catalogue entry is a mispelling for Montsouris, a park facing the Cité étudiante where Muhlstock resided while in Paris.

participation in the painting section. Several of Muhlstock's drawings had been accepted in previous exhibitions of the Royal Canadian Academy from as early as 1925. These early charcoal sketches featured members of his family, such as his grandmother, his brother Solly as well as studies of neighbourhood characters.

The following year, in February 1932, Muhlstock showed forty oil paintings in his first one-man exhibition at the Montreal Arts Club on Victoria Street. The Parisian scenes exhibited at the R.C.A. the year before were presented again, with several others such as Effet du matin, Porte d'Orléans, Paris and Gentilly, aux environs de Paris. Also featured in the exhibition were Muhlstock's first Montreal sketches. One reviewer of the show commented in the Montreal Star on how the paintings:

> show a good sense of colour and atmosphere, and of the differences between French and Canadian atmosphere... Two town views, very different from each other, are the Boulevard Jourdan, Paris and the amusing study of a tumble of buildings about a backyard on St. Dominique Street, Montreal.[33]

Muhlstock could have found subject matter in Montreal's attractive counterparts of his Parisian subjects. Instead, he chose to record the backyards, the lanes and doorways of his childhood environment. His choice of such unglamourous subject matter has often been interpreted by several Canadian critics and art historians as a reflection of the Muhlstock's concern for the prevailing economic conditions of the early Thirties. But one Parisian oil sketch featured in the same exhibition reveals that

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[33]"Louis Muhlstock exhibits sketches" in The Montreal Star, Feb. 3, 1932.

a childhood spent in the slums of Montreal had made Louis Muhlstock aware of these particular problems, even before the Depression. La Zone, Paris under a stormy sky recorded a very different type of urban environment. La Zone was a rather squalid sector situated directly behind the Maison canadienne where Muhlstock lived while studying in France. Before it was razed to make room for the Cité universitaire, this part of Paris harboured mostly squatters and transients. That Paris in the late 1920's also had its share of poor and destitute people was a reality that Muhlstock did not ignore or abstract in his depiction of his Parisian environment. In fact, it is typical of Muhlstock's realist tendencies that he chose to represent the obverse and reverse sides of his immediate environment during his Parisian stay. The Maison canadienne was facing the attractive boulevard Jourdan and Parc de Montsouris, while its back windows looked on a different urban panorama; the more sordid side of the city was exemplified in the human reality of la Zone. Muhlstock represented both sides, transforming the less attractive subject into an image where line and colour provided a new focus and meaning. As commented by the same reviewer cited above: "In one or two cases, - La Zone, Paris, under a stormy sky is one, - the painting seems more interesting than the picture". This characteristic trait is frequently present in Louis Muhlstock's urban landscapes.

2. Interaction with The Art World

In 1935 Muhlstock had his first solo exhibition of some sixty studies and drawings at the Art Association of Montreal. Impressed by the talent and draughtmanship of the young artist, the writer Robert Elie[34] and the poet Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau, both reporters of the Montreal art scene, arranged to meet Louis Muhlstock and bought one of the drawings in the show. This was Muhlstock's introduction to a group of young French-canadian intellectuals that were to play an important role in the development of Montreal's cultural life. Robert Elie and Saint-Denys Garneau, together with Jean Lemoyne, Fançois Rinfret and Claude Hurtubise would often meet to listen to music, and Muhlstock, already a knowledgeable music lover, was happy to join these sessions. Saint-Denys Garneau wrote a poem entitled "Muhlstock", which was inspired by the drawings in the 1935 exhibition:

> Les yeux mal désengourdis de sommeil, encore alourdis et comme humides d'un rêve complaisant en sa tristesse.
> Tellement évanescents, comme à peine dévoilés et sur le point encore de se résorber dans l'ombre.
> Ce sentiment de l'irrévocable se marie à ce qu'il y a de sensuel dans ces regards. Libération, élargissement.
> L'art des surréalistes.
> Images accolées, unies non par lien logique, qui est hors de l'art, mais un lien essentiellement artistique.
> Correspondance est art.
> Leur qualité intime.[35]

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[34]During the 1930's and 40's, Robert Elie published an art column in La Presse under the pseudonysm of Pierre Daniel.

[35]This poem, written in pencil on a loose sheet (18.6 x 11 cm), dates from approximately 1936 and remained unpublished during the poet's lifetime. It is reproduced in the book by Jacques

(continued...)

It was through his friendship with Robert Elie that Louis Muhlstock was invited to attend the initial meeting of the Contemporary Arts Society in February 1939, where he first met John Lyman. While Lyman's experience abroad was considerably longer and broader than that of the young Muhlstock, it was obvious to both painters on their simultaneous return to Montreal that the Quebec art establishment was extremely provincial in its outlook. Muhlstock has often commented on how the only public art gallery in Montreal at the time, the Art Association, did not respond to contemporary European trends, even less to abstraction, or anything that was not academic. Furthermore, according to Muhlstock, the lack of exhibiting facilities was another major problem, Montreal having all but two art dealers, Watson on Sherbrooke Street and Johnston on St. Catherine Street, both of which catered to Montreal collectors' interest in "Little Brown Dutch paintings."[36] This interest had been prevalent for some decades. In his autobiography, A Painter's Country, A. Y. Jackson notes that before his departure for Paris in 1907 the majority of Montreal collectors were buying Dutch painters at high prices, ignoring the French Impressionists which were being acquired by

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[35](...continued)
Brault et Benoit Lacroix, Oeuvres de Saint-Denys Garneau, (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1971), p. 736.

[36]Oral history interview with Louis Muhlstock by Monique Nadeau-Saumier, Tape 1, side 1, Nov. 9, 1983, 32:55, The Montreal Art Community, Concordia University Library.

the Americans.[37] This situation was unchanged when Louis Muhlstock returned from France in the early 1930's.[38]

It is therefore not surprising that he responded heartedly to Lyman's call to artists willing to explore the issues of modern art. Notwithstanding the short span of Muhlstock's stay abroad, his exposure to French and to a lesser extent Belgian and English contemporary painting, had given him an awareness of the recent developments in modern European art.[39] However, Muhlstock's position on subject matter was different from Lyman's own "art for art's sake" credo:

> The "purpose" of art is to be art, not a vehicle for thought or sentiment of a different order.[40]

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[37]A.Y. Jackson, A Painter's Country, Toronto: Clarke, Irwin & Co. Ltd., 1958, pp. 14, 15.

[38]In his book, Retrospective Recollections of a Montreal Art Dealer. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974, William R. Watson stresses how, from the onset of his career as an art dealer in Canada at the beginning of the 20th century, he was eager to sell the work of Canadian painters. However, he seems to have had mitigated success in this aspect of his sales, for as late as 1932, a large portion of his clientele was still buying Dutch paintings, the "bread and butter" of his business, as stated by him on p. 41.

[39]While in Paris, Muhlstock spent a great deal of his spare time in the Louvre Museum, although he occasionally visited exhibitions of contemporary painters. One that he mentions particularly is an exhibition of paintings by Oskar Kokoschka (1886-1980) the visionary Austrian painter. He also visited museums and saw exhibitions in England and Belgium, where he travelled during his stay in Europe.

[40]John Lyman's Journal, Jan. 8, 1947, as reproduced in Hedwidge Asselin, Inédits de John Lyman, (Montréal: Bibliothèque nationale du Québec, 1980), p. 112.

Indeed, Muhlstock's paintings clearly showed his sympathy for the condition of the working class in these troubled times. But then again, several other painters who joined the Contemporary Arts Society at this period were in marked opposition with Lyman's proclaimed detached attitude towards subject matter. This was particularly the case of most Jewish members of the C.A.S., such as Jack Beder, Alexander Bercovitch and Sam Borenstein. The titles of the paintings listed in the Society's exhibitions indicate that these artists were largely concerned with a realist interpretation of their immediate urban environment.[41]

It is revealing of Muhlstock's social consciousness that his contribution to the first C.A.S. exhibition in December 1939 was Goupil Lane, a painting of a derelict alley in the slums of Mon real [Fig. 12]. Muhlstock, together with Goodridge Roberts and Eric Goldberg, participated in the selection and installation of this exhibition. Other urban subjects were also featured in this first showing of the Contemporary Arts Society. Marian Scott and Fritz Brandtner presented industrial subjects such as scenes from the Montreal harbour, while Allan Harrison's House on Dorchester showed his shared concerns with Edward Hopper, of the American regionalist school.[42]

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[41]The Jewish painter Eric Goldberg, who favoured fashionable subjects such as Garden Party, (Musée d'art de Joliette) seems to have been the exception in this case.

[42]For more documentation of these artists and reproductions of some of these paintings, see Christopher Varley The Contemporary Arts Society/La Société d'art contemporain Montreal 1939-1948 (Edmonton: The Edmonton Art Gallery), 1980.

Paul-Emile Borduas had entered under the title Paysage what was possibly a Mentana Street image [Fig. 13], more correctly identified now as Matin de printemps, No. 78 in the catalogue of Borduas' 1988 exhibition at the Moncreal Museum of Fine Arts. [43] Probably painted from a second floor appartment at the corner of Napoleon and Mentana streets where Borduas then had an appartment, this soft, lyrical rendition of an otherwise ordinary street in the working class district of Montreal owes much to Maurice Denis, the French symbolist painter with whom Borduas had studied in Paris. Although Muhlstock later produced streetscapes of similar lyrical beauty, particularly his Sainte-Famille Street paintings, his entry for the 1939 C.A.S. exhibition was stark and almost gloomy in comparison to Borduas' Mentana street scene. Muhlstock's Goupil Lane appears austere and unadorned, probably the only realist portrayal of the slums of Montreal in the 1939 C.A.S. exhibition. The artist's choice of such subject matter would therefore seem to imply that a concern for fundamental social issues could exist in an artwork that dealt primarily with the relationships of its formal elements, as encouraged by Lyman.

That same year, the Contemporary Arts Society lobbied the National Gallery for exhibition space in the Canadian Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. Five other established Canadian art societies had already been promised such support. The belated and somewhat arrogant demand of the Contemporary Arts Society had been

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[43] François-Marc Gagnon, Paul-Emile Borduas (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1988), p. 274.

turned down by H.O. McCurry, the director of the National Gallery.[44] However, Muhlstock who, for several years had been a member of three of the five selected societies: the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, the Canadian Society of Graphic Art and the Canadian Group of Painters, was eligible to participate in this prestigious world exhibition. Altogether, seven works by Muhlstock were accepted. Alhough none of these portrayed city scenes, the studies of Paranka, Jos Lavallée (Head of an Old French Canadian) and a black youth (Three heads) were part of Muhlstock's portraits of the urban dwellers.[45]

The Contemporary Arts Society finally succeeded in establishing a strong, active presence in Montreal. Indeed, the C.A.S., surely aided by John Lyman's social contacts, had secured a foothold in the academically oriented Art Association.[46] In 1942 more than half of the 30 members of the C.A.S. exhibited at the 59th Spring Exhibition of the Montreal Art Association. Muhlstock's own entries were two important cityscapes: The Open Door[47] and View from a window.

But, save for these and other "progressive" entries from

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[44]Christopher Varley, op. cit., p. 14.

[45]See Annex III for a complete list of Muhlstock's entries in the 1939 New York World Fair exhibitions.

[46]John Lyman's cousin was Cleveland Morgan, owner of the Morgan store (now La Baie), and also then President of the Art Association of Montreal.

[47]The Open Door was probably the painting now in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Open Door of Third House, Groubert Lane, [fig. 50].

artists associated with the Contemporary Arts Society, the great majority of the works shown in the official exhibitions of the Art Association of Montreal were extremely conservative, reflective of the academic inclination of the jury members. This situation was constantly denounced by John Lyman in the by-weekly column he published in The Montrealer, from 1936 to 1942. Lyman and other astute art critics were amply justified in their comments on the lack of artistic ambition in both the A.A.M. and the Royal Academy exhibitions. As a protest against the state of the official art in Montreal, the members of the Contemporary Arts Association boycotted the AAM Spring Exhibitions of 1943 and 1944. Their demand for an enlightened selection of works was finally realized and some members of the CAS, including Louis Muhlstock, served on the alternative jury for the Spring Exhibition of 1945.

The same year, 18 members of the Contemporary Arts Society were invited to participate to a prestigious exhibition: The Development of Painting in Canada 1665-1945. Curated by four of the most important Canadian museums and art galleries, The National Gallery of Canada, The Art Gallery of Toronto, The Art Association of Montreal and the Musée de la Province de Québec, this retrospective of Canadian Art was shown in the institutions' home cities. Typically, Muhlstock's entry was an urban scene: Ste. Famille Street, (Wet Day) 1939.

Representations of cityscapes were frequently featured in Muhlstock's numerous participations in exhibitions during this period.[48] This is particularly true of the Contemporary Arts Society where, together with Jack Beder and Phillip Surrey, his exhibition entries were almost constantly representations of the urban scene of Montreal.

[48]See Annex III for a list of the exhibitions to which Louis Muhlstock participated and the titles of the paintings he exhibited from 1930 to 1950.

Chapter III

The Montreal Landscape

> To the art critic Lawrence Sabbath, who asked him: "When you came back to Montreal what followed from then", Louis Muhlstock answered: The Depression followed![49]

1. Backyards and Rooftops

Among the works presented at Muhlstock's first solo exhibition in Montreal in 1932 was a study of roofs and sheds, that the Montreal Star reviewer described as "a tumble of buildings about a backyard on St. Dominique Street,"[50] This unpretentious recording of a familiar view may not have been Muhlstock's first rendering of his urban environment, but it was however the first of his Montreal views to be reproduced in a newspaper [Fig. 14]. In the Saturday edition of La Presse, February 6, 1932, three of Muhlstock works are featured. Alongside two figure studies, the painting of Back Yard Saint-Dominique Street bears the caption:

> On voit ici (en haut) intitulé "Back Yard Saint-Dominique Street" une belle symphonie en rose, sur un dessin énergique.

In a long and praising article under the heading: "Muhlstock, impressioniste, a un pinceau qui imite le pastel de façon étonnante," the journalist comments on the artist's choice

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[49]Lawrence Sabbath, "Louis Muhlstock" Canadian Art, Vol. XVII, no. 4, (July 1960), p. 223.

[50]"Louis Muhlstock Exhibits Sketches" The Montreal Star, February 3, 1932.

of colour for such a subject:

> ... là un coin de rue, avec des bâtisses présentant des arêtes accusées, des toits lancés puissamment dans un rose cru sous un coin de ciel.[51]

We have not been able to trace this painting, which may be identified as the same as one now in the permanent collection of the National Gallery in Ottawa.[52]

However, Muhlstock has a very similar painting in his own collection. This study entitled: Backyard Upper St-Dominique, c. 1932, [Fig. 15] is also rendered in vivid pink hues that belie its banal subject. The strong diagonal shapes of the flat planes of the roofs zigzag across the vertical thrust of the sheds. The interlocking geometric volumes constitute the major part of the painting in a tight construction. This intricate puzzle is punctuated by the strong contrast of sun and shade, relieved by the tender colours of trees that survive in such a hostile

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[51]R.O.B. (probably for E.R Bertrand, who would later sign his articles with the pseudonym of Raynald), "A l'"Arts Club" Muhlstock, impressioniste, a un pinceau qui imite le pastel de façon étonnante", La Presse, samedi, 6 février 1932.

[52]The National Gallery of Canada has received in 1983 the gift of a painting by Louis Muhlstock from June Magog Villalon, of Westport Conn., U.S.A. Number 28262 and intitled Backyards/Fonds de cour, this painting dated c. 1935 could be the one reproduced in the La Presse edition of 1932. Because of the restrictions on visiting some of the storage areas of the National Gallery before its move to a new building, we have been unable to verify this hypothesis. In a letter of November 26, 1986, we were informed by the Marketing Department of the National Gallery that they would be unable to produce a photograph of this painting for at least two years. A subsequent visit by the author to the curatorial wing of the National Gallery in April 1989 revealed that this particular work is now in the new building reserve area. Unfortunately, because of installation problems it was not possible to see this painting.

environment. The upper right corner is a vibrant contrast of loosely painted foliage on a vivid blue sky. Through means of light and colour, Muhlstock transforms an unsightly array of sheds and rooftops on Upper St. Dominique into an harmonic arrangement of sun-drenched buildings.

Painting of backyards and roofs by Muhlstock can be identified as part of a realist tradition rooted in the American Ash Can School. The importance of rooftops as part of a city dweller's landscape is manifest for instance in several paintings by John Sloan, but the architecture is primarily a setting for the figures which inhabit it.

If the influence of American painters can be felt only indirectly in Muhlstock's personal interpretations, interest by other Canadian painters in the subject came from a first-hand experience of a realist American painting tradition. Several painters of the urban scene at the time were slightly younger than Muhlstock and, unable to study overseas because of the Depression and later because of an impending world conflict, had gone to the Art Student League in New York for their training. This was the case for example of Jack Beder (1909-1987), Philip Surrey (b. 1910) and Alan Harrison (1911-1986), all of whom studied at the A.S.L. of New York in the mid 1930s.

In the turbulent thirties of America, with the Depression, the rise of Fascism and the threat of World War II, a native tradition of realism initiated by the Ash Can School at the beginning of the century produced an art that sought to express

the artist's commitments to political, cultural and social problems. Having been exposed to this artistic climate, Canadian painters upon their return to Montreal tended to produce sober and realistic works, based on acute observation of urban life.

Of these Jack Beder, a Jewish artist born in Poland, who first came to Montreal as a teenager in 1926, produced a large body of paintings depicting the Montreal Jewish ghetto as exemplified by Toits de la rue St-Urbain, 1938 [Fig. 16]. Although different in its formal treatment (the paint is handled in small broken touches while Muhlstock's is much more broadly painted), the work of Beder shows a great similarity to Muhlstock's Backyard, St. Dominique, in the choice of subject, composition, close viewpoint and the use of vibrant pink tones.[53]

Another painter whose work is concerned as well with such mundane subjects is Ernst Neumann (1907-1955). A painting of Neumann: Windsor Street, 1953 [Fig. 17], presents a familiar Montreal scene that evokes Muhlstock's own earlier Pointe St. Charles [Fig. 18]. Even though Neumann's streetscape shows the street with human presence, as opposed to Muhlstock's totally unpopulated Point St. Charles rendition, both are imbued with the same eerie stillness and spiritual vacancy found in Edward

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[53]Two other renditions of the same scene were featured in the exhibition curated by Esther Trépanier: Jewish Painters and Modernity, 1940-1960, Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montreal, 1987. Jack Beder's entry is entitled: Roofs at dusk, cat. # 22. The same scene as painted by Bernard Mayman: Rooftops, cat. # 107, is reproduced on page 148 of the exhibition catalogue.
There is another painting of the same subject by Jack Beder: Back Roofs, 1936, oil on board, 47 x 56 cm, collection Musée d'Art de Joliette.

Hopper's Sunday Morning [Fig. 4], a painting that has now become the icon of the loneliness of urban life. Ernst Neumann was a sensitive and gifted printmaker whose numerous etchings illustrate the stark reality of the day to day struggle for survival during the Depression. Although Neumann did not study in New York, he was nevertheless exposed to the American realist tradition indirectly through his association with Goodridge Roberts (1904-1974), who had attended the League and studied with John Sloan of the Ash Can School.[54] However, Roberts' work is distinguished from Neumann's by its unsentimental objectivity to subject matter. Yet, it is possible that the romantic atmosphere present in several of Sloan's early New York scenes, may have found a more receptive echo in Ernst Neumann's work. Another influence on Neumann might have come from his association with Sam Borenstein, with whom he shared a studio in Montreal in the early 1940s.[55]

Sam Borenstein (1908-1969) born in Poland, arrived in Montreal in 1921. Largely self-taught, he started to record his working class background around 1930.[56] Although related in

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[54]Neumann and Roberts had met as students in the Montreal Ecole des beaux-arts. When Roberts returned to Montreal in 1936, he founded a school with Neumann which lasted a few seasons. Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the thirties, (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), p. 128.

[55]Both Neumann and Borenstein are listed with the address of 1215 Greene Ave. Westmount, in Art Association of Montreal Spring Exhibition catalogue of 1940.

[56] Edgar Main, "A cartoonist of the Left" in Canadian Forum, Vol. XV, no. 177, (August 1935), p. 332, p. 347.
Edgar Main was the pseudonym of Leo Kennedy (b. 1907), a Canadian poet and writer who contributed to several Canadian magazines in

(continued...)

subject matter, his work differs strongly from that of Muhlstock. Borenstein's slashing lines and abrasive colours are totally removed from Muhlstock's controlled handling of paint and subdued coloring. One case in point is Borenstein's Old Montreal Rooftops, 1943 [Fig. 19]. Far from the intimate rendering of Muhlstock's own backyard, an immediate and familiar scene, Borenstein's painting is a wide angle survey of the many aspects which make up an immigrant's view of Montreal. His sweeping panorama stresses the different components of the city's skyline where billboards, tall buildings and factory whistles all but dwarf the humble dwellings of his immediate neighbourhood.

Another painter who frequently recorded the rooftops of Montreal is Alexander Bercovitch (c.1893-1951). Described as "Something of an eccentric, disillusioned individualist"[57] the Russian-born Bercovitch was an artist of great political awareness who often depicted typical scenes of the Jewish ghetto.

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[56](...continued)
the 1930s. Under his real name, he wrote in The New Frontier and The McGill Fornightly Review. He was at one time editor of the Canadian Mercury, and, together with A.M. Klein and David Lewis, wrote articles for The McGilliad, McGill's University undergraduate literary magazine. Leo Kennedy's major contribution to Canadian poetry is The Shrouding, a collection of poems published in 1933. For more documentation on Leo Kennedy, see Michael Benazon's excellent article: "Leo Kennedy: Reticent Poet", in Matrix, no. 20, (Spring 1985), pp. 55/65.

[57]Edgar Main, op. cit., p.332.

Such paintings surely influenced his young pupil, Ghitta Caiserman (b. 1923), in her choice of similar subjects. Rooftops, [Fig. 20], a pastel dating from 1937 and painted by Ghitta at age 14, shows how the young Jewish artist might also have been inspired by Muhlstock's sensitive and gentle treatment of his environment. Ghitta Caiserman first encountered Muhlstock shortly after his return from France and she recalls walking with him while he would point out the changing light and colours on the walls of old houses near her home.[58]

[58]Donald F. P. Andrus, Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, A retrospective view, 1947-1980, (Montreal: Concordia Art Gallery, 1981), p. 13.

2. Lonely Streetscapes

> These subjects were all in Montreal... they included people and the streets of Montreal and the lanes of Montreal, the slum parts of the city, around the harbour and the Mont-Royal, these were the areas that I frequented.[59]

Louis Muhlstock's choice of subject matter was shared with several other Jewish artists, as previously mentionned. Actually, the humble urban environment was represented almost solely by Jewish artists, as suggested by an article "Montréal, ville à l'aspect multiple" in which Reynald, who covered the art scene of Montreal for La Presse, wrote a lengthy report about the exhibition Montréal dans l'art, held at the Eaton Galleries in May 1936. He welcomed the participation of several French Canadian painters to this important exhibition on an urban subject with the comment:

> On aurait pu craindre un moment que les seuls artistes importés se voulaient charger [sic] de "repenser" nos scènes urbaines, tandis que les peintres de chez nous voueraient leurs pinceaux jusqu'à la fin des temps à refaire et à défaire les hivers du terroir. Les 164 toiles exposées par 56 artistes aux galeries Eaton, depuis une semaine, nous promettent le contraire.[60]

It can be assumed that the expression "les seuls artistes importés" is a reference to these Jewish painters, among the few artists to record the urban landscape in realist terms. This is further confirmed by a quick survey of the titles of paintings presented at the Art Association of Montreal Spring Salon and

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[59]Louis Muhlstock talking about his paintings in the 1930s. Oral History, Feb. 16, 1984, 3:45.

[60]Reynald, "Montréal, ville à l'aspect multiple" La Presse, Montréal, samedi 16 mai 1936, p. 9.

R.C.A. exhibitions of the late 1930s. Old Dwellings, Across the Streets and Ste. Famille Street by Jack Beder; De Bullion St. by Alexander Bercovitch; Canadian National Station by Sam Borenstein; From my Window by Ghitta Caiserman; Our back lane, Jeanne Mance by Julius Kaplan; Streetcar Scene, by Harry Mayerovitch.[61]

If the subject matter is essentially the same, Muhlstock's representation of the streets in and around his immediate neighbourhood is very different. For the majority of his compatriots, the cityscapes are a chronicle of the ethnology of the streets with which they seek to portray the folk singularities of the Jewish ghetto. Muhlstock's, on the opposite, by leaving out any reference to particularities, produces detached studies of urban "impersonality" in which the poetry of buildings and places is presented by the artist in a romantic light. To illustrate this comment, we will compare a painting by Louis Muhlstock Rue de Bullion, coin Sherbrooke, [Fig. 21], to that of De Bullion Street painted at the same period by Sam Borenstein [Fig. 22]. De Bullion by Muhlstock is a quiet, deserted street, represented half in shadow and in sunlight. The geometric angular shapes of the buildings and the telephone pole at the left are balanced on the right by the gentle curve of the sidewalk and the bulging, almost organic shape of the street as it winds up the hill. The white surface of the wall, articulated by the contrasting play of light and shadow, is crowned by a canopy of soft, plume-like trees.

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[61]Most of these titles were listed in the Spring Exhibitions of the Art Association of Montreal from 1936 to 1940.

On the other hand, Borenstein's De Bullion Street, is a harsh, angular row of seedy, cluttered buildings where dying, leafless trees and slanted telephone poles all but overwhelm the two lonely figures making their way up the street. It is obvious that the immense difference in the treatment of the subject cannot be explained by the artists' choice of the vantage points and time of year. The interpretation of Borenstein is closer to that of writer Ted Allan, whose description of this street is mentioned previously on page 21. While Borenstein and Allan comment on the squalid living conditions of the Jewish ghetto, Muhlstock invests the street with a quiet beauty that belies its location. Another version of this subject by Muhlstock, reproduced in Canadian Art, July 1960, presents the same attitude.[62] It is interesting to speculate on which of these description was closer to the "truth" of De Bullion Street.

Several other streetscapes from the same neighbourhood, painted by Muhlstock during this period, are now only known through reproductions or comments in newspapers. Yet, even with such scant information, it appears that these humble surroundings were also transformed through Muhlstock's lyrical approach to light and colour. This is further confirmed by Reynald's description of Louis Muhlstock's entries in the above-mentioned exhibition Montréal dans l'art:

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[62]Lawrence Sabbath. Louis Muhlstock, Canadian Art, vol. XVII, no. 4, (July 1960), p. 220.

> "Rue Rachel", "Rue Napoléon",[63] "Rue Duluth", trois descriptions exécutées dans une technique hors de l'ordinaire. Pâte généreuse, couleurs riches, taches vibrantes qui font harmonie et qui prêtent une magie presque "orientale" à des rues que la réalité nous présente souvent plus mornes. Sa pâte devient même un peu plus forte que de raison dans "Back Yard".[64]

Other streetscapes of the same neighbourhood were also shown by Alexander Bercovitch in the same exhibition. Reynald mentions them as: "des descriptions ramassées, réalistes et pittoresques." He goes on to give more information on the subject and content of Bercovitch's paintings:

> Il raconte toujours, dans son réalisme poignant et narquois malgré lui, l'animation des "rangs à la mélasse" de notre ville. Rue de Bullion, une perspective vivante d'un bout de Rue S.-Dominique, un bout de Rue Clarke, des silhouettes sur le Main Street (S.-Laurent), une rue d'hiver noyée dans d'étranges reflets vitreux, deux fois la Rue S.-Urbain, et dans un cas avec un grand arbre qui jette les plus curieux reflets bleus sur une façade de maison.[65]

The differences between the interpretations of a similar environment by the two artists are explicitly stated by the reviewer's choice of terms. According to Reynald, Bercovitch renders these streets with a poignant and quizzing realism (un réalisme poignant et narquois) while Muhlstock invests them with an almost oriental magic (une magie presque "oriertale"). Bercovitch was interested in the "animation" of the streets, as

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[63]Reproduced in the article with the mention: "Rue Napoléon" l'une des toiles que Louis Muhlstock a peintes d'une pâte généreuse et scintillante." Raynald, La Presse, Montréal, samedi 16 mai 1936, p. 9.

[64]Raynald, ibid., p.9.

[65]Raynald, ibid, p. 9.

exemplified in his painting of Laurier Street, with its emphasis on the people as they go about their daily life [Fig. 23]. That such vivacious elements are largely absent in Muhlstock's deserted and mysterious cityscapes may explain the critic's use of the word "magic."

Although Muhlstock always could find a subject from his immediate surroundings, he would sometimes sketch in other parts of the city. For a number of years he painted along the port of Montreal and the Lachine Canal, in the neighbourhood of Pointe-Saint-Charles, [Fig. 24]. Situated between the Lachine Canal on the north and the St. Lawrence to the south, the Pointe had traditionally been the home of the Irish. In the 1930s, the area's blue-collar population was severely affected by the Depression, as surely as the working class people in Muhlstock's own neighbourhood. Two Dwellings, Point St. Charles, Montreal, 1935, [Fig. 25], and Pointe-St-Charles, 1941, [Fig. 26], are essentially versions of the same subject.[66] The row houses depicted are typical of a laborer's lodgings during these difficult times and similar to his own "slums that we used to know

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[66]Louis Muhlstock is very casual about dating his paintings. It is very difficult to assert with any certainty the date of a work, because he sometimes will put a date in several years after the work has been painted. The two paintings of Pointe Saint-Charles show so much similarity in details, such as the placement of the shutters on the house represented, that they were probably painted on the same day. After some discussion with the artist, the first date of 1935 seems to be the more accurate one.

in childhood."[67] Through the sumptuous use of colour, the shadows across sunlit walls and fences and the living, breathing branches of the trees, Muhlstock's interpretation transforms these poverty stricken areas into sunny, open environments.

Commenting on such representations of the urban scene, Henri Girard of Le Canada, hints at the criticism that met such a personal interpretation of ordinary urban scenes. In his review of Muhlstock's solo exhibition at Eaton's Gallery, in October 1936, he stated:

> Dans plusieurs de ces toiles l'artiste s'est fait l'interprète du lyrisme particulier à la lumière de Montréal. D'aucuns disent que ce lyrisme est outré, que le paysage montréalais n'a pas tant d'éclat, qu'un marché d'ici n'a pas le mouvement et la couleur de celui qu'a peint Muhlstock, etc. Ces gens oublient d'abord que "la nature littérale n'a rien à voir avec l'art," comme l'affirmait si bien Maurice Busset, mais ils négligent également, et peut-être davantage, de constater leur incapacité de voir, ce qui s'appelle voir. Il faut avoir une dose peu commune de présomption, profanes et artistes d'académie, pour opposer votre vue très bornée à celle d'un observateur aussi patient et perspicace que Louis Muhlstock.[68]

This appreciation of Muhlstock's paintings comes from a champion of urban subjects. While Muhlstock's predilection for the Montreal landscape found a staunch supporter in Henri Girard, the subject matter also generated a very positive response with the Montreal press in general. This is evident in most articles by Reynald of La Presse who constantly reviewed Muhlstock's

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[67]Oral history interview with Louis Muhlstock by Monique Nadeau-Saumier, Tape 1, side 2, Feb. 16, 1984, 3:45, The Montreal Art Community, Concordia University Library.

[68]Henri Girard, "L'exposition Muhlstock à la galerie Eaton", "La vie artistique", Le Canada, 15 Octobre, 1936, p. 2.

exhibitions with praise and enthusiasm during the 1930s.[69] Reynald also commented on the urban scenes in Muhlstock's 1936 exhibition at Eaton's Gallery:

> Il a retrouvé les vivants effets de papillotages et le coloris aux chatoiements quasi-orientaux pour évoquer des scènes de rue (le Marché de la rue Rachel, en particulier). Il a décrit la rue Roy dans la clarté plus diffuse du crépuscule et a vu la rue Sainte-Famille se bomber légèrement sous l'illusion des reflets, sans doute.[70]

The Anglophone press, particularly through one of Montreal's most encouraging art critic at the time, Robert Ayre, also reviewed Muhlstock's work in glowing terms. Writing about the 1936 exhibition, Ayre comments that:

> There is no gainsaying Muhlstock's vitality. It is a warming experience to look at these paintings, whether the subject be a backyard with shadows moving across sunlit walls and fences, a street of many-colored houses, a path on Mount Royal, or a group of sturdy trees marching up a hill.[71]

Muhlstock's urban landscape was perceived by such writers as a pleasing departure from the traditional rural scenes so favoured by the public and consequently so predominent in the majority of exhibitions in Montreal. Raynald's own comments on the subject have been reported in previous chapters. That painting,

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[69]For a good study of these two Montreal critics, see Esther Trépanier's "L'Émergence d'un discours de la modernité dans la critique d'art (Montréal 1918-1938), in L'Avènement de la modernité culturelle au Québec, Yvan Lamonde et Esther Trépanier, (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1986), pp. 69-112.

[70]Raynald, "Du nouveau Muhlstock", La Presse, Montréal, 10 octobre, 1936.

[71]R.H.A. (Robert Ayre's initials), "Muhlstock's Show Denotes Progress", The Gazette, Montreal, October 9, 1936.

specially in Montreal, was now moving away from the "empty" pure landscape (as exemplified by the work of the school of the Group of Seven) to portraying the people and their contemporary urban environment was also noted approvingly by Graham McInnes, a Toronto-based art critic. Reviewing an exhibition of the Canadian Society of Watercolour, held at the Art Gallery of Toronto in April 1937, McInnes welcomes this new presence of the people in the Canadian landscape:

> These artists are as much interested in the people whom the landscape has conditioned, and who in turn, are affecting it, as they are in the landscape itself. They realize that on, and to the South of the Precambrian shield live (according to the latest inter-censal report) 11,110,000 Canadians, whole (whose) actions and reactions have an urgency and interest which opens boundless possibilities. In this connection, one may note Coryers Barker's "March", Fritz Brandtner's three ebullient studies, Paraskeva Clark's "Presents from Madrid", Louis Muhlstock's two Montreal street scenes and Pegi Nicol's "Pavement People".[72]

The emergence of the inhabited urban landscape in Canadian painting of the thirties reflects on how the artists came to see this subject as a form of testimonial to a humanism which developed in parallel to the social and economic crisis of the same period. Muhlstock's cityscapes reveal his consideration of man's place in the social order in these troubled times, and undoubtedly this was more important to him than the formal visual problems emphasized by Lyman.

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[72]G. Campbell McInnes, "World of Art", Saturday Night, (Toronto: April 10, 1937), p. 20.

3. Ste-Famille Street

> On the walls hang Laurentian landscapes
> And glimpses of an old Montreal that's as dead
> as Ernest Neumann.
> Back alleys, still lifes and huge slivers of
> raw tree bark.
> This is a wizard's den.
>
> Leo Kennedy

That Louis Muhlstock's lyrical approach transforms his immediate surroundings in his life as well as in his art is evident to anyone who has visited his studio on rue Ste-Famille. No better description exists of this extraordinary setting than an unpublished poem by Leo Kennedy.[73] In this "wizard's den", as described by the poet, one can decipher the elements of Muhlstock's urban iconography, for there, juxtaposed in the studio as in the paintings, the natural elements relate harmoniously to man-made artefacts: branches and weathervane, tree bark and sculpture, smooth river pebbles and Inuit soapstone carvings, live plants and their still-life images. This transformation of an ordinary environment into a poetic setting is also evident when one studies the large body of works exclusively devoted to subjects connected with Ste-Famille Street.

This short street, running from Sherbrooke to Pine Avenue, was at one time the favoured address of Montreal's art community. Because of its close proximity to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the facilities offered by the sculptor Alfred Laliberté, who shared

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[73]Leo Kennedy, "In the Studio" written on August 22, 1977, and dedicated in homage to Louis Muhlstock. The full text of the poem can be found in Annex I.

his large studio with several well-known painters, Ste-Famille Street was equally popular with students as well as mature artists.[74]

Louis Muhlstock first rented a studio on the second floor of a building located at 3414 Ste-Famille Street near Sherbrooke Street in 1936. More than twenty years later, in 1959, he was forced to move because the building was sold to be demolished and he bought the house at 3555 Ste-Famille, where his studio has been ever since. A Notman photograph of 1912 shows that an abundance of trees lined Ste-Famille Street, as they still did when Louis Muhlstock first started painting the street around 1936. [Fig. 27]

One of Muhlstock's favorite vantage points was the stately entrance to the Montreal Institute (now part of the UQAM campus) where, preferably on Saturday or Sunday, he would often sketch the almost deserted Ste-Famille Street.[75] From this position, the artist looked down on the street, and the foreshortened

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[74]In the 1920s, the sculptor Alfred Laliberté built a large studio in the back of his house, situated at 3531 Sainte-Famille. Over the years, he rented studio space to a series of painters. Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Côté, Maurice Cullen, Robert Pilot, Horne Russel, Jean Palardy are but a few of the artists who list their address at Laliberté's studio number in the Art Association catalogues of the 1920s, 30s and 40s.
In an autobiography published after his death, Laliberté refers to the numerous painters who, at one time or another, rented studio space from him. See Alfred Laliberté Mes souvenirs, Préface de Odette Legendre, Montréal, Les Éditions du Boréal Express, 1978, p. 86.

[75]Oral history interview with Louis Muhlstock by Monique Nadeau-Saumier, Tape 1, side 2, Feb. 16, 1984, 30:10, The Montreal Art Community, Concordia University Library.

perspective focused on the canopy of trees that seem to close off and contain the course of the street as it winds northwards. Paintings like Sainte-Famille Street, 1939, [Fig. 28]; Ste-Famille Street, Wet Day, 1939, [Fig. 29]; Ste-Famille Street, Rainy Day, 1941, [Fig. 30], and Summer Day... 1946, [Fig. 31], all share this compositional devise. The spatial treatment invests the street with an almost organic quality as it appears to swell and pulsate under the strong sunlight or through the chromatic reflections of rain on the wet pavement.

Other Ste-Famille streetscapes concentrate on the intersection with Sherbrooke, a stone's throw from Muhlstock's first studio. Two paintings, Corner of St. Famille and Sherbrooke St., 1939, [Fig. 32] as well as Arbres en hiver, c. 1949, [Fig. 33] are studies in atmosphere where the graceful trees and their reflections indicate how Muhlstock's preoccupations lie with the sylvan aspects of the scene. This impression is reinforced by the choice of cool blues and greens in the first painting, and the use of a restricted white and gray palette in the second; both colour schemes referential to a still and peaceful vision of the cityscape. Again, in this series, a painting untitled: Street Corner, Montreal, ca. 1947, [Fig. 34], focuses on a cluster of stately trees, whose sweeping lines contrast with the geometry of the buildings that, by their scant treatment, serve as a foil to the lush foliage-covered branches.

If more attention is paid to architecture in Muhlstock's Ste-Famille, Corner of Sherbrooke, ca. 1942, [Fig. 35], and St.

Famille St., ca. 1950, [Fig. 36], it still appears only as a backdrop to the trees whose foliage masks all but the lower part of the paintings. A study of the picket fence, the wooden arch and the trees indicate that these are two renderings of the same view, done from a different viewpoint. The first [Fig. 33] is seen from across the street, with the sidewalk on a slight diagonal to the left, while the second [Fig. 34] is a perpendicular sweep looking straight up the street. In both however, the impression is of a remarkably secluded, tree-shaded refuge amidst the bustle of the city. Another painting of the same subject At Sainte-Famille and Sherbrooke Streets, Montreal, 1947, was shown in an exhibition at the Musée de la Province de Québec, in May-June, 1948.[76] This work was later reproduced in The Montrealer of September 1949, in a photograph of the living room of Mr. Maurice Chartré's home[77] which also shows a drawing by Pellan [Fig. 37]. Even on this small scale of reproduction, the painting conveys the same feeling of calm and tranquility that is prevalent in the majority of Muhlstock's Ste-Famille Street scenes.

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[76]Catalogue entry # 71: At Sainte-Famille and Sherbrooke Streets, Montreal, 26 x 30, (1947), Coll. Maurice Chartré. See Annex III for list of works in this exhibition.

[77]Louis Mulligan, "Prismatic Notes", The Montrealer, September, 1949. The photo caption reads: "Gallic Charm in Outremont". The information on the owner of the house is from Louis Muhlstock himself, the name of Maurice Chartré is not mentioned in the article.

4. Views from a Window

Louis Muhlstock's move to Sainte-Famille Street also marked the beginning of a large series of views from windows where the tumble of sheds were replaced by the tree-lined Place Sainte-Famille. The first mentions of these window-views are found in the reviews of his solo exhibition at the Eaton's store Galleries in Montreal in October of 1936. Robert Ayre writing in The Gazette, Raynald in La Presse and Graham McInnes in Saturday Night all commented favourably on the young painter's new descriptions of Montreal. The latter closed his review of Muhlstock's exhibition at the Eaton Galleries by stating that:

> Mr. Muhlstock, in addition to being a skilled artist with deep sensibility, is one of the leaders of that small group of Montreal painters who have found that it is possible to paint one's immediate environment - to see forms and relationships from one's back window - and at the same time to paint well, and in a manner as fine and as native in this country as the most gnarled and twisted pine on the most jagged rock in the North Country.[78]

The windows of Muhlstock's first studio on Sainte-Famille Street looked down on Place Ste-Famille, a dead-end alley that ran perpendicular to the street [Fig. 38]. Place Ste-Famille was painted by him from various points of view as well as in different lights and seasons. This series is but one of many that could be called "Variations on a Theme," a title that Muhlstock often uses when referring to his diverse interpretations of a single subject.

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[78]G. Campbell McInnes, "The World of Art" Saturday Night, (Toronto: October 24 1936), p. 22.

Three of these paintings serve to illustrate Muhlstock's different approaches to a subject.[79] The first, Winter afternoon, Place Ste-Famille [Fig. 39], is a softly rendered study of buildings bathed in a diffused winter light that envelopes the area in blue and pink tones. Two tall trees frame the composition in the foreground, linking the middle and background where a row of buildings delineates the shallow space of the lane. The verticality of these elements is balanced by the diagonal thrust of the lane and the roofs of the sheds, punctuated by long tall shadows cast by the setting sunlight filtering through trees.

The second image is presented as seen through a window. In Grey day, Place Ste-Famille [Fig. 40], the painter frames his image through a closed window, using the windowpanes as a formal device to delineate elements of the composition. A narrow pane on the left of the painting is further divided by the open casement. Thus the building pictured at an angle is split in two images: a ghostly reflection through the open casement contrasting with a sharply defined brick wall punctuated by windows and balconies. In the centre and right areas of the painting, the receding planes of the sheds and their flat roofs create a series of geometric shapes whose orthogonal trust is enclosed within the window pane, used here also as a framing device. The composition is focused in the

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[79] A round bay-window crowned by a balcony is found in all three paintings. This architectural detail positively identifies the locale of the paintings. This bay-window has since been torn down but its faint outline is still visible nowadays on the wall of a building on Place Sainte-Famille.

centre where the juxtaposition of white and black shapes creates a push/pull tension through a limited palette of reds, ochers and grays. A third painting, View from a window [Fig. 41], is a triptych-like composition, with an iconic bare tree as the dominant element of the centre rectangle. On the left, Muhlstock again plays with the distortion created by open and closed casement windows in a ghostly rendition of reflected shapes. The vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines are repeated on the right, echoing the slant of the brick wall. The elegant shape of the bay-window and its balcony, represented at lower right in a different perspective and small scale, reinforces the fragmental concern of the composition. Through its complex formal treatment of an otherwise banal subject, this painting could aptly illustrate McInnes' quote:

> "...that it is possible to paint one's immediate environment - to see forms and relationships from one's back window - and at the same time to paint well..."[80]

View from a window, an oil of 1938 [Fig. 42], represents a different scene as it was painted from the apartment of a friend on Durocher Street. Here the diagonal planes of the lane and architecture are echoed in the shape of the tree whose dark trunk thrusts powerfully towards the left to frame the familiar silhouette of Mount Royal. Again, the painter uses a sharp contrast of light and glistening dark shapes as formal elements to articulate this emotive presentation of a deserted backyard on a rainy day.

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[80]McInnes, ibid, p. 49.

5. The Deserted Lanes

> Very few showed any interest in paintings of dirty lanes, but it did not matter to me. I painted them for me, because I had to.[81]

As previously mentioned, Muhlstock's family first settled in the Lower Main Street area of Montreal, on the east side of St. Dominique Street, between Demontigny and Ontario Streets. In the decades between the two world wars, this sector was part of the Jewish ghetto of the city. If the streets of this area could be best described as slums. what terms could then characterize the network of lanes that were the even darker side of this dismal environment. Most of these lanes have since disappeared, due to the extensive urban renewal programs that have changed the topography of this sector. Both Groubert and Leduc lanes, in the immediate vicinity of the Muhlstocks' first dwelling, can be located on earlier maps of Montreal [Fig. 43].

A first mention of the lane paintings occurs relatively early in the body of Louis Muhlstock's urbanscapes, more precisely in a 1939 exhibition in the Print Room of the Toronto Art Gallery. This important show featured works by three other painters: André Biéler (1896-), Henri Masson (1907-) and Philip Surrey (1910-). Of the fifteen Muhlstock's entries, nine were of urban subjects, three of which were entitled Goupil Lane, Lane off Durocher Street and Leduc Lane.[82]

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[81]Oral history, February 16, 1984, 3:45.

[82]One of these: Goupil Lane, was subsequently presented as Muhlstock's only entry in the first exhibition of works by members

(continued...)

Very little information is available about this series of lane paintings, some of which are only known through catalogue entries or newspaper articles. Leduc Lane, may be the same as that reproduced in Vie des Arts or a similar study [Fig. 44].[83] Another painting Groubert Lane, is in a private collection in Ottawa [Fig 45]. Here the artist's vantage point was from Groubert Lane, looking toward the intersection of Leduc Lane. This sun-drenched area offers a striking contrast to the dark brooding buildings of Groubert lane in the foreground. A very similar, yet more somber version of Groubert Lane can be seen on the wall of Muhlstock's studio, in a photograph taken by Lazlo Gabor in 1976 [Fig. 46].

All three works, regardless of the eccentric dating, were painted by Muhlstock during the late 1930s and early 1940s, in what appears to have been a probing look at a familiar place; the stage where, together with other children of the ghetto, he played the games of his youth. Totally devoid of any embellishment in their stark geometric reality, these perturbing scenes of unpaved

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[82](...continued)
of the Contemporary Arts Society, at the Stevens Art Gallery, in December 1939.

[83]Rodolphe de Repentigny, "Louis Muhlstock" in Vie des arts, no. 16, (Automne 1959). The painting is reproduced on page 11, under the caption:"La ruelle Leduc, (1950). Huile, 26" x 30". L'artiste se retrouve aussi dans les quartiers vétustes, en face des maisons couleur du temps."
Although the first mention of Leduc Lane as a painting subject occurs in 1939, this painting dated 1950 could be the same one. Louis Muhlstock tends to be very casual about the exact date of some of his works. When pressed for a more accurate dating, he will reply: "What does it matter, just say that it was painted during the artist's lifetime".

lanes are almost always empty. Yet, children still played in these lanes when Muhlstock returned to study the forlorn setting of his past. Typically, as in most of Muhlstock's urban scenes, the human presence is systematically avoided in these paintings of ghetto lanes, where the empty scenery seems to echo still the faint and distant sounds of his own childhood.

These paintings of deserted alleys are in sharp contrast to contemporary renditions of the same neighbourhood by other Jewish painters. For instance, Jack Beder's Lane dwellings, Montreal [Fig. 47] is closely related to Muhlstock's Groubert Lane [Fig. 46] in subject matter. Both paintings represent a row of buildings in a narrow and dark lane, intersected by a sunny alley, yet are very different in their interpretation of the scene. The mood created by the bleak dwellings is alleviated in the Beder painting by the figures of a woman and child trodding towards a sunlit crossway and by the wealth of picturesque architectural details that are largely absent in the Muhlstock scene.

The investigation of a familiar locale becomes close scrutiny as Muhlstock focuses on doorways to produce a series of studies of doorways that emphasize even more acutely the dire living conditions which prevailed in this part of the city. The buildings, scarred by open doors like gaping wounds, are so close to the picture plane that they seem to monopolize the pictorial space. Circumventing the use of such compositional devices as artful play of light and shadow, contrast of bright and dark hues, receeding planes of perspective, Muhlstock confronts the viewer

who becomes the reluctant "voyeur" of the almost obscene frontal nudity of the slum dwellings. In this deliberate and unredeeming graphic depiction of derelict buildings, the terrible impact of poverty is not relieved by the insertion of any devices of "picturesque" painting such as little street urchins. Muhlstock chooses instead to focus on the squalid halls and stairways which are the day-to-day decor of these slum children. Such is the case in Three doors, Leduc Lane, painted around 1939, [Fig. 48]. Three narrow doors and transoms are aligned with the picture plane, with the centre door opening into the dark recesses of a narrow stairway leading to an upstairs apartment. A wooden sidewalk confirms that these lanes were still unpaved when Muhlstock revisited this sector.

Third door, Groubert Lane, [Fig. 49] and Open door of third house, Groubert Lane, Montreal [Fig. 50] are almost identical renditions of the same bleak doorway. These two paintings differ only in a slight shift in the painter's point of view and proximity. Yet, as their titles indicate, the first is essentially a painting of a half-opened door, while the second brings the viewer deeper into the slum dwelling as the open door reveals its squalid interior stairway. Muhlstock confronts the viewer with all the sordid elements of the scene: dirty wainscotting, scarred and peeling plaster wall, dark and narrow stairs. Chalky and dusty colours reinforce the bleakness of the setting; only the bright yellow and red of the linoleum nailed to the wooden sidewalk evokes the tenants' presence and their sad,

futile attempt at improving their surroundings. Referring to these lanes and doorways paintings, Muhlstock has said:

> These subjects were the areas that I knew best, places I remembered from childhood, lanes as yet unpaved and badly neglected. Our fourteen dollar a month flat was a palace compared to some in these areas.[84]

Such a depiction of almost intolerable want and poverty is also the subject of a painting which is still hanging on the wall of Muhlstock's studio on Sainte-Famille Street. Goupil Lane, [Fig. 10] represents the bleak facade of a house. The closed door and shutters on the street level floor, the sole devices for attaining some privacy, are an indication of the painful proximity with the outside world that was the lot of the inhabitants of Goupil Lane.

Another painting, Four doors, Leduc Lane, 1940, shows a pleasanter side of this environment. [Fig. 51] Here the lane is the locale for an animated conversation between a woman on the sidewalk and her unseen neighbour of the next flat, while two other women look down from upstairs windows. Another optimistic detail is the addition of a window-box on the upper left window where a bright red geranium is in bloom. The artist has captured the feeling of boredoom and idleness that would have prevailed in the life of the women of Leduc lane during this period.[85] With a

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[84]Oral history, February 16, 1984, 4:00.

[85]When questionned on this unusual human presence in a series of otherwise uninhabited cityscapes, Muhlstock explained that these women were probably recipients of some form of welfare, which was then a municipal responsibility, commonly referred to as "Le secours direct". As such, they were expected to be at home, (and not at work) when an inspector would come to verify their unemployed status in an unannounced visit.

minumum of detail, the figures are carefully observed in their stance and attire. This painting, with its lively psychological and social annotation of city life, is a rare exception in Muhlstock's usually empty depictions of the urban scene.[86] Generally avoiding the "picturesque" aspect of the animated streets of Montreal often favoured by other Jewish painters, Muhlstock's rare and perceptive representation of the city dwellers could lead one to surmise that the general absence of figures in his streetscenes is to be regretted. Be that as it may, the silence and emptyness which haunts and underlies Muhlstock's urban landscape is perhaps more powerful in its evocation of human presence.

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[86]Muhlstock also represented figures in a few other urban paintings, two of which are known to us through reproductions: Rue Napoleon, reproduced in La Presse, samedi 16 mai 1936 and Couvent et brasserie, reproduced in Le Canada, vendredi 6 novembre 1942. The location of the first is unknown; the second is in a private collection in Montreal.

6. The Empty Rooms

Silent shuttered
Condemned buildings
Waiting for the
Speculating demolishers.

Louis Muhlstock's love and appreciation of oriental music is complemented by an interest for Japanese Haiku poems. Their short and highly evocative verses convey succinct allusions to everyday images and emotions. He has written several poems in the Haiku manner, one of which is used as the introduction to this section. Such a poem bears the essence of Muhlstock's attitude towards the fate of the familiar deserted buildings of his youth. These sentiments have also found their expression in a major series of empty room paintings.

As illustrated by the travelling exhibition Jewish Painters and Modernity, 1930-1945, superbly researched and presented by its curator, art historian Esther Trépanier, there was great similarity in the choice of subjects painted by members of Montreal's Jewish artist community during that period. However, the Empty Rooms series produced by Louis Muhlstock is unique. This is true both in the corpus of urban landscape produced by Jewish painters and in the whole of modern Canadian painting as well.

The Jewish ghetto was the realm of absentee landlords who rented cold-water flats and kept them occupied, without any repairs or improvements, until City officials would eventually order the premises vacated after having condemned these buildings

and earmarked them for demolition.[87] Such precarious living conditions, certainly the lot of most recently-landed immigrants, were even more acutely felt at the onset of the Depression. People were actually thrown on the street, and in one documented case, Nick Zynchuk, a neighbour of the Muhlstock family on St-Dominique Street, having been evicted for failure to pay his rent, was shot and killed by the police as he tried to return to his tenement to claim a few meager possessions.[88]

Was it the memory of this terrible injustice or his own recollections of squalid living quarters in the neighbourhood where he grew up, that led Louis Muhlstock on this pictorial quest of deserted, condemned buildings? He will not comment further than to say:

> When I painted these empty rooms, I painted silence and decay. I was very moved and disturbed that people were allowed to live in such surroundings and I think I expressed it through my colour. Although the people were never introduced in these paintings there were traces of their having been there.[89]

It is difficult to retrace accurately the first painting of an empty room by Muhlstock. As mentioned before, the artist rarely dates any of his works and is extremely vague when asked to be more precise about the time a painting was produced, as these are unimportant details to him. It would seem that the first in

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[87]Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty, the Conditions of the Working Class in Montreal, 1897-1929 (Toronto: 1974), p. 70.

[88]Dorothy Livesay, Right Hand - Left Hand; A True Life of the Thirties, (Toronto: Porcepic Press, 1977), pp. 87 and 94.

[89]Oral History, February 16, 1984, 10:00.

this series of empty rooms was done around 1938, just before the beginning of World War II, at a time when the effects of the Depression were still cruelly felt. This concurs with the first mention of such a subject, when Muhlstock participated in the annual art show, held at the Toronto Canadian National Exhibition, from August 25 to September 9, 1939. His catalogue entry, number 154, bears the title Empty room in a basement.

Shortly after, in October/November 1939, a similar subject appears in the catalogue of the A.G.T. exhibition that Muhlstock shared with Biéler, Masson and Surrey. These paintings: Empty rooms and Empty room, mark the first suggestions of an important series of deserted rooms of which six paintings have been located. Furthermore, with Muhlstock's help, most of the settings can be assigned to a specific location in Montreal. The earliest three, dating from around 1938, show the interior of a condemned building, then situated on St-Norbert Street, near de Bullion [Fig. 52].[90]

The first, Empty room in a basement, is still in the artist's possession [Fig. 53] and has been exhibited several times, under different titles: Empty room with plant, Plant in

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[90]Muhlstock also used this empty building as a vantage point. Couvent et Brasserie, reproduced in Le Canada, 6 novembre 1942, is a scene looking out into the street from the open window of this condemned building. This painting is now in a private collection. According to Muhlstock, the convent was then some sort of reform school. It is identified in the Atlas of Montreal [Fig. 51] as the "Bon Pasteur convent and female refuge". This area in now gentrified; the historic chapel is used for music concerts and the convent has been transformed into condominiums.

empty room, Basement room, condemned building, St. Norbert St.[91] The painting represents an interior which is literally falling to pieces: broken floor, torn wallpaper, mended and soiled dado, scars and gaping holes in the walls and ceiling. Yet, surprisingly, a young lilac tree blooms in this squalid setting, its slender branches bathed in the soft diffused light emanating from the window at the centre of the far room.

Far from being incongruous, the plant confers a magical quality to this desolate scene. The faded wallpaper, whose flower pattern can still be deciphered, covered not only the upper portion of the walls but the ceiling as well. The poignant remains of this decorative element reveals how some former occupants once attempted to make this room more cheerful and brighter. In his careful depiction of the elements alluding to an anterior presence, Muhlstock gives clues as to the archeology of this now deserted dwelling.

The plant in the foreground is placed against a path of light

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[91] This painting was first mentioned in the Canadian National Exhibition held in Toronto in 1939, cat. no. 154. It was subsequently shown at the Montreal Art Association Spring Exhibition of 1941, cat. no. 147, under the title: Plant in Empty Room. It was presented again in 1948, at the Musée de la Province de Québec, entry 58 in the catalogue as: Empty Room with Plant. (See Annex III for more information on these mentions).
More recently, under the title: Basement Room, Condemned Building, St. Norbert Street/Chambre au sous-sol, maison condamnée, rue Saint-Norbert, it was featured in two important travelling exhibitions: The Contemporary Arts Society/La Société d'art contemporain, Montréal 1939-1948, 1980, curated by Christopher Varley and circulated by the Edmonton Art Gallery and Jewish Painters and Modernity/Peintres juifs et modernité, Montréal 1930-1945, 1987, curated by Esther Trépanier and circulated by the Saidye Bronfman Art Centre, Montreal.

that offsets the dark recesses of the room, seen through the open door to the left. Was it really this sunny when Muhlstock painted the scene? Could it be the memory of his own childhood, spent in a dismal basement where the sun never entered, that inspired the painter to endow this room with such luminosity. Perhaps the answer lies in Muhlstock's reply when asked why he had painted this plant in an empty room? He introduced these twigs of lilac as "a sign of humanity."[92]

This painting, which was part of the exhibition The Contemporary Arts Society, Montreal 1939-1948, caused the Curator Christopher Varley to remark that:

> Muhlstock's Goupil Lane was one of an extended series of city scenes that he painted in the late thirties. Among these are a number of abandoned houses, the compositional flimsiness of which add to the pathos of the depictions. Empathizing with the house's sad end, Muhlstock added a budding plant to the foreground of The Basement Room, Condemned Building, St. Norbert Street (fig. no 33). The innocence of this gesture, and the beauty of the painting itself, are genuinely touching. Although Muhlstock has not always been as successful at fusing his romantic, pantheist feelings with accomplished painting, he was unquestionably one of the most talented members of the Society.[93]

An evocative image of humanity is also present in another deserted interior, painted in the same condemned building, Basement with tailor's dummy. [Fig. 54].[94] Here, a human presence

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[92]Oral History, February 16, 1984, 10:00.

[93]Christopher Varley, op. cit,, p. 18.

[94]This painting was exhibited at the National Gallery, Ottawa, in 1957, at the Second Biennial exhibition of Canadian Art, cat. no. 23.

(continued...)

is alluded to by a forlorn dummy, whose hour-glass figure and wired crinoline, evoke a remote fashion style. By placing this female silhouette near the window, Muhlstock refers to a long tradition in the symbolic iconography of the woman by the window, epitomised by the seventeenth century Dutch painter, Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675). The contrast between the treatment of this subject, Vermeer's living, breathing woman standing by a window in an immaculately clean and elegantly furnished Dutch bourgeois interior and Muhlstock's anachronistic female dummy, set in a basement room in the slums of Montreal, is made even more evident by Muhlstock's spartan composition.

In this basement interior, Muhlstock does away with all telling details. Here, the walls are utterly bare, stark rectangles that recede or project by the tension created through the strong contrast of light and shadows. The geometric, angular forms are only relieved by the curvilinear shape of the fissure on the wall in the front room, a scar that echoes the silhouette of the mannequin, like a ghostly presence heralding the motionless humanoid form that symbolizes the past vocation of this dwelling. Tailoring, traditionally a Jewish craft, involved long, arduous hours. This demanding trade was the livelihood of many of the Jewish immigrants living in this part of the city. The inclusion of this tailor's mannequin, almost like an archeological relic,

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[94](...continued)
It was reproduced on August 6, 1961, in the rotogravure of La Patrie du Dimanche under the caption Chambre vide (1945), in an article by Manuel Maître.

could be interpreted as an allusion to the desperate living conditions that Muhlstock and his countrymen had experienced in their early years in Montreal.

Another empty room version of the Norbert Street condemned building, is known to the author only by a photograph [95] [Fig. 55], which shows an even more sordid interior than the preceding ones. Surprisingly, the painting represents an apartment situated at street level, while the other two were basement rooms. Even if the angle of the photo creates an important distortion, the elements such as the bricked-in fireplace; the overturned pail on the floor; the gaping hole of the stovepipe; the soot on the ceiling; the scarred surfaces of the walls and dado are evident testimony that this apartment was equally unfit for human occupation.

Even more dilapidated conditions existed in the cold water flats that were relegated to the lanes and back alleys of this sector. The flats on Leduc and Groubert Lanes were scrutinized as well by Muhlstock as described in the previous section. A more thorough investigation of the stairway behind the open door of the third house on Groubert Lane led Muhlstock to the deserted upstairs dwelling. In the ensuing painting Two-room apartment, Ruelle Groubert, c. 1940-41, the artist brings the viewer up the narrow stairway into a deserted cold-water flat. [Fig. 56] Muhlstock avoids all extraneous detail, concentrating on the

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[95]The photo was taken by the owner of the painting who now resides in England,

geometry of the elements which result in an almost abstract composition. The wedge-like shapes of the open door and the recesses of the stairwell dominates the composition. The realist treatment of the door, with its simple rectangular panels, is offset by the luminous patch on the floor against which the ajar door looses all its solidity, seemingly floating above the diagonal lines of the floorboards. The atmosphere is further accentuated by the lyrical rendition of light emanating from the stairwell and the painterly treatment of the walls. This otherwise dismal interior is bathed in an extraordinary light, which seems to negate its direct relation to the entrance, the somber Open door of third house, Groubert Lane, Montreal [Fig. 48]. Describing a scene such as this one, Robert Elie, an admirer of Muhlstock, wrote in La Presse, under the pseudonym of Pierre Daniel:

> Muhlstock nous introduit dans un monde tout différent. Ce peintre sensible cherche son inspiration dans la nature. Il se plait particulièrement à peindre ces rues sordides de Montréal, ces taudis brûlés par la lumière et l'air qui prennent ainsi, à certaines heures, l'aspect de ruines somptueuses.[96]

Muhlstock's empty rooms paintings are not always in buildings situated in the slum section of Montreal. The artist would often forsake such subject matter to paint the pathways and undergrowth of Mont-Royal,the resulting body of paintings is marked by the exceptional sylvan quality of the artist's interpretation.[97]

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[96]Pierre Daniel, "Eveleigh et L. Muhlstock", La Presse, Samedi le 7 novembre 1942, p. 34.

[97]Muhlstock's numerous Mount-Royal landscapes, painted during this period, are spontaneous studies of the light filtering

(continued...)

It was a derelict tree, on the edge of Mont-Royal park, near Côte-des-Neiges Road, that first captured his attention.[98] This tree belonged to an abandoned house, located in the sector where the Gleneagle apartment complex was erected in the 1930s. The pastel walls and flowery pattern of the wallpaper were the only indications of the house's former glory. Two important works, Empty rooms [Fig. 57] and Haunted house [Fig. 58] describe the site. The first painting, Empty rooms, presents a series of softly coloured rectangles whose painterly surface is framed and delineated by the strong vertical and horizontal lines of the doorways and transoms. In this balanced and structured composition the diagonal lines of the ceiling and floor leads through a series of receding rooms to the open door and the luminous green of the far tree. To the left, a rectangle of flowered wallpaper evokes the house's former glory.

Haunted house presents a very different interpretation, a severe, almost abstract painting of a totally bare and empty space, without the lyrical touch of the outdoor view as offered in the previous painting. Through his research into space and light, solid and void, Muhlstock creates a tension between the relatively hard edges of the structural elements, such as doorways, windows, etc. and the more painterly, almost vaporous

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[97](...continued)
through tall trees, bringing to mind visions of unspoiled forests rather than scenes in an urban park.

[98]The painting of this derelict tree is now in the collection of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

surfaces of the wall areas. The push-pull effect underlies the spatial relations which appear ambiguous and elusive. The ghostly mood thus created is reinforced by the artist's conscious or unconscious quest for a presence in these empty rooms, as manifested in the subjective treatment of small details.

The pictorial investigation of empty rooms in condemned buildings is symptomatic of Muhlstock's empathy for the plight of the destitute and the homeless in these times of poverty and want. Almost unique to this day in its highly personal interpretation of such a subject matter, this relatively small series remains one of the strongest and most poignant contributions of Muhlstock to Canadian painting.[99]

As prosperity slowly returned to the city, Muhlstock abandonned this subject matter for more optimistic settings. The empty rooms will be succeeded by a series of inviting, serene and inhabited interiors encountered in his travels to Tadoussac and the Laurentians.[100] Such pleasant images, notwithstanding their

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[99]In the 1960's, the painter Carl Schaefer, b. 1903, produced a series of drawings and watercolours of empty interiors. Although they present a very different approach to the subject matter, some are reminescent of Muhlstock's earlier series. See Carl Schaefer Retrospective Exhibition Paintings from 1926 to 1969 Montreal: Sir George William University, n.d., c. 1970, cat. nos. 60, 61, 64, pp. 42-45.

[100]In the 1950's, Louis Muhlstock, together with his brother Saul, bought a farm in the 8th range of Val-David. From then on he spent most of his week-ends painting out of doors, in what he refers to as "his 140-acre studio." The surrounding Laurentian landscape provided the painter with countless studies of nature's changing moods, records of atmospheric changes in the passing of seasons.

seductive aspect, appear almost purfunctory when compared to the empty rooms painted by Muhlstock in his wanderings through the condemned buildings of Montreal.

7. The People in the City

We have seen, that except for a few rare exceptions, Muhlstock chose to portray the cityscape: streets, backyards, lanes, empty rooms, with a total absence of human presence. Yet, and this is particularly true in his series of deserted dwellings, the presence of the inhabitants of the urban landscape is implied and evoked by numerous clues and signs alluding to their passage. The empty rooms are peopled by the ghosts of their former tenants, the deserted streets echo the noise and traffic, the lanes and backyards are alive with traces of children's cries and laughter.

Certainly, the downtrodden, the derelicts, the unemployed were an integral part of the cityscape during the Depression. However, the urban environment is empty of such occupants in Muhlstock's paintings. On the other hand, his drawings reveal that he has depicted the urban dweller of Montreal with rare compassion and empathy. Joe Lavallée, homeless; William O'Brien, unemployed; Paranka, wasting away in an hospital ward; Mrs. Breen, the newsvendor and countless others whose features were recorded by the artist as a sensitive and caring observer of their difficult and precarious existence.

At the outset of his career Muhlstock devoted many studies to the people who were part of his immediate environment. As mentionned, his earliest entries to the Royal Canadian Academy of Art and the Spring Exhibition of the Art Association of Montreal were portraits of his grandmother, a sketch of an inmate in an old

people's home, a blind man, a rabbi, his brother Solly: in short a picture gallery of such diverse characters as to imply that the young artist was in fact a recorder of his milieu. This aspect of Muhlstock's work is surely related to the particular sense of Jewish culture that art historian François-Marc Gagnon describes in the following terms:

> Dans le portrait, pour commencer par cet exemple, majeur il est vrai, il y avait non seulement le besoin de traiter de la figure humaine si négligé jusqu'alors dans l'art canadien, mais aussi ce projet bien juif de recenser avec amour sinon tous les membres de la communauté, du moins ceux par qui on s'y rattachaient.[101]

When Muhlstock studied in Paris for two years, his art training had been essentially in the French tradition of figure painting, under the artistic direction of Jean-François Bilhoul, a painter of the academic tradition. Upon his return to Montreal during the Depression years, financially unable to pay model fees, he sought his subjects from among the homeless and the unemployed who took refuge in the streets and parks of Montreal. Short of money for materials, he drew on kraft paper and used bleached sugar bags as canvas for his oils. Using these makeshift supports, Muhlstock created a pictorial chronicle of the human condition of those difficult years.

Sixty six chalk and charcoal drawings were exhibited in November of 1935, in Muhlstock's first solo show at the Art

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[101] François-Marc Gagnon: "Peintres juifs et modernité/Jewish Painters and Modernity. Montréal 1930-1945. Exposition présentée au Centre Saidye Bronfman, Montréal, du 6 octobre au 5 novembre 1987", dans RACAR, XV, 2, 1988, p. 152.

Association of Montreal. The exhibition included many works well-known today, such as the compassionate studies of Paranka, one of which is in the permanent collection of the National Gallery of Canada [Fig. 59]. Paranka, a young blind woman, afflicted by an incurable disease, spent her brief lifespan in total withdrawal and completely isolated from the surrounding world of a Montreal hospital public ward. It was there that Muhlstock, most discreetly and silently so as not to disturb this fragile creature, described in a few strokes the emaciated and sorrowful face with such troubling intensity.

Two important drawings, also presented in 1935, tell of the poverty prevailing in Montreal in those years of crisis. Waiting for breakfast[102] shows a few wretched people gathered together in the cold light of dawn, waiting patiently for the public soup kitchen to open its doors so that they can finally get something to eat [Fig. 60]. The second drawing, entitled Last Supper (at refuge for unemployed) [Fig. 61], was chosen a few years later, in 1940, to be included in the exhibition The Artist as Reporter, sponsored by the American daily newspaper P.M. and presented at the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA).[103]

These two drawings are not as rigorous in execution as those of the Paranka series. The line is not as incisive, the drawing

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[102]This drawing was reproduced in The Canadian Forum under the title: Street Scene, together with Last Supper (at Refuge for Unemployed), Vol. XVI, no. 184, (May 1936), p. 15.

[103] Robert Ayre, "Art News and Reviews" subtitle: "Montrealers Honored" Standard, (Montreal, May 11, 1940), p. 9.

more hesitant, the subject less focused. While the studies of the young sick girl carry no reference to surroundings, we find here a number of details that are of anecdotal rather than of a social nature. The staging brings half to mind a sense of caricature. As a matter of fact, both in subject matter and expressive line, they are closely related to the sketchy drawing style of the American graphic artist, Marice Becker (b. 1889), whose cartoons were reproduced in The Masses, an American leftist magazine published from 1911 to 1916.[104] If one compares the two Muhlstock's drawings described above with Becker's Beware of Pickpockets [Fig. 62], these quickly drawn and roughly formulated vignettes have a common evocative power, precisely because the awkward, even gauche renderings correspond totally to the resigned attitude of the characters portrayed therein. More than half a century later, these works still reflect a distressing actuality, as the problem of the shelterless and the vagrant is just as acute today as it was then.

Muhlstock also sketched the transients sleeping in Fletcher's Field, a park in his immediate neighbourhood. Their stretched-out shapes are shown in a few lines, which owes as much to acute observation as to technical mastery. Other artists have also described the world of vagabonds that inhabited Viger Square and Fletcher's Field during the Depression. His contemporary, Ernst

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[104]For a brief history of The Masses, its socio-political tendencies and reproductions of some of the contributing artists' cartoons, see Milton W. Brown American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression, (Princeton: 1972), pp. 30-32.

Neumann positions his figures in anecdotally loaded decors, such as idle men in rags seated on a bench or reading a newspaper in quasi-caricatural compositions [Fig. 63]. Muhlstock's hasty sketches capture the essential elements of form and volume, bringing to life these prostate silhouettes [Figs. 64, 65, 66 and 67]. Contrary to those of Newman, Muhlstock's studies are devoid of any environmental reference, except for succinct allusions to makeshift arrangements: newspaper, hat or bundled up clothing, which serve as pillows or shields from the elements. These futile efforts aimed at some small measure of comfort are rendered by the artist with an economy of details, as a reflection on the precarious life of his models.

Out of these faceless and anonymous figures, a few identified characters emerged as symbols of the multitude of homeless and destitute. They were the protagonists of a human drama for which Louis Muhlstock has already set the stage in his silent streetscapes, lonely lanes and empty rooms.

William O'Brien first appeared in 1935, discovered in Viger Square by Muhlstock. The painter was at once fascinated by the forlorn yet dignified figure, an outsider in the otherwise gregarious group of men who spent most of their waking hours in idle discussions. When asked by Muhlstock why he was not joining the others, O'Brien replied: "Ce n'est pas une conversation". This isolation is manifest in the series of studies that Muhlstock did of O'Brien. William O'Brien, unemployed, is now in the permanent collection of the National Gallery in Ottawa [Fig. 68]. Completely

devoid of references to environmental decor, this carefully rendered drawing is one of the most sensitive portraits ever produced by Muhlstock.

Yet another unknown came to represent the homeless vagrants in the pictorial chronicle created by Muhlstock. It is Jos Lavallée, with the deeply lined face, to whom Muhlstock offered food and pocket money in exchange for sittings. The ensuing paintings, such as Jos. Lavallée with bowl of soup [Fig. 69] or Jos. Lavallée [Fig. 70], where the model is portrayed against a backdrop of dingy flats, can be compared to the American painter Raphael Soyer's studies of the unemployed during the Thirties, as exemplified in Soyer's HOW LONG SINCE YOU WROTE TO MOTHER? [Fig. 71]. In bearing, gestures and the atmosphere, both painters show the same sense of the static, of repose. This prevailing mood is also present in a painting by Alexander Bercovitch's daughter, Canadian painter Sylvia Ary. Poor people c. 1943, [Fig. 72]. These three artists' paintings could be described as simple statements of fact concerning the poor, yet containing within themselves an implication of social protest.

These times of economic crisis were also a period of repressive politics. Duplessis' "Padlock " and Adrien Arcand's fascist party were endangering the civil liberties in the Province. Anti-semitism, always latent, was even more threatening. Muhlstock's work in these difficult years reflected his preoccupation for the victims of society with whom he identified.

This is particularly true in light of his collaboration with the New Frontier and the Canadian Forum.[105] In the same spirit as The Masses, their American predecessor by a few decades, these Toronto-based leftist magazines published a number of drawings in which the poor and the deprived were presented in eloquently expressive portraits. Sick children, defiant teenagers, black youths, toiling women or anxious unemployed workers formed a gallery of modest people which served to illustrate various commentaries condemning the Thirties' alarming socio-political context.[106] This segment of Muhlstock's work, focused on mankind's condition, caused him at times to be identified as a socially involved artist. This however was not an art of proletarian protest, but rather one that revealed a lucid and compassionate observation of the people who lived in the streets of Montreal, the inhabitants of the cityscapes that Muhlstock otherwise described as deserted.

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[105]The Canadian Forum (still published today) was at the time linked to the C.C.F. and the League for Social Reconstruction.
The New Frontier (1936-36) was a short-lived socialist magazine; many among its contributors had been formely associated with the Canadian Forum.
For a summary of the history of Canadian Forum and its editorial policies in the 1930's see "The Twenty-First Year" Canadian Forum, Vol. XXI no. 243, April 1941, pp. 5-7.
For a summary of its articles on Canadian Art, see Esther Trépanier, "Modernité et conscience sociale: La critique d'art progressiste des années trente", The Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien, vol. 8, no. 1, 1984, pp. 80-108.

[106] See Annex II for a list of Louis Muhlstock's drawings published in the Canadian Forum and the New Frontier during the 1930's.

Conclusion

Out of the ghetto streets where a jewboy
Dreamed pavement into pleasant Bible-land,
Out of the Yiddish slums where childhood met
.....
It is a fabled city that I seek;
It stands in Space's vapours and Time's haze;
A. M. Klein[107]

An important body of work produced by Louis Muhlstock, between the years 1930 and 1950, played a definitely pivotal role in the evolution of the Urban Landscape in the history of Canadian painting, not so much because of its size, even though the number of paintings on the subject is considerable, but because of Muhlstock's personal approach and attitude.

Backyards and rooftops were among the first Montreal subjects that Muhlstock painted shortly after his return from Paris. Belying the mundane setting, these scenes are presented in vivid sunlight and brilliant hues; a kind of celebration, a painter's delight in the view from the sunny appartment that his family now occupied after years of lodging in a dark basement. "Upper St. Dominique", as Muhlstock jokingly referred to this new address, near Duluth Street, even though located also in the Jewish ghetto of Montreal, offered a much-improved environment.

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[107]Extracted from the poem Gloss Aleph *Autobiographical* from the book in novel form, The Second Scroll, by A.M. Klein, originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1951, and republished in 1961 by McClelland and Stewart Limited. The historical context in which the story takes place is the period between 1917, when pogroms in Russia terrorized the Jewish population, and 1949, a year following the establishment of the state of Israel....

Muhlstock's ensuing paintings of lonely streetscapes testify to the isolation of the city dweller, while at the same time revealing the painter's deep attachment for this part of Montreal where he grew up. When he wandered away from these familiar surroundings, it was often to record a similar environment; that of Pointe St. Charles for instance, with its humble dwellings so sensitively portrayed.

His move to Sainte-Famille Street in 1937 resulted in an extraordinarily lyrical representation of this neighbourhood as a haven of peace and tranquility in the bustle of city life. The sylvan quality that he confers to the street reflects the serene setting of his new painting place. From the sheltered space of his studio, he looked out into the tree-lined street or across to Place Ste-Famille, a narrow vista that he represented in several studies of different formal approaches.

"Dreamed pavement into pleasant Bible-land." The poet's dream is not always shared by the painter. At times, Muhlstock will forsake the cityscapes where tall trees cast shade on sunny days or are reflected in the glistening pavement after rain, for a return to the dark and bare lanes; the locales of his forlorn youth. No more sunny vistas or colourful reflections; the decaying buildings and muddy lanes do not lend themselves to flattering renditions. Moreover, when Muhlstock revisited them in the mid 1930's, these slums were even more dilapidated than when he first knew them, a result of the difficult economic conditions that prevailed during the Depression.

Muhlstock's itinerary through the familiar places of his childhood will culminate in the poignant series of empty rooms. No other Canadian painter before and very few since have so successfully evoked the silence and decay that permeated these abandonned dwellings. When questionned about the empty room paintings, Muhlstock always refers to his empathy with the former occupants of these dismal lodgings. One could surmise that a memory of time gone-by is not without a link to this extremely personal and memorable interpretation of urban loneliness.

When, parallel to this representation of largely deserted urban scenery, the portraits of the city dwellers emerge, their destitute condition and resigned attitude are closely related to the mood evoked by the lanes and empty rooms.

Muhlstock's method of separately treating the actors and the set resulted in the creation of two dramas, one related to the surroundings which could be considered as dehumanizing and alienating, and the other more related to the people with all their very human considerations of hope and despair. Muhlstock's descriptions of rooftops, lanes or empty rooms are endowed with such human feeling and presented with such insight that they remain a benchmark of modern Canadian painting because of the artist's desire to "dream pavement into pleasant Bible Land."

Figures

Fig. 1 Robert Henri,
West 57th Street in 1902,
Yale University Art Gallery.

Fig. 2 Alfred Stieglitz,
The Hand of Man, 1902
Photograph,
Art Institute of Chicago.

Fig. 3 John Sloan,
Sixth Avenue & 30th Street, c. 1910.
medium, size and location unknown.

Fig. 4 Edward Hopper,
Early Sunday Morning, 1930.
Whitney Museum of American Art, New York.

Fig. 5 Kenneth Hayes Miller,
Fourteenth Street.
medium, size and location unknown.

Fig. 6 Reginald Marsh,
End of the Fourteenth Street Crosstown Line, 1936,
oil and tempera,
61 x 91 cm,
Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

Fig. 7 Raphael Soyer,
Transients, 1936,
Oil on canvas,
87 x 95 cm,
Michener Collection, University of Texas at Austin.

Fig. 8 J.E.H. MacDonald,
Tracks and Traffic, (sketch) 1912,
oil on canvas,
15.2 x 25.5 cm,
private collection.

Fig. 9 Joseph Légaré,
Le Choléra à Québec, c. 1832,
oil on canvas,
88.2 x 111.4 cm,
The National Gallery of Ottawa.

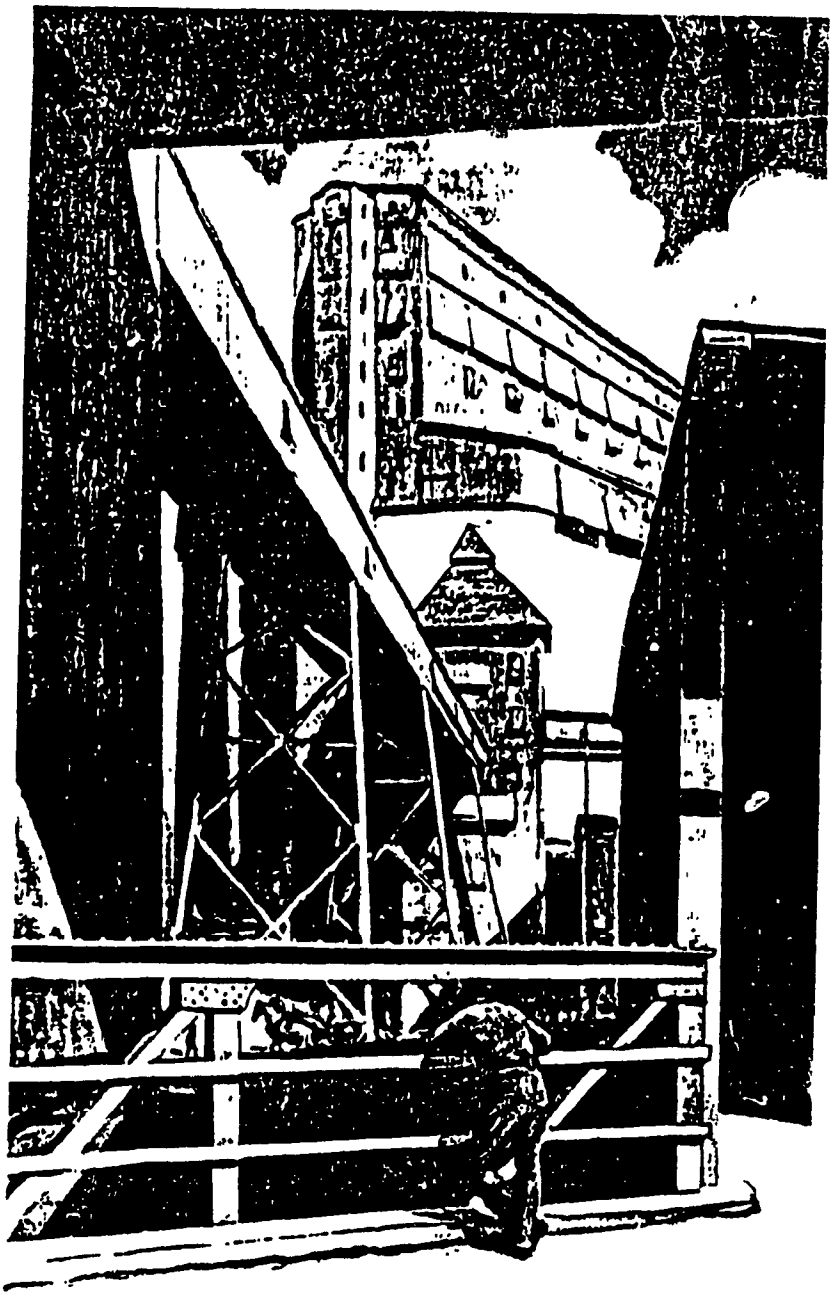

Fig. 10 Adrien Hébert,
Élévateur-terminus no 1, c. 1929
oil on canvas,
104.7 x 63.8 cm
Art Gallery of Hamilton.

Fig. 11 Louis Muhlstock,
Gentilly, aux environs de Paris, c. 1930,
oil on canvas,
41 x 51 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 12 Louis Muhlstock,
Goupil Lane, c. 1938,
oil on canvas,
approx. 76 x 66 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 13 Paul-Emile Borduas,
Matin de printemps, 1937,
oil on canvas,
private collection, Montreal.

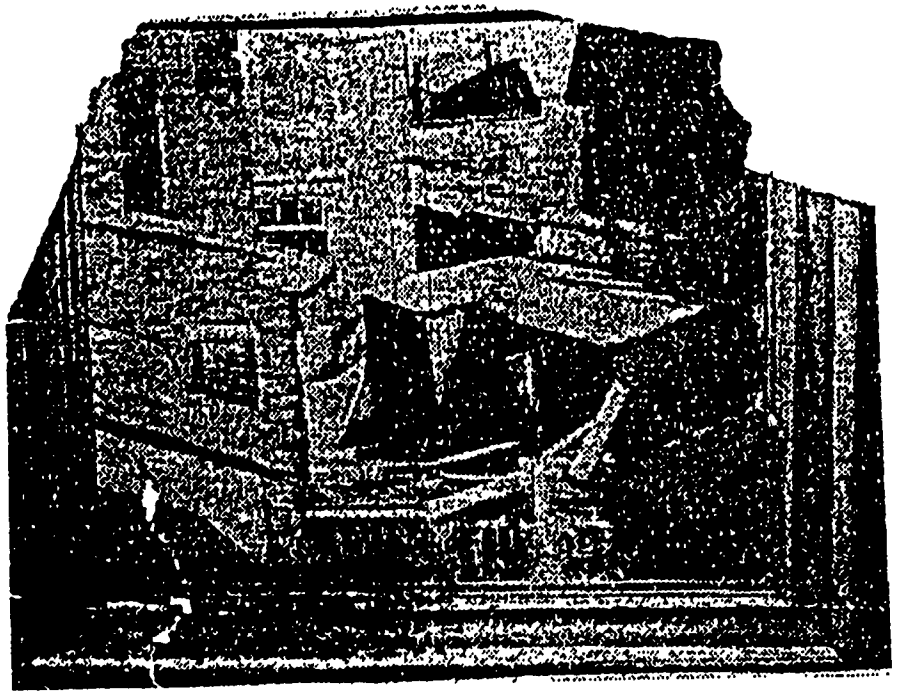

Fig. 14 Louis Muhlstock,
Back Yard Saint-Dominique Street,
reproduced in La Presse, 6 février, 1932,
present location unknown.

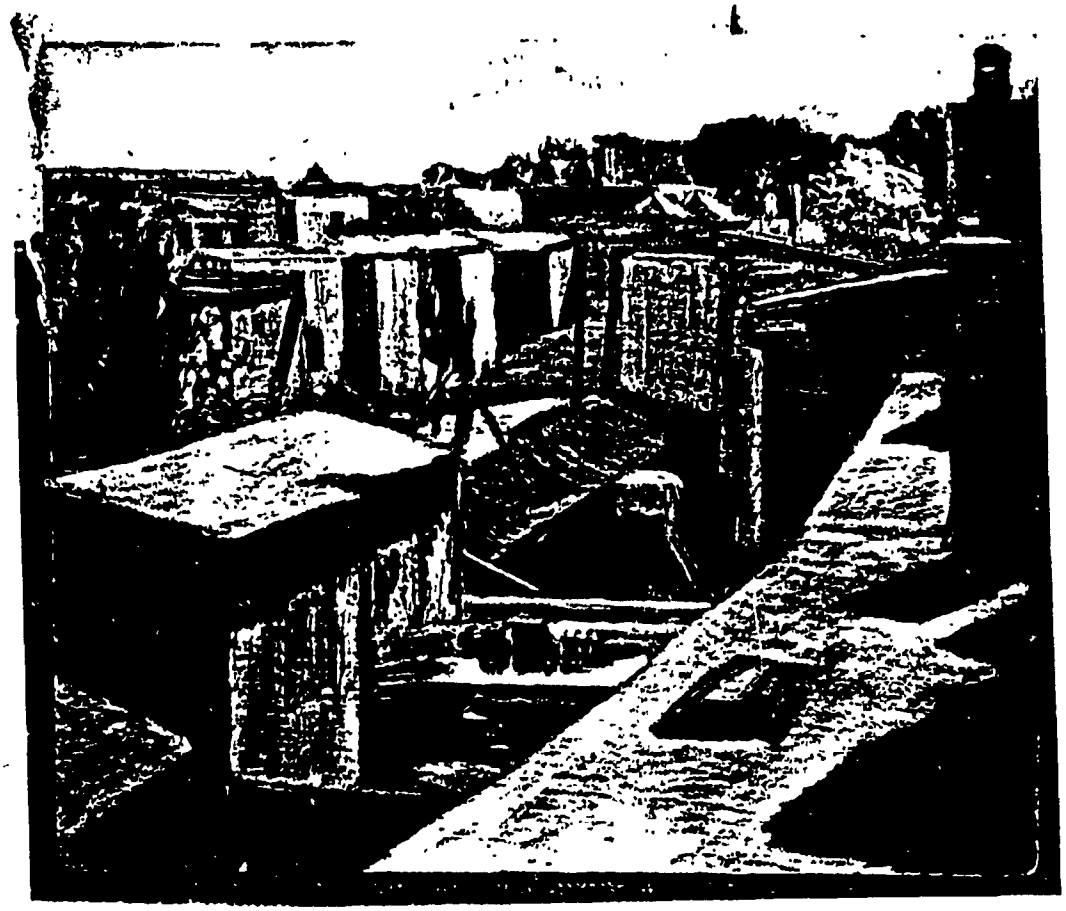

Fig. 15 Louis Muhlstock,
Backyard Upper St-Dominique, c. 1932,
oil on board,
50 x 60 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 16 Jack Beder,
Toits de la rue St-Urbain, 1938,
reproduced in Guy Robert, La peinture au Québec depuis ses origines, p. 181,
medium, size and location unknown

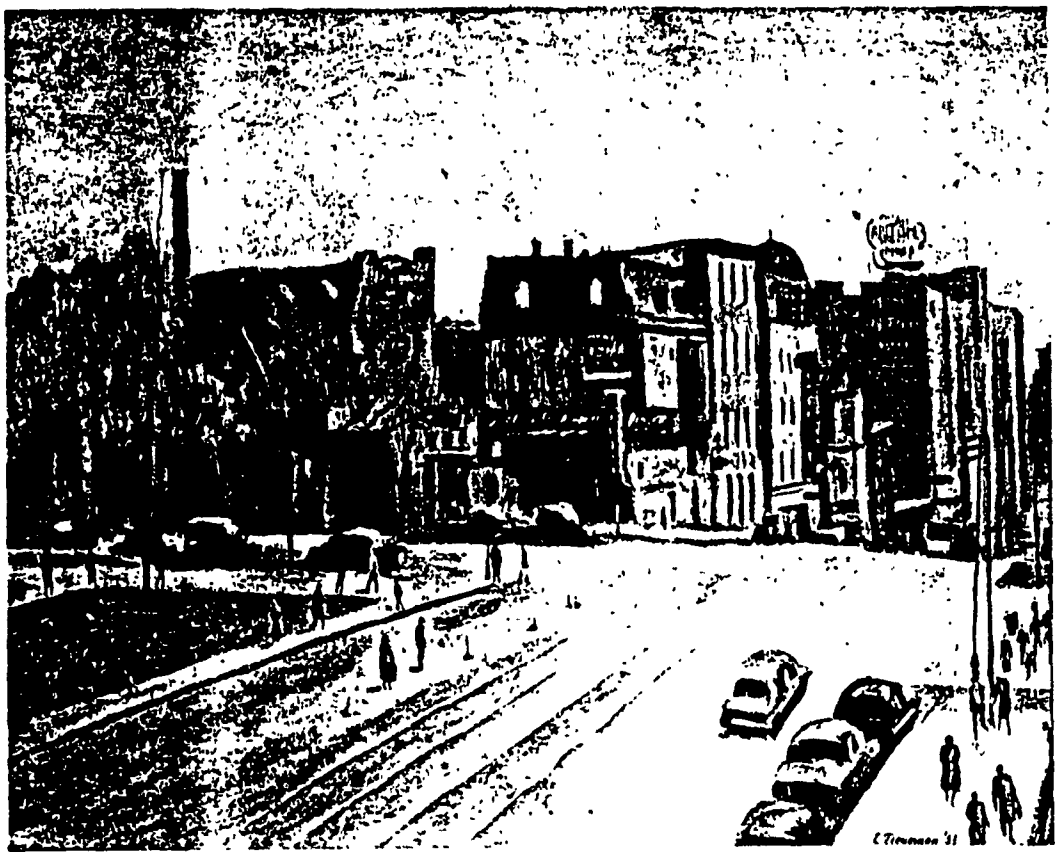

Fig. 17 Ernst Neumann,
Windsor Street, 1953,
oil on masonite,
50.8 x 66 cm,
Concordia Art Gallery collection.

Fig. 18 Louis Muhlstock,
Sunday, Point St. Charles, c. 1946,
oil on canvas, 66.1 x 76.2 cm,
whereabouts unknown.

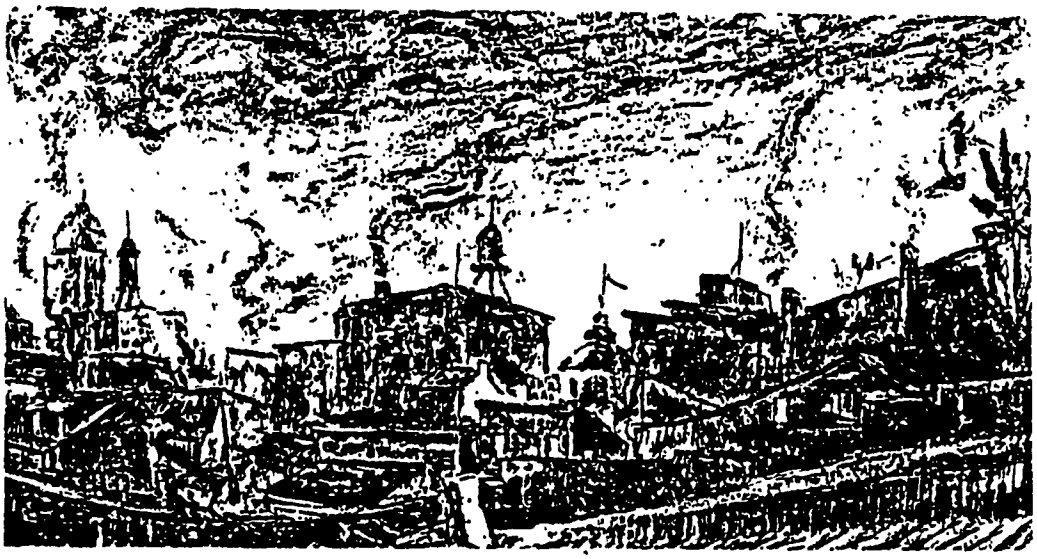

Fig. 19 Sam Borenstein,
Old Montreal Rooftops, 1943,
oil on canvas,
58.5 x 109 cm,
private collection.

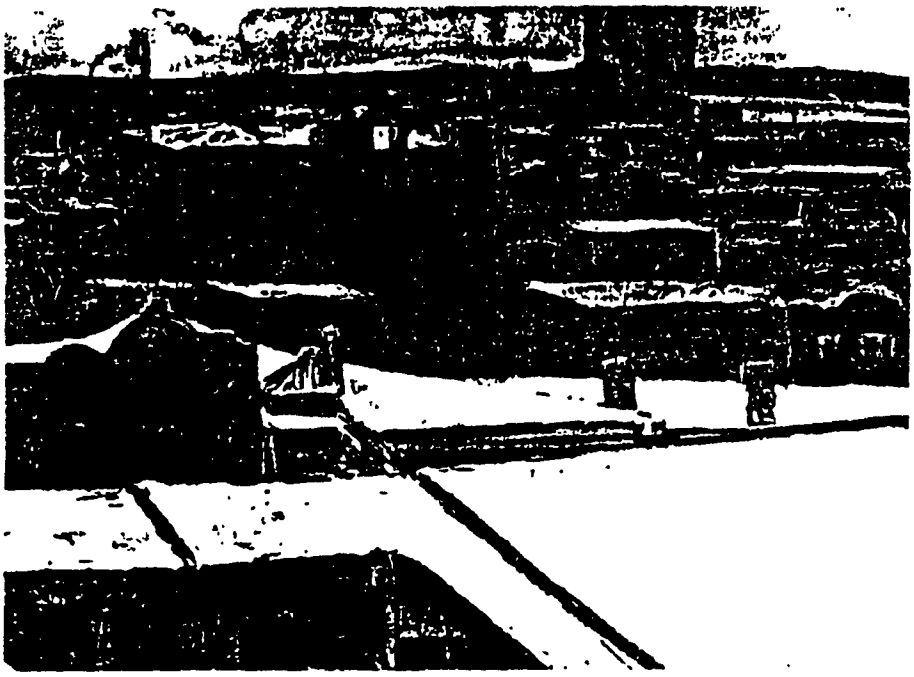

Fig. 20 Ghitta Caiserman-Roth,
Rooftops, 1937,
pastel on paper,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 21 Louis Muhlstock,
Rue de Bullion coin Sherbrooke, c. 1940,
oil on canvas,
app. 66 x 76 cm,
private collection.

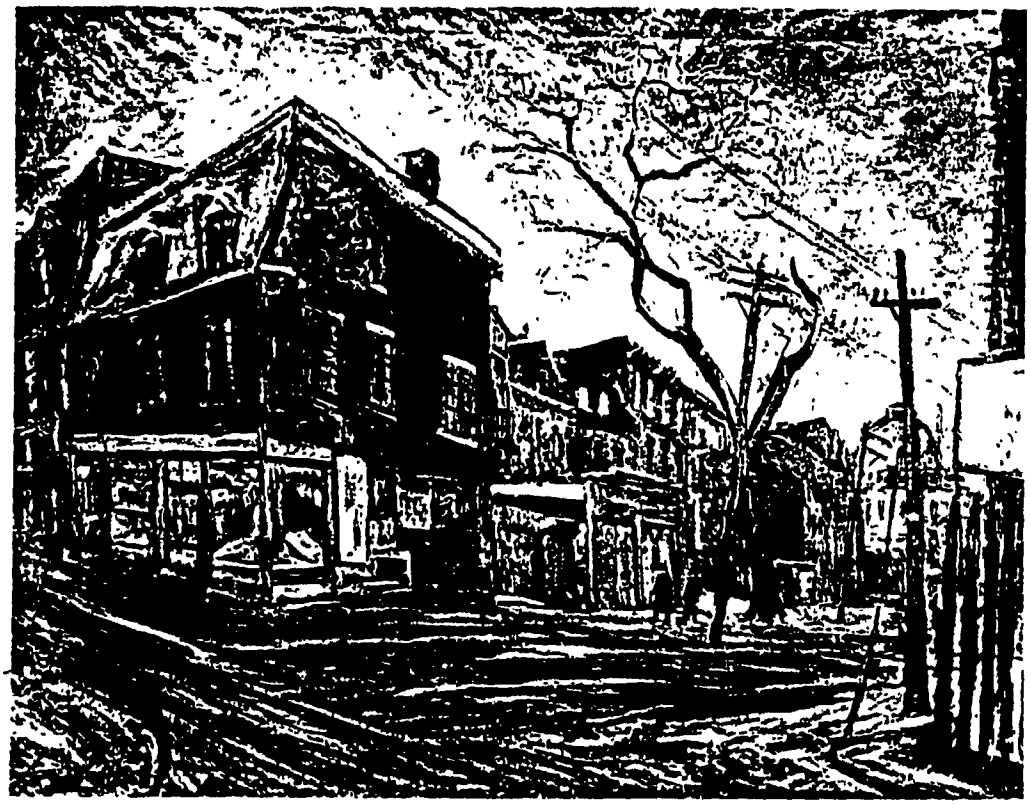

Fig. 22 Sam Borenstein,
De Bullion Street, 1940,
oil on canvas,
76 x 101.5 cm,
Concordia Art Gallery Collection.

Fig. 23 Alexander Bercovitch,
Laurier Street, c. 1933,
Gouache on paper,
47.2 x 76.2 cm,
Collection of Mr. & Mrs. Saul Shapiro,
(Reproduced in Jewish Painters and Modernity,
Montreal 1930-1945, p. 76)

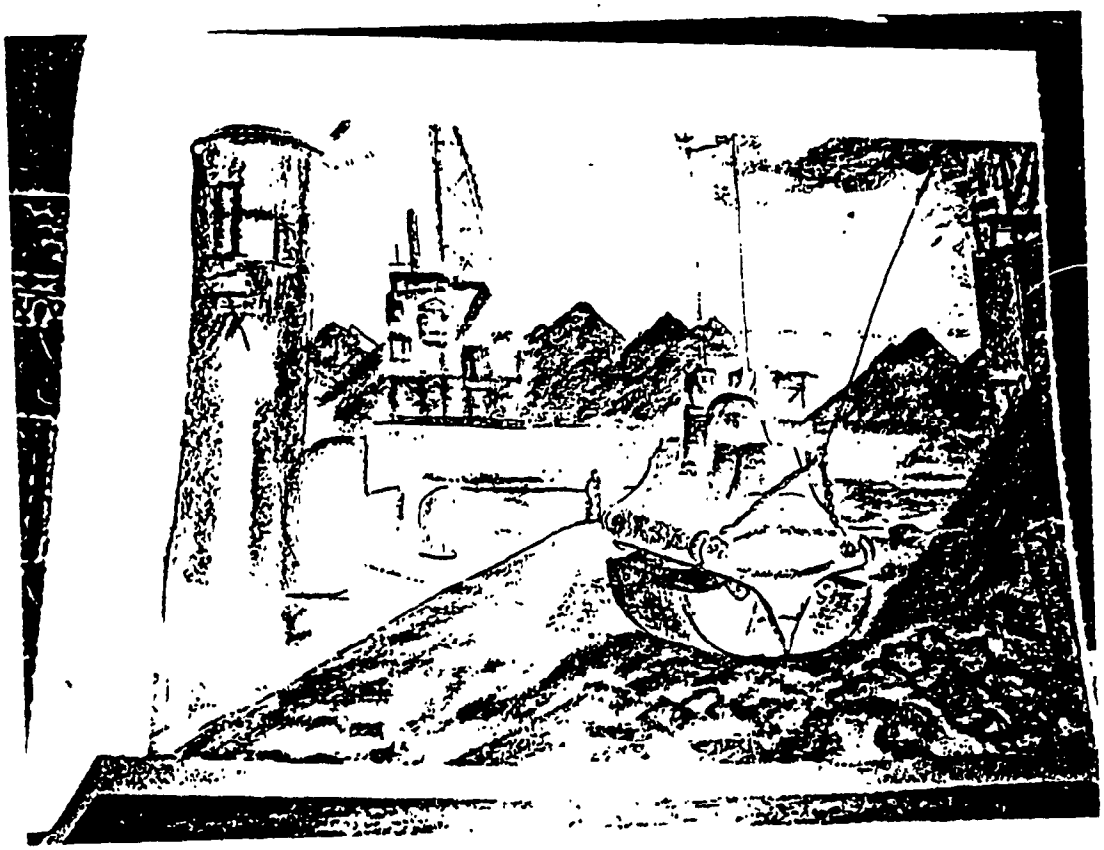

Fig. 24 Louis Muhlstock,
On the Harbour, 1935,
Charcoal, red and white chalk on buff paper,
43.5 x 58.5 cm,
collection of the artist.

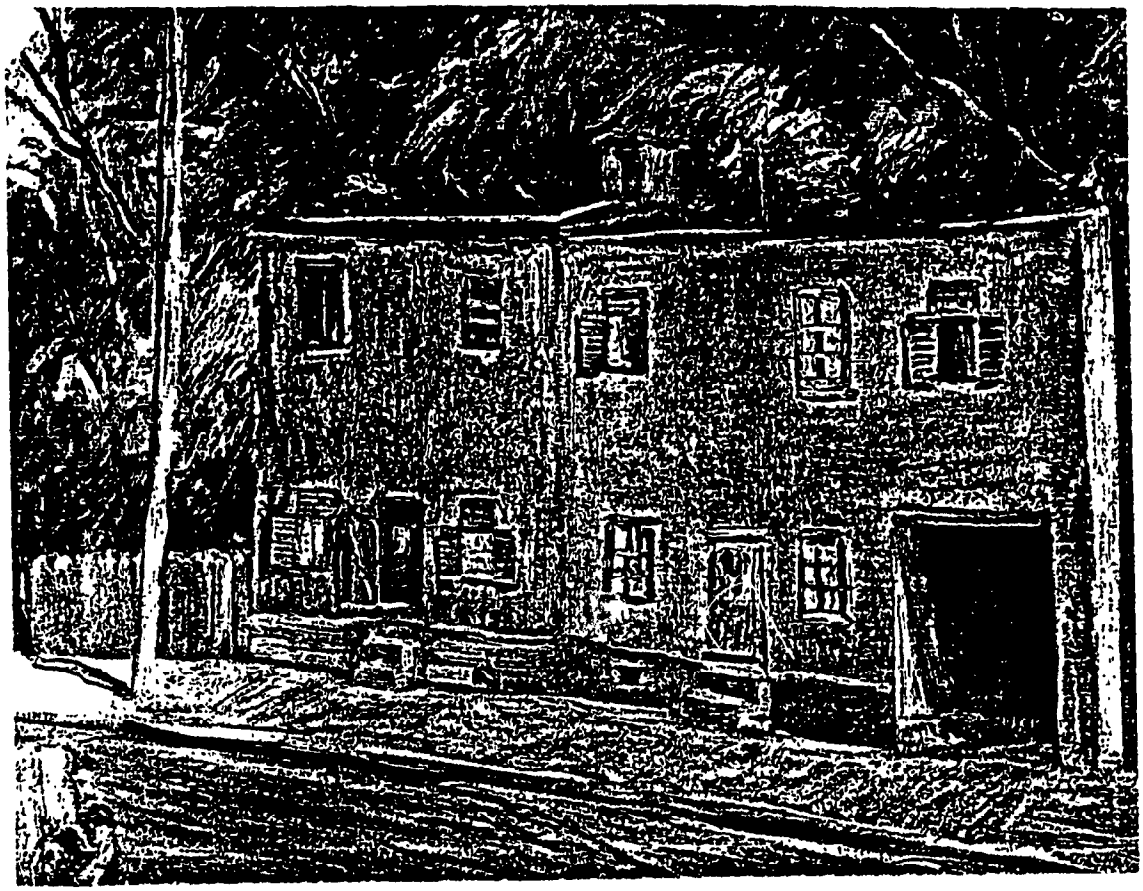

Fig. 25 Louis Muhlstock,
Two dwellings Pointe St-Charles, 1935,
oil on canvas,
49.5 x 64.8 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 26 Louis Muhlstock,
Pointe St-Charles, 1941
oil on panel,
45 x 60 cm,
collection of the artist.

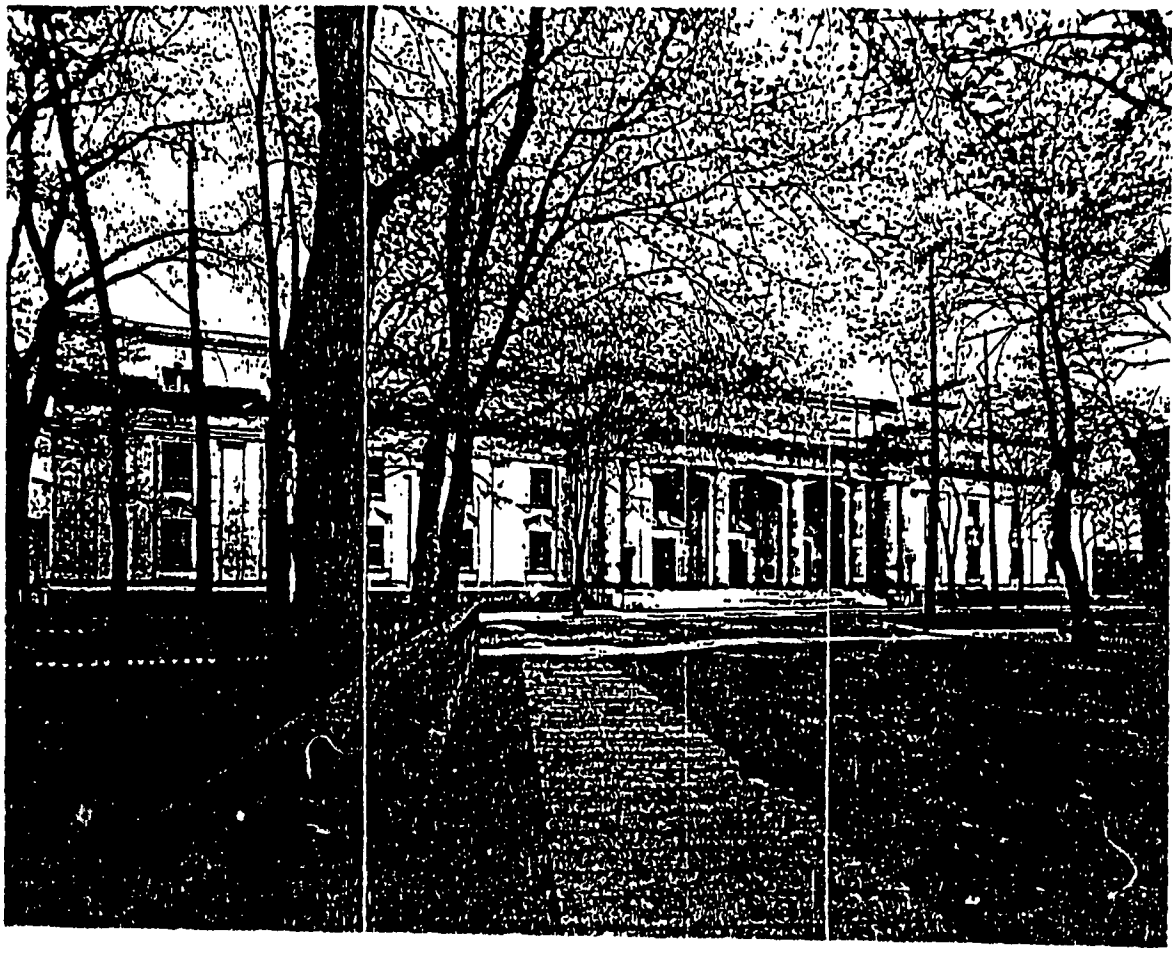

Fig. 27 Technical School, Sherbrooke and Ste-Famille, 1912, Notman photo Archives, 12,153.

Fig. 28 Louis Muhlstock,
Sainte-Famille Street, 1939,
oil on canvas,
64.8 x 74.9 cm,
University College, University of Toronto.

Fig. 29 Louis Muhlstock,
Ste-Famille Street, Wet Day, c. 1939
oil on canvas,
Mrs. I. H. Weldon, Toronto

Fig. 30 Louis Muhlstock,
<u>After the Rain, Ste-Famille Street</u>, 1941,
oil on canvas,
63.5 x 73 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 31 Louis Muhlstock,
Summer Day... 1946,
oil on canvas,
Macdonald Stewart Art Centre,
University of Guelph, Ontario.

Fig. 32 Louis Muhlstock,
Corner St-Famille and Sherbrooke St. , 1939,
oil on canvas,
76,3 x 66,4 cm,
Musée du Québec.

Fig. 33 Louis Muhlstock,
Arbres en hiver, c. 1949,
oil on canvas,
55.9 x 48.3 cm,
Musée d'art de Joliette.

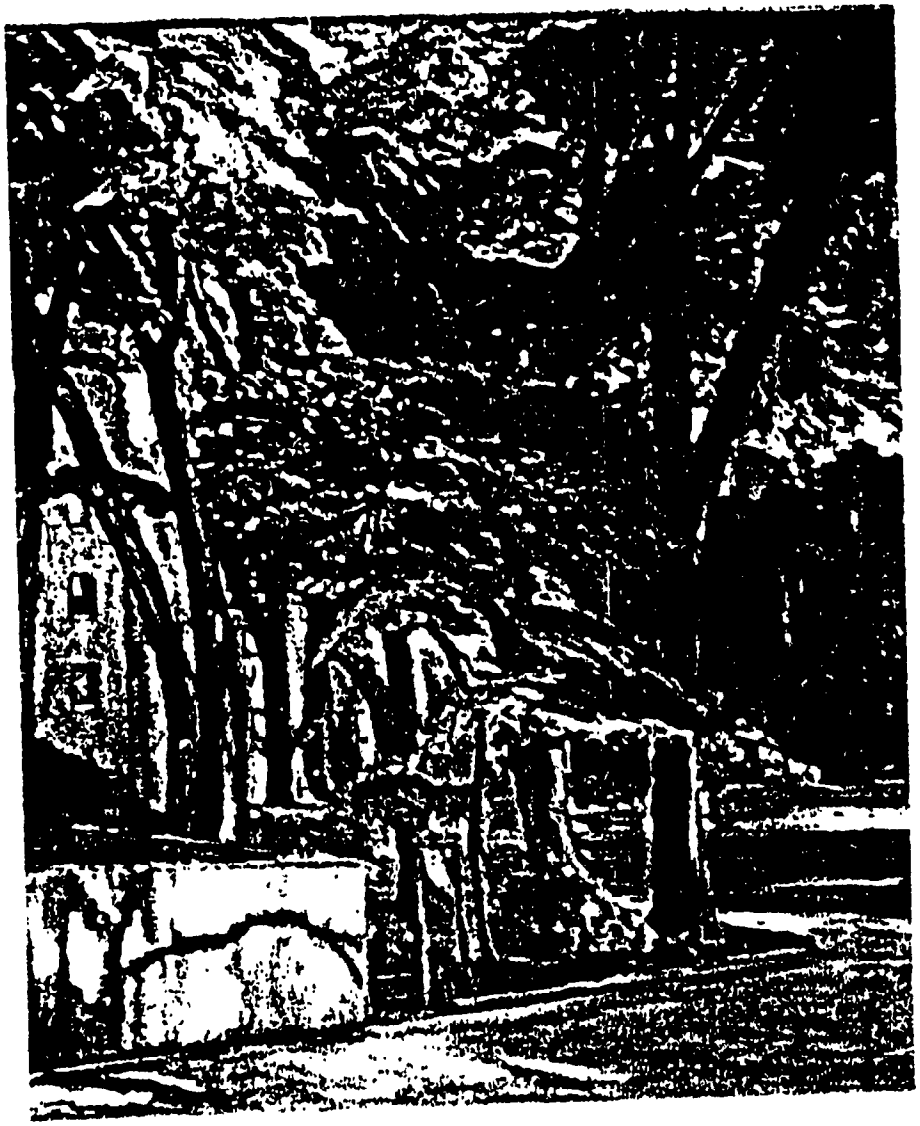

Fig. 34 Louis Muhlstock,
Street Corner, Montreal, ca. 1947,
oil on canvas,
91.5 x 82.3 cm,
Collection Mrs. Alison Palmer, Montreal.
(Reproduced in Donald W. Buchanan:
The Growth of Canadian Painting,
Toronto, 1974, plate 54.)

Fig. 35 Louis Muhlstock,
Ste-Famille, Corner Sherbrooke, Montreal, c. 1942,
oil on canvas,
65.2 x 75.3,
collection of the artist.

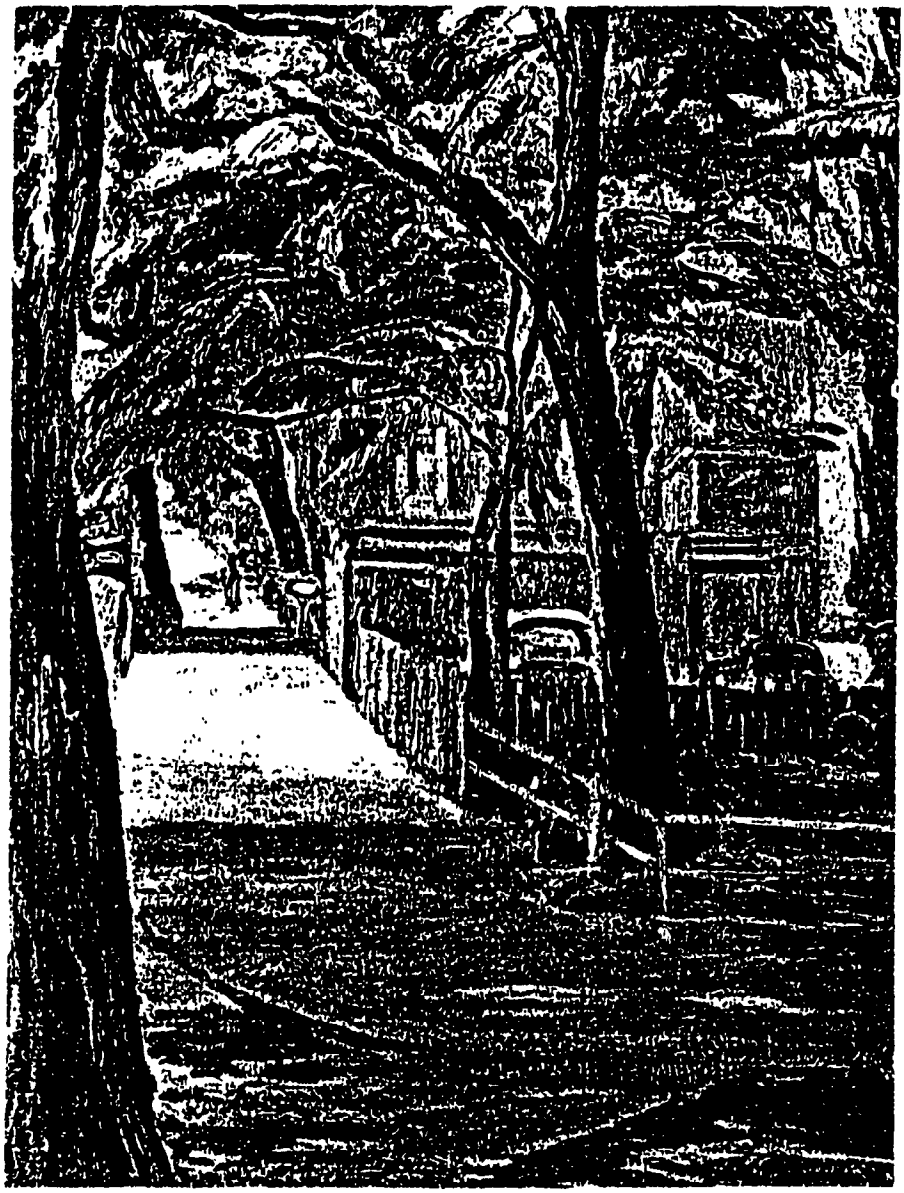

Fig. 36 Louis Muhlstock,
Ste-Famille Street, c. 1950,
oil on canvas,
71.8 x 56.5,
collection of the artist.
(Reproduced in Louis Muhlstock - A Survey of forty-five years, Art Gallery of Windsor, 1976, cat. # 38)

Fig. 37 "Gallic Charms in Outremont,
Three views of a living room decorated by Louis
Mulligan", The Montrealer, September, 1949.

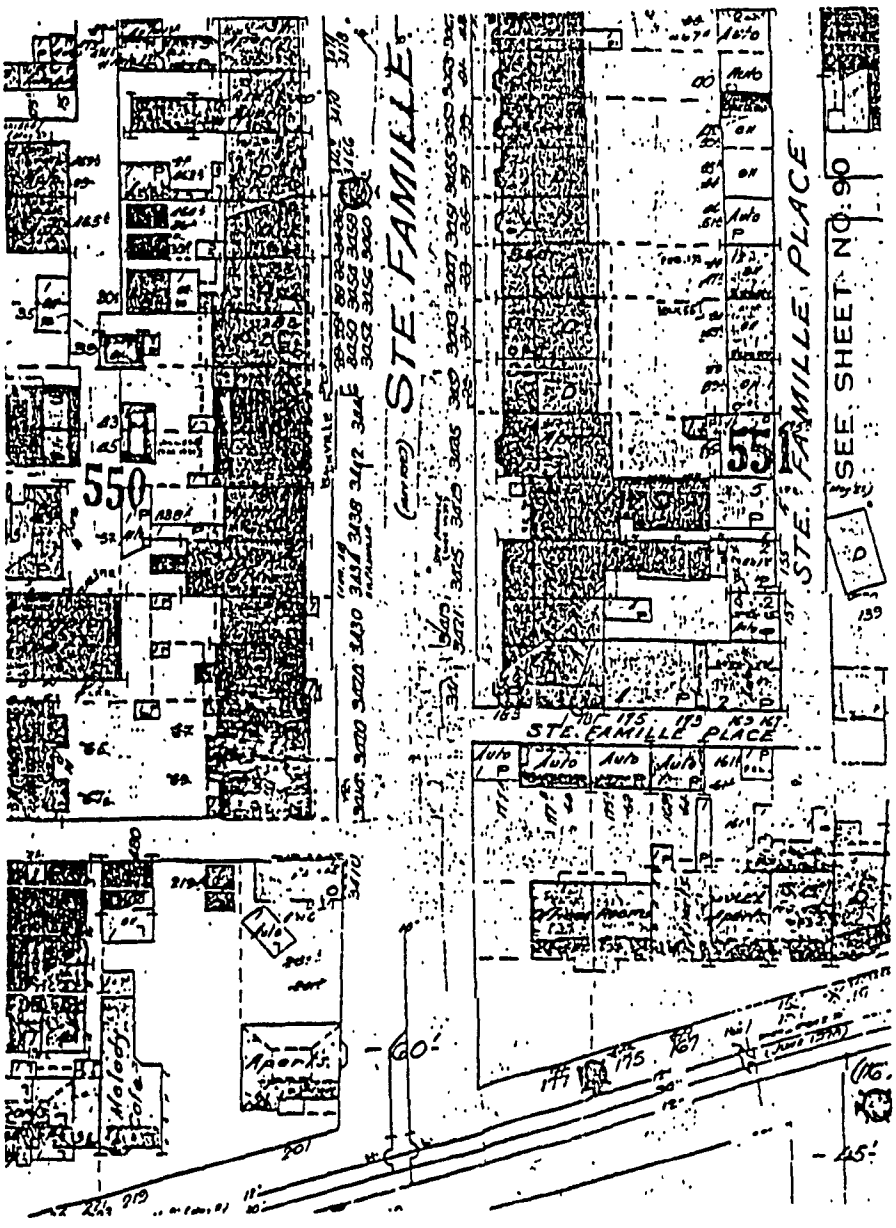

Fig. 38 Place Ste-Famille,
Chas. E. Goad, Atlas de Montréal,
Vol. 2, 1918, revised in 1938-39-40.
(Microfilm in the archives of the City of Montréal).
(Muhlstock's first studio at 3414 Ste-Famille St.
was directly facing Place Ste-Famille)

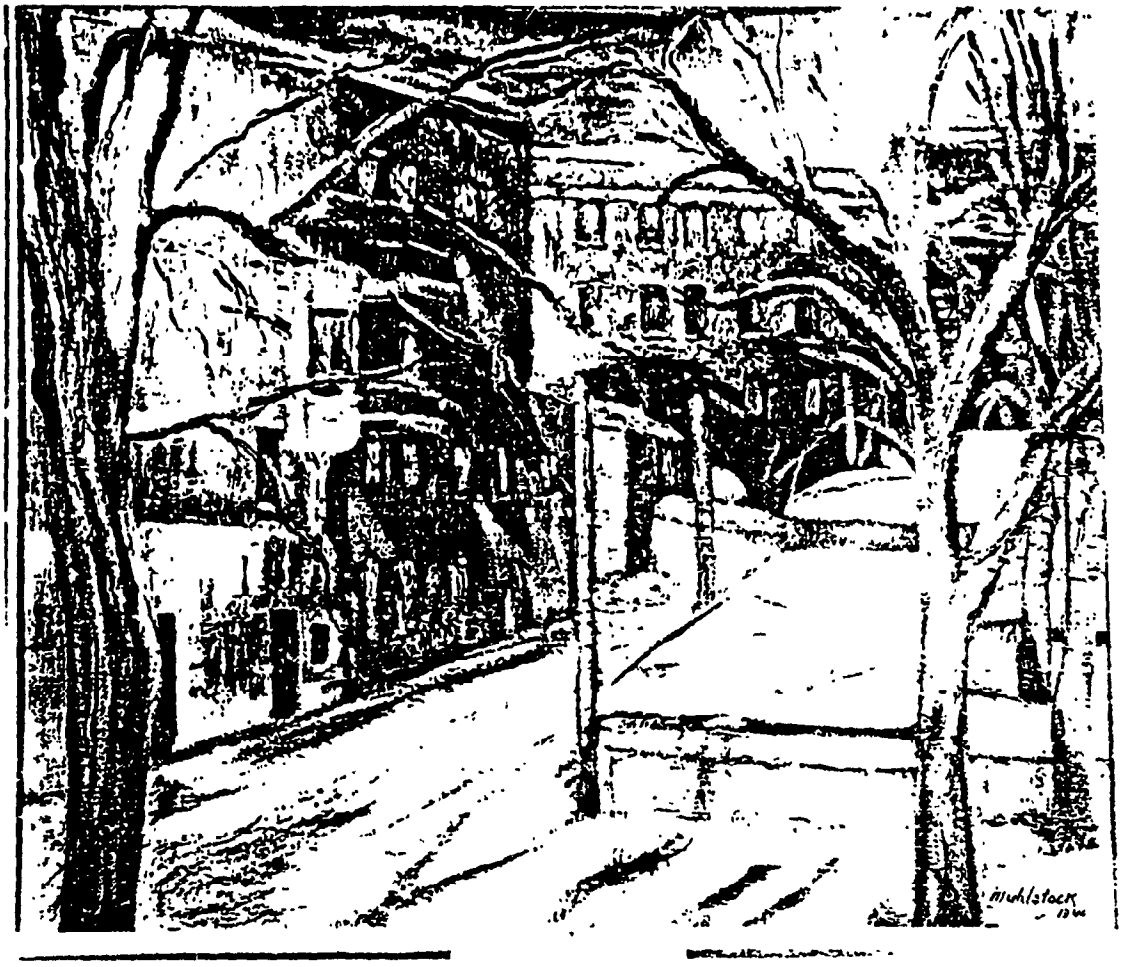

Fig. 39 Louis Muhlstock
Winter afternoon, Place Ste-Famille, 1940,
oil on board,
62.1 x 78.8 cm,
Musée du Québec.

Fig. 40 Louis Muhlstock,
Grey day, Place Ste-Famille, c. 1940,
oil on canvas,
65 x 75.2 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 41 Louis Muhlstock,
View from a window, c. 1936,
oil on canvas,
75.2 x 65.2 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 42 Louis Muhlstock,
View from a window, 1938
oil on canvas,
collection of the artist.

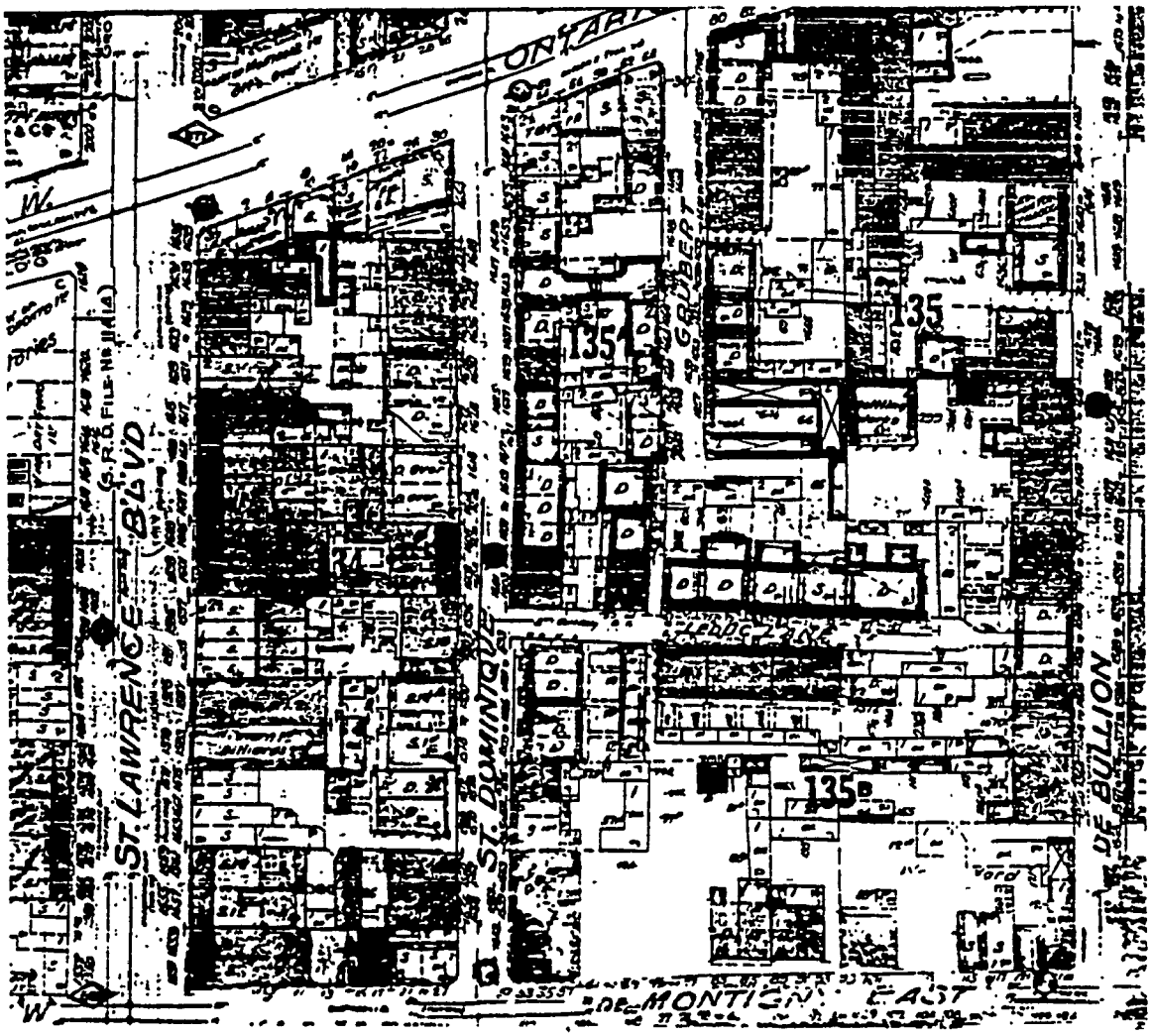

Fig. 43 Groubert and Leduc Lanes
Chas. E Goad, Atlas de Montréal,
Vol. 1, 1918, revised in 1938-39-40.
(Microfilm in the archives of the City of Montréal).

Fig. 44 Louis Muhlstock,
La ruelle Leduc 1950,
oil on canvas,
26" x 30"
Whereabouts unknown.
(Reproduced in Vie des arts, no, 16,
automne 1959, p. 11)

Fig. 45 Louis Muhlstock,
Groubert Lane, c. 1939,
oil on canvas,
private collection, Ottawa.

Fig. 46 Louis Muhlstock in his studio, 1976, photographed by Lazlo Gabor.

Fig. 47 Jack Beder,
Lane dwellings, Montreal, 1941,
oil on canvas,
44 x 53.5 cm,
Private collection.
(Reproduced in Jewish Painters and Modernity, p. 38).

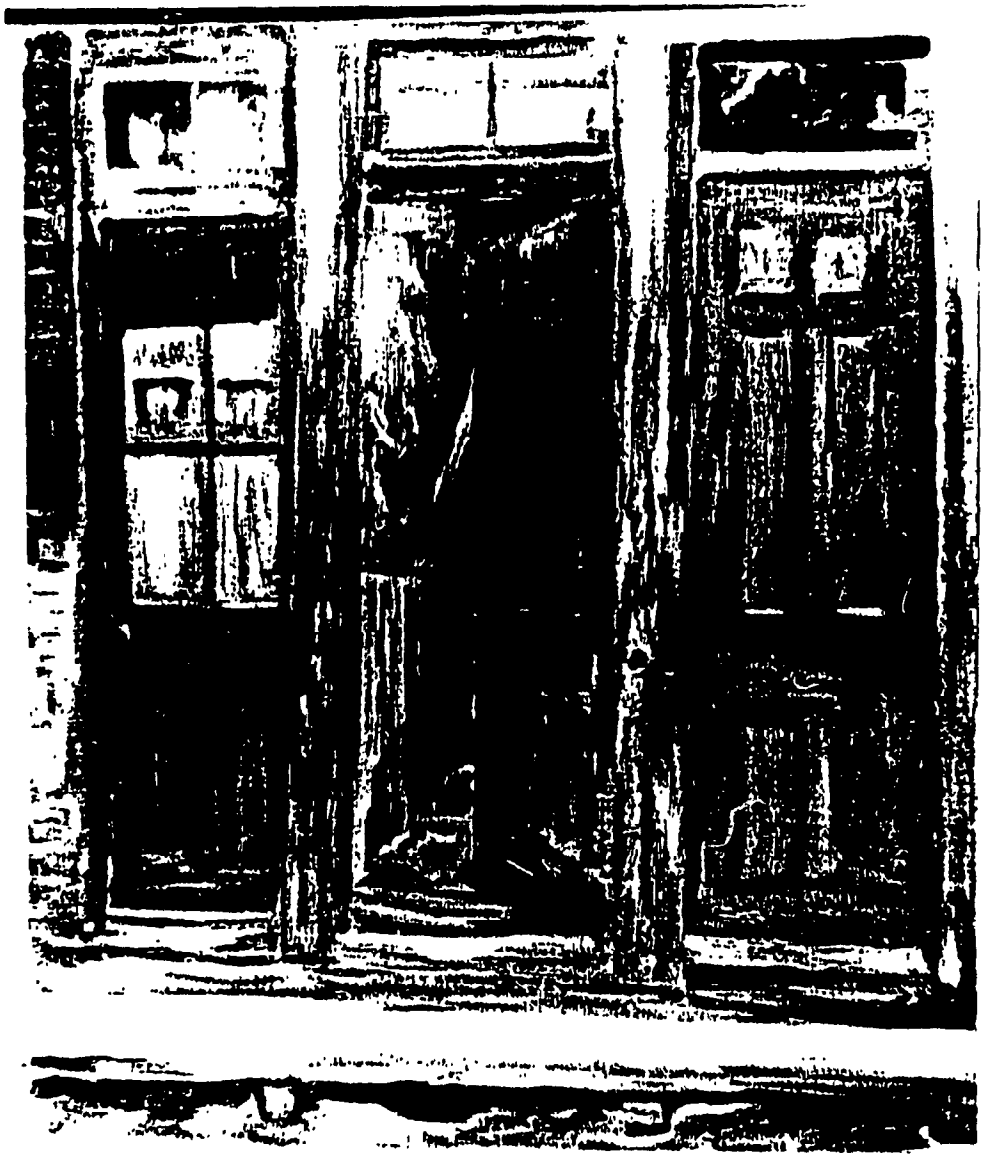

Fig. 48 Louis Muhlstock,
Three doors, Leduc Lane, c. 1939,
oil on canvas,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 49 Louis Muhlstock,
Third door, Groubert Lane, c. 1939,
oil on canvas,
76.2 x 66 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 50 Louis Muhlstock,
Open door of third house, Groubert Lane, c. 1939,
oil on canvas,
76.8 x 66 cm,
National Gallery, Ottawa.

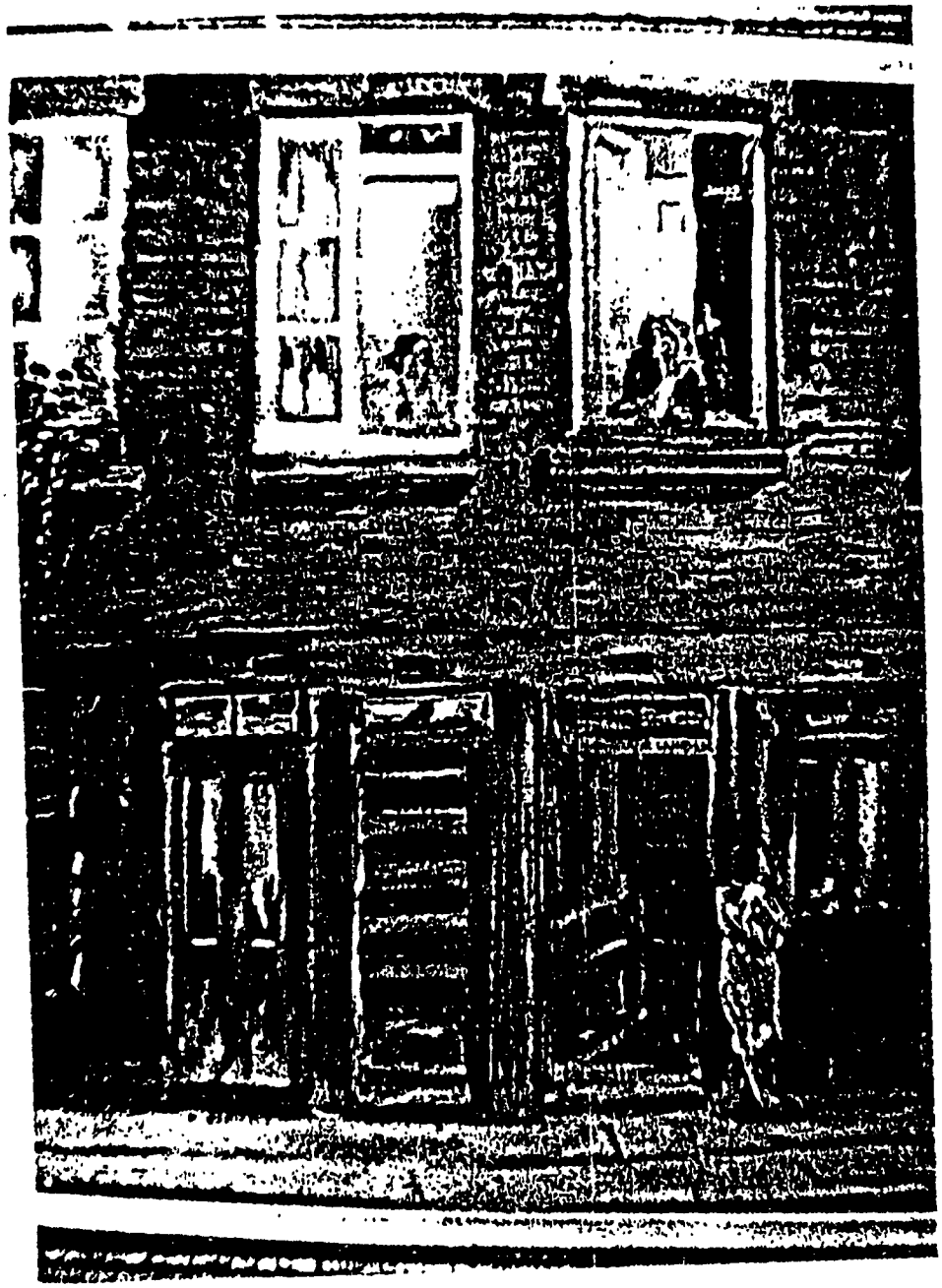

Fig. 51 Louis Muhlstock,
Four doors, Leduc Lane, 1940,
oil on canvas,
50.2 x 50.2 cm,
Private collection, Edmonton, Alberta.

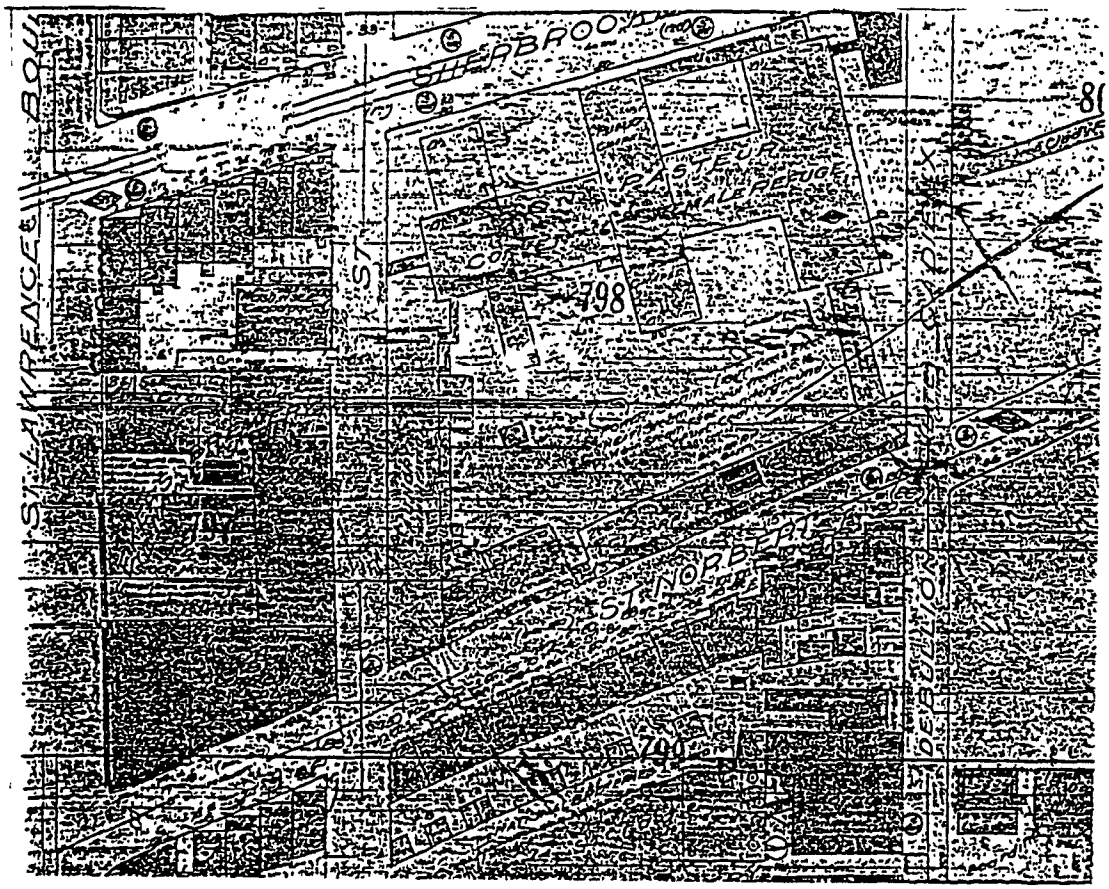

Fig. 52 St. Norbert Street,
Chas. E. Goad, Atlas de Montréal,
Vol. 1, 1918, revised in 1938-39-40.
(Microfilm in the archives of the City of Montréal).

Fig. 53 Louis Muhlstock,
Empty room in a basement, c. 1939,
oil on canvas,
63.5 x 76.2 cm
collection of the artist.

Fig. 54 Louis Muhlstock,
Basement with tailor's dummy, c. 1938,
oil on canvas,
private collection, Edmonton. Alberta.

Fig. 55 Louis Muhlstock,
Condemned dwelling on St. Norbert Street, c. 1938,
oil on canvas,
private collection, England.

Fig. 56 Louis Muhlstock
Two-room apartment, Ruelle Groubert, c. 1940,
oil on canvas,
76.5 x 66.4 cm,
Musée du Québec.

Fig. 57 Louis Muhlstock,
Empty room, 1938
oil on canvas,
Edmonton Art Gallery.

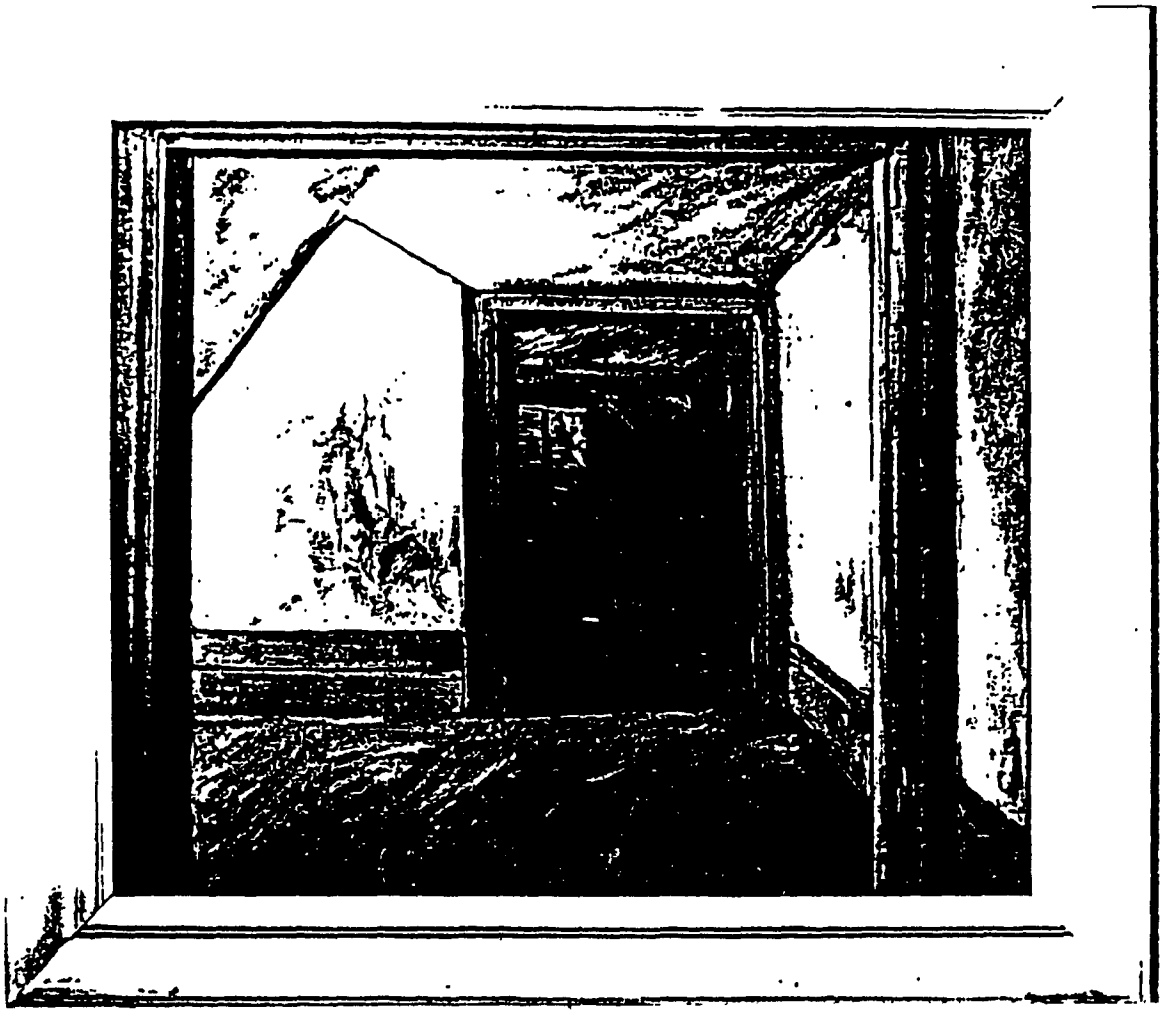

Fig. 58 Louis Muhlstock,
Haunted house, 1938,
oil on canvas,
61 x 76.8 cm,
London Regional Art Gallery.

Fig. 59 Louis Muhlstock,
Paranka, c. 1935,
charcoal on laid paper,
42.3 x 37.7 cm,
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Fig. 60 Louis Muhlstock,
Waiting for breakfast, c. 1935,
charcoal on paper,
38 x 49 cm.
collection of the artist.

Fig. 61 Louis Muhlstock,
Last Supper (at refuge for unemployed), c. 1935,
charcoal on paper,
35.5 x 62 cm
collection of the artist.

Fig. 62 Maurice Becker
Beware of Pickpockets
Published in The Masses, February 1913
(Reproduced in American Painting from the Armory Show to the Depression, Princeton: 1972, p. 31).

Fig. 63 Ernst Neumann,
Unemployed No. 6, 1933,
Lithograph,
19 x 18 cm,
(Reproduced in Jewish Painters and Modernity, p. 48).

Fig. 64 Louis Muhlstock,
Homeless - Fletcher's Field, Montreal c. 1932
Chinese brush on paper
Collection of the artist
(Reproduced in "They could split rock..." Norman Bethune His time & Legacy Ottawa: 1982, p.114).

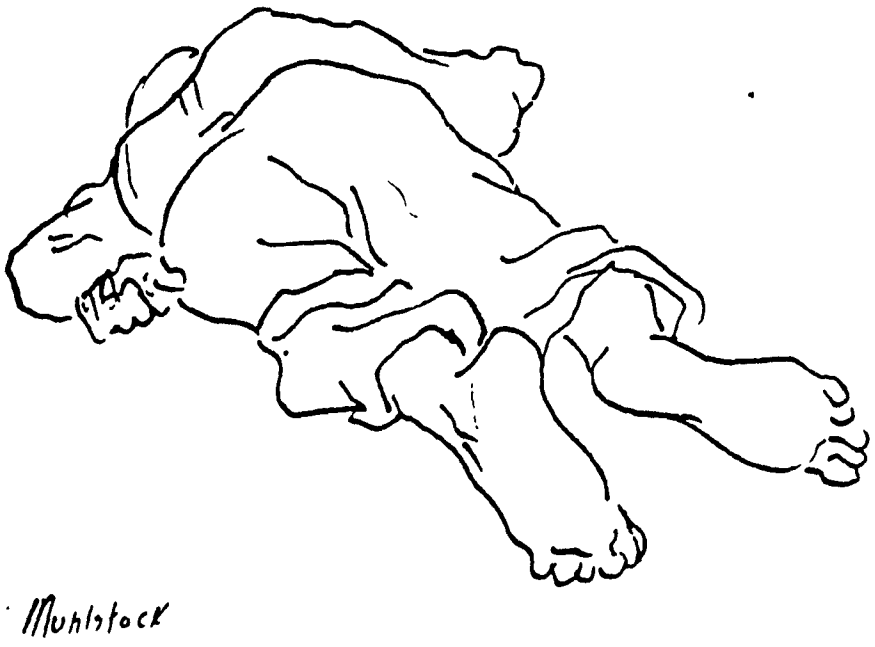

Fig. 65 Louis Muhlstock,
Sleeping figure, c. 1932-33
Chalk on paper
Collection of the artist.

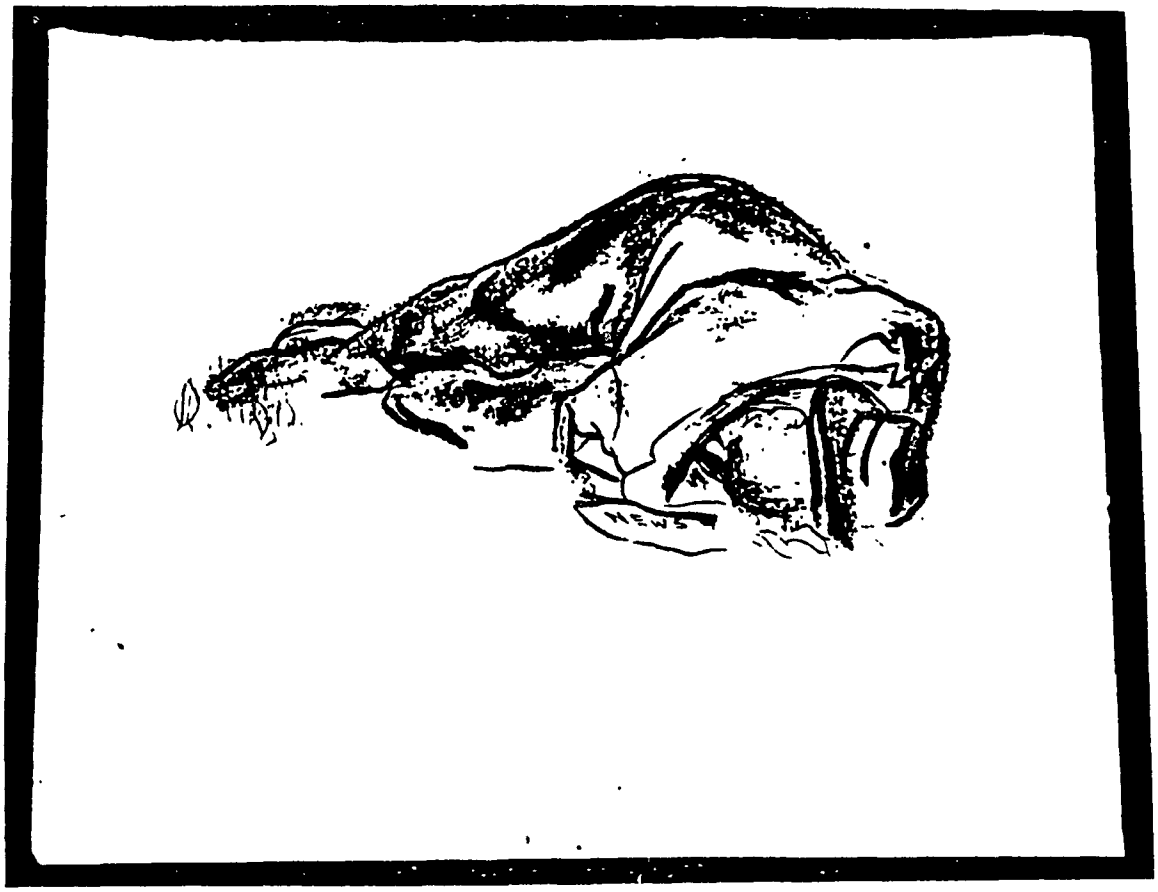

Fig. 66 Louis Muhlstock,
Sleeping figure with newspaper, c. 1932-33
Chinese brush and chalk on paper
Collection of the artist.

Fig. 67 Louis Muhlstock,
Sleeping figures, c. 1932-33
Chinese brush and wax on paper
Collection of the artist.

Fig. 68 Louis Muhlstock,
William O'Brien, unemployed, c. 1935,
charcoal and brown chalk on wove paper,
68 x 51 cm,
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Fig. 69 Louis Muhlstock,
Jos. Lavallée with bowl of soup, c. 1935,
oil on canvas,
54.9 x 45.7 cm,
collection of the artist.

Fig. 70 Louis Muhlstock
Jos. Lavallée, c. 1934,
oil on canvas,
size and present location unknown,
(Exhibited at Eaton's Gallery, Montreal,
October 1936, reproduced in La Presse,
October 10, 1936.)

Fig. 71 Raphael Soyer
HOW LONG SINCE YOU WROTE TO MOTHER?, 1934
oil on canvas,
(Reproduced in Les Réalismes 1919-1939, cat. No. 247,
Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1980).

Fig. 72 Sylvia Ary,
Poor people, c. 1943,
oil on canvas board,
49.5 x 39.5 cm,
collection of the artist,
(Reproduced in Jewish Painters and Modernity, p. 54).

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Artist's Files

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal.

Musée du Québec, Québec.

National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

Annex I

In the Studio (for Louis Muhlstock)

Balsam steams on the hot plate.
Good medicine is hereabouts.

On the walls hang Laurentian landscapes
And glimpses of an old Montreal that's as dead as Ernest Neumann.
Back alleys, still lifes and huge slivers of raw tree bark.

This is a wizard's den
With handcraft of Esquimo in soapstone,
Serpentine and walrus ivory tusk.

A Baffin native peers out of the pocket vertebra of a whale.
Immaculate and mathematical, the bleached skeleton
of a tide-beached fish reposes.
Mexican pebbles shaped and polished like goose eggs
of creamy white quartz glisten in water.

Lush indoor vegetation extends the backyard jungle from which
a Rousseau tiger could at any moment emerge.
Tiger and jungle are sealed out by glass.
Amid the inner green struts a hammered cock of the community
Arrogant weathervane from some demolished Quebec village church
Now replaced by plastic and modern grotesquerie.

In the high ceilinged room there is audible silence.
Outside trucks road, gear-growling taxis dodge.
Greek, Chinese, French, English and other ethnics raise the hubbub
of Rue St. Famille!

On Street of the Holy Family we're a far cry
from the Manger, the Magi, the Star and Mac the Shepherd.
But here one wise man presides, white haired,
full of quips, laughter and ancient jokes,
"In his anecdotage" to quote Abe Klein.

The artist with cake and wine relates to three friends,
one a newcomer.
To the new friend, "The time it took to paint this winter
landscape?
"O forty years and two hours.
And my fingers were cold all the time."

Leo Kennedy
in homage
Aug. 22/77

Annex II

List of drawings by Louis Muhlstock, with titles of articles in which they appeared (when relevant) and dates of publication.

CANADIAN FORUM

Vol. XV, no. 181, February 1936
pp. 16-17 Vieux canadien (a study of Jos Lavallée)
War! (three defiant teenagers)
Victor Sartori (a vagrant of Montreal)
Paranka

Vol. XVI. no. 184, May 1936
p. 15 Street Scene
Last Supper (at refuge for unemployed)

Vol. XVII, no. 202, November 1937
p. 282 Young Girl from slums

Vol. XVII, no. 203, December 1937
p. 229 Untitled (Victor Sartori), reproduced in an article by Eugene Forsey, "Quebec on the Road to Fascism", pp. 298-299.
p. 305 Untitled (Young boy with tuberculosis) reproduced in an article by Eric Wiseman "Bloody Instructions, Protestant Education in Quebec", pp. 303-306.

Vol. XVII, no. 205, February 1938
p. 381 Supper for two, Lino cut, reproduced in an article by Eric Wiseman "Little School House in the Red", pp. 379-381.

Vol. XIX, no. 225, October 1938
p. 219 William O'Brien, Esq., reproduced in an article by C.P. Wright "To Finance Padlock Appeals", pp. 215-220.

NEW FRONTIER

Vol. 1, no. 5, September 1936
p. 15 Two Drawings by Louis Muhlstock
Untitled (Three elderly women in conversation)
Untitled (Woman washing floor)

Vol. 1, no. 7, November 1936
p. 17 Two Drawings
Negro Children
Negro Worker

Annex III

Titles of paintings and list of exhibitions to which Louis Muhlstock participated from 1930 to 1950

1930

Paris, Grand Palais, Salon de la Société des artistes français, [mai].

Portrait de Mlle Simone Roz
Nature Morte.

Paris, Pavillon Français, Cité universitaire, [mai]. (Incomplete list)

Charcoal and oil sketches of fishermen from Brittany.

1931

Paris, Salon de la Société des artistes français, [mai]. (Incomplete list)

Paysage Haute-Savoie.

Paris, International Exhibition, Fondation Deutsch de la Meurthe, [n.d]. (Incomplete list)

Six landscapes.

Montreal, 52nd RCA Exhibition, AAM, [Nov. 19- Dec. 20].

204 Vue sur le Parc Monsouris, Paris [oil]
205 Boulevard Jourdan, Paris [oil]
414 Czecho-slovakian woman, [charcl]
415 Sketch, [charcl].

1932

Ottawa, Canadian Annual Exhibition, NGC, [Jan.].
204 Czecho-slovakian woman, [charcl]
205 Sketch, [charcl].

Montreal, Arts Club, (Victoria Street) [February].
(Incomplete list, about 40 oils and 4 charcl)
Back Yard Saint-Dominique Stret [oil]
La Zone under a Stormy Sky [oil]
Boulevard Jourdan, Paris [oil]
Effet du matin, Porte d'Orléans, Paris [oil]
After Rainfall Paris [oil]
Evening Study Mont-Rolland [oil]
Afternoon, Lac Brulé [oil]
Grey Morning, Lac Brulé [oil]
Boats in Harbour, France [charcl]
Study of an old man (Jos Lavallée) [charcl]
Study of an old man (Jos Lavallée) [charcl].

Toronto, Ontario Society of artists, AGT, [March].
118 Overlooking Park Monsouris, Paris [oil]
200 The Thinker, [charcoal].

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March 17 - April 17].
417 Study of a Head [charcl]
418 Patrick Butler [charcl]
419 One who suffers [charcl]

Toronto, Canadian National Exhibition, [Aug. 26 - Sept. 10].
746 Patrick Butler [charcl]
748 The Thinker [charcl]

Toronto, RCA Exhibition, AGT, [Nov. 4 - 30].
252 Frustation [charcl]
253 Mrs. Ida Massey [charcl]

1933

Montreal, Eaton Art Gallery, [February].
(Incomplete list)
Street in Gentilly, France [oil]
Concarneau Market [oil]
Boats in Harbour, Concarneau [oil]
Douarnenez Harbour [oil]
Rachel Street Market [oil]
Market scene [oil]
Quiet Lane [oil]
Rivière du Nord [oil]
Mountain Mist [oil]
October [oil]
And Summer L agers [oil]
St. Helen's Island [oil]
The Bathing Place, Shawbridge [oil]
Patrick Butler [charcl]
The Thinker [charcl]
Eugene Guilaroff [charcl]
The Poetess [charcl].

Montreal, 50th Spring Exh., AAM, [March 16 - April 16].
477 Marvin Duchow [charcl]

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, AGT, [May].
432 A Pious Old Jew [charcl]
433 An Old Jew [charcl]
434 Paranka [charcl]
435 A Yeminite Jew [charcl]

Montreal, Fine Arts Club Exhibition, Jacoby Studio [Nov.].
(Incomplete List, Drawings)

Montreal, RCA Exhibition, AAM, [Nov. 16- Dec. 17].
308 Indian Girl [drawing]
309 Indian Woman of Caughnawaga [drawing].

1934

Montreal, 51st Spring Exh., AAM, [April 19 - May 13].
459 War! [charcl]
460 Ukranian [drawing].

Toronto, Canadian National Exhibition, [Aug. 24 - Sept. 8].
1017 Waif [charcl]
1018 Derelict
1019 Study of a girl
1020 Study of a child.

Toronto, RCA Exh., AGT., [Nov. 2 - Dec. 3]
220 European Youth [charcl].

1935

Montreal, 52nd Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March 21 - April 14].

232 Coloured man.

Toronto, CNE, [Aug. 23 - Sept. 5].

951 European Youth [charcl]
952 Oriental Jew [charcl]
953 East-Side Girl [charcl].

Montreal, "Exhibition of Drawings by Louis Muhlstock", AAM, [Nov. 16-27].

1 H. Leivick
2 Little colored girl
3 Young East-side boy
4 Evelyn
5 Young Polish immigrant
6 Head
7 Study of colored women
8 Irene
9 Colored man
10 Portrait study
11 Fragment
12 Bill - Negro worker
13 Jerry
14 Little colored girl
15 Commérages
16 Salle Player, Paris
17 Red chalk nude
18 Sketches
19 Old Jewish woman
20 Mother and child
21 Group of old men
22 Mother and child
23 Worker at rest
24 Coming from market
25 Nude (study of back)
26 "Cabby" at prayer
27 Unemployed and child.
28 Three Brittany women
29 Brittany fishermen
30 Head (red chalk)
31 Nude (bending)
32 Woman Washing Floor
33 Sketch of nude
34 Conversation
35 Waiting for breakfast
36 Lino-cut
37 Head of Young girl
38 Man standing
39 Nude
40 Chalk drawing
41 Colored girl
42 Latour of Mont Rolland
43 Louise of Caughnawaga
44 Reclining nude
45 Colored girl
46 Colored girl
47 Colored girl asleep
48 Study of child
49 Victor Sartori
50 Derelict
51 Patrick Butler
52 Portrait d'un vieux canadien
53 War!
54 A young musician
55 Mrs. Regina Fish of London
56 The Thinker
57 Paranka
58 "
59 "
60 " profile
61 Study of a girl
62 Study (oriental jew)
63 Indian woman of Caughnawaga
64 Daniel Clarke
65 European youth
66 Last Supper (at refuge for unemployed).

Montreal, RCA Exhibition, AAM, [Nov. 21 - Dec. 22]

332 Young East-side girl [charcl]
333 Nude [charcl].

1936

Toronto, Canadian Group of Painters, AGT [Jan.].
133 Nude of Coloured girl
134 Study of Back
135 Study of young Coloured girl.

Montreal, 53rd Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March - April].
315 Winter [oil]
316 La Zone, Paris [oil]
555 Portrait [drawing].

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, AGT. [April].
237 Nude Negress [charcl & red chalk]
238 Nude [charcl]
239 Portrait d'un vieux canadien
240 George Webb.

Montreal, "Montréal dans l'art" Eaton Art Gallery, [May].
(Incomplete list)
Rue Napoléon.

Tororto, Canadian National Exhibition, [Aug. 28 - Sept. 12].
968 Negro Children
969 Portrait [charcl]
970 Nude [charcl].

Montreal, Eaton's Art Gallery, [October].
(Incomplete list)
Portrait of Jos Lavallée [oil]
Le chemin montant [oil]
Lane on Mount Royal [oil]
Still life with fruit & vegetable [oil]
Marché rue Rachel [oil]
Montreal Harbour
Parisian sketch.

Toronto, RCA Exhibition, AGT, [November].
150 Ste. Famille St. Mtl. [oil]
151 Back yard [oil].

1936/37

"Exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Painting", arranged by the National Gallery of Canada for circulation in the Southern Dominions of the British Empire.
Johannesburg, South Africa, [Sept 15, 1936 - Jan. 15 1937]
Australia's capital cities, [July - December 37].
870 Lane [oil].

1937

Toronto, Exhibition of Jewish Artists, Jewish Centre, Brunswick Ave. [April]. (No titles available)

Toronto, Picture Loan Society, [April].
(Charcoal Studies, incomplete list)
Confusional Psychosis
Sketch of roadmenders.

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, AGT, [April].
(Works on paper)
223 Coloured Girl
224 Three Brittany Women
225 Indian Woman
226 Young Negro Boy
227 Commerages
228 Woman Washing Floor
229 Brittany Fisherman.

Toronto, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, AGT, [April].
76 Landscape [wc]
77 Backyard [wc].

London, England, British Empire Overseas Exhibition, [May 8 - 29].
67 Ste. Famille St. Mtl. [oil].

Toronto, Canadian National Exhibition, [Aug. 27 - Sept. 11].
706 Negro Boy [drawing]
707 Sick Child [drawing]
708 Harbour Scene
709 Norwegian freighter [drawing].

Toronto, Canadian Group of Painters, AGT, [November].
Summer landscape [drawing].

Montreal, "Art Exhibition", Sun Life Building, [November].
(Incomplete list)
3 View from St. Helen's Island
Haunted House [oil]
Deserted house [oil].

Montreal, RCA Exhibition, AAM, [Nov. 18 - Dec. 17].
160 Mr. Isaac Levine [oil].

1938

Ottawa, Canadian Group of Painters, NGC, [February].
54 Summer Landscape.

Edinburg, Scotland, Royal Scottish Society of Painters in Water Colour", [Feb 4 - March 12]. (No titles)
216 Water - Colour
262 Water - Colour.

Montreal, 55th Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March 17 - April 10].
173 Nude [drawing].

Toronto, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, AGT, [April].
113 Boats at rest.

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, AGT, [April].
241 Three heads [sepia & charcl]
242 Negro boy [charcl]
243 Willie (Speedy) [charcl].

Toronto, Picture Loan Society, [May 2 to 14].
(Oils, watercolours & drawings, no titles).

Montreal, Group Exhibition, Eaton's Art Gallery, [August].
Windy Day, St. Helen's Island
Boat House, Montreal East.

Toronto, Canadian National Exhibition, [Aug. 26 - Sept. 10].
444 Evening, Filion, Quebec [oil]
445 Point St. Charles, Montreal [oil]
446 Autumn Afternoon, Filion [oil]
698 Three Heads [sepia & charcl]
699 Negro Boy [charcoal]
700 Willie [charcl].

Toronto, RAC Exhibition, AGT, [Nov. 18 - Dec. 18].
164 Mr. Isaac Levine [oil]

Montreal, "Aid to Spanish Democracy", Exhibition Sale, 5th Floor Gallery, Henry Morgan & Co. Ltd. [Dec. 15 -18] (No titles).

1939

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March 9 - April 2].
243 View from a window [oil]
423 Nude [sepia drawing].

Toronto, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, AGT, [April]. (Works on paper)
The Quarry
Summer Landscape
Head of Old French Canadian.

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, ACT, [April]
Nude # 1 [sepia & charcl]
Nude # 3 [sepia]
Country Philosopher [charcl]
Geraldine Dunbar [charcl].

Montreal, Summer Exhibition, AAM, [n.d.]
31 Night.

New York, New York World's Fair, (CSPWC) [June 10-July 31].
69 Head of an Old French Canadian
70 Boats at rest.

Gloucester, England, Exhibition of Water Colours by Canadian Artists, [June 10 - July 1]. (No titles).
32 Water Colour
36 Water Colour.

New York, New York World's Fair, (CGP), [Aug. 1 - Sept. 15].
44 The Rabbi (... Isaac Levine) [oil].

Toronto, Canadian National Exhibition, [Aug. 25 - Sept. 9].
153 Reflexions in a country mirror [oil]
154 Empty Rooms in a Basement [oil]
451 Drawing of Old Trees
452 Study of W. O'Brien [sepia & charcl]
453 Study of a Young Jewish Girl [sepia]
454 Drawing of a Nude.

New York, New York World's Fair, (CSGA), [Sept. 18 - Oct 31].
94 Paranka [charcl]
95 Nude no 1 [sepia & charcl]
96 Nude no 3 [sepia & charcl]
97 Three Heads [sepia & charcl].

Toronto, Picture Loan Society, Solo Exhibition, [Oct. 14-27]. (About 30 oils and some drawings, no titles).

Toronto, Canadian Group of Painters Exh., AGT, [November].
Woodlands Interior [oil].

1939 (cont'd)

Toronto, "Four Artists' Exhibition" (André Bieler, Henri Masson, Louis Muhlstock, Philip Surrey) AGT, [Oct. - Nov.].

Ste Famille St. [oil]
Sherbrooke St. [oil]
Goupil Lane [oil]
Lane off Durocher St. [oil]
Open Window [oil]
Leduc Lane [oil]
Convent and Brewery [oil]
Tree
Old Unemployed [oil]
Empty Rooms [oil]
Summer [oil]
Empty Room [oil]
Tiny [drawing]
Young Bull [drawing]
Calf [drawing].

Montreal, "Drawings by Louis Muhlstock" AAM, [December].

1 Tree on Mount Royal
2 Young Negress
3 Young Bull
4 Geraldine Dunbar
5 William O'Brien
6 Negro Girl (hands & head)
7 Calf
8 Three heads
9 Tree
10 Calf asleep
11 "Nude" (on back)
12 Country philosopher
13 Jamaican Woman
14 Negro nude boy resting
15 "Tiny"
16 "Sprinter"
17 Nude
18 Heifer
19 French Canadian Woman
20 Rocks
21 Chinese Brush Drawing
22 In the Gatineau Hills
23 Nude Sketch
24 Two cows
25 Old Quarry
26 Paranka
27 Cat & kittens
28 "Asleep"
29 Young Jewish Girl
30 Drawing of old trees
31 Reclining Nude
32 Tree in Lindenlea
33 Confusional Psychosis.

Montreal, Contemporary Arts Society, Stevens Art Gallery, [Dec. 16 - 23].

17 Goupil Lane [oil].

1940

Montreal, 57th Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March 20 - April 14].
215 Autumn Stormy Sky [w.c.]
216 Wet Autumn day
217 Empty Rooms [oil].

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, AGT, [April].
Seated Nude [sepia & charcl]
Reclining Nude [" "]
Nude resting on elbows [charcl]
Confusional Psychosis [charcl].

Ottawa, "Auction of Paintings, Canadian Committee on Refugees" NGC, [Oct. 10].
71 Tree in Garden [oil]
72 Boat House [w.c.]
73 Negro Girl [photographic print]
74 Unemployed [" " "].

Montreal, Arts Club, Victoria St. [Oct.].
(16 Paintings & Drawings, incomplete list)
Laurentian Night
Goupil Lane [oil]
Woodlands Interior
Empty room with door open
A Tadoussac Scene.

Montreal, Contemporary Arts Society, "Art of our Day in Canada", AAM, [Oct. 15 - Nov. 22].
End of Winter [oil]
On Mount Royal [oil]
Tadoussac Interior [oil]
Nude.

1941

New York, American British Art Center, [Jan. - Feb.].
38 Woodlands Interior.

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March 20 - April 13].
147 Plant in empty room [oil]
246 Girl at window [crayon drawing]
247 Nude with lowered head [crayon drawing].

Brooklyn, N. Y., "International Water Colour Biennial" Brooklyn Museum, [March 28 - May 11].
218 Autumn Sky
219 Old Quarry.

Toronto, Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, AGT, [april].
75 Harbour Sketch.

1941 (cont'd)

Toronto, Canadian Society of Graphic Artists, AGT, [April].
89 The homeless
90 The homeless
91 The homeless
92 Cow at rest
93 Cow at rest.

Québec, "Première exposition des Indépendants", Galerie municipale, [26 avril, 3 mai].
32 Fin d'hiver [oil]
33 Automne [oil].

Montreal, "Peinture moderne", Henry Morgan & Co. Ltd. [May.
29 Fin d'hiver
30 Automne.

Montreal, "Drawings, Prints, Sculpture" Contemporary Arts Society, Henry Morgan & Co. Ltd., [Dec. 1 -31].
44 Negress [drawing]
45 Nude [drawing]
46 Hindu [drawing]
47 Watercolour drawing
48 Cows [sepia].

1942

Toronto, Canadian Group of Painters, AGT, [February].
41 An Old Tree [oil]
42 Sunny Afternoon [oil].

Montreal, 59th Spring Exhibition, AAM, [April 1 - 31].
118 The Open Door [oil]
119 View from a window [oil].

Andover, Mass. "Contemporary Painting in Canada", Addison Gallery, [Sept. 18 - Nov. 8].
51 Fin d'hiver 1939 [oil]
52 The Homeless [crayon drawing].

Montreal, "Louis Muhlstock and Henry Eveleigh" Gallery XII, AAM, [November]. (Incomplète list, about 20 oils)
Intérieur de maison rurale
Rue St-Norbert
Couvent et Brasserie
Rue St-Urbain
Sous-bois dans la montagne
Plants dans une chambre vide
Sous-sol
Sunflowers
Reflexions dans un miroir de campagne
Maison hantée
Woodland Interior.

1942/43

CAS Travelling Exhibition, Montreal, AAM, [8-29 Nov. 42]
Ottawa, NGC, [Dec. 19, 42 - Jan. 14, 43]
Kingston, Queen's University Gallery, [Feb. 1-8 43]
Quebec, Galerie municipale, [April 12-? 43].
Back Entrance
Lane

1943

Ottawa, "Exhibition of work in Canadian War Plants by Fritz Brandtner and Louis Muhlstock" NGC, [July 17 - Aug. 15].

1 Two men drilling
2 A Riveter
3 A Chipper
4 Chipping with boiler cap
5 A Caulker (Le Grand Leo with light over shoulder)
6 Two welders in a tube
7 Jimmy Woods, Caulker and cutter
8 Cutting in a cement mixer
9 A Boiler Maker
10 Welding section of a tune (Welder standing)
11 Portrait study of a worker
12 Riveting a Yarrow Boiler
13 Steel plate cutter hard at work
14 Man swinging a sledge hammer
15 And old reliable worker
16 Welding section of a tube (Welder seated)
17 Welder working inside a tube
18 Young worker with celluloid mask
19 Quick sketch of a riveter
20 Welding inside a tube (Welder resting on elbow)

Montreal, CAS Exhibition, Dominion Gallery, [Nov. 13-24].
(Incomplete list)
The Welder.

1944

Winnipeg, War Industry Drawings by Louis Muhlstock [Feb.].
(Same subject matter as NGC show 1943)

New Haven, Conn. "Canadian Art 1760-1943", Yale University Gallery, [March 11 - April 16].
Fin d'hiver-1939.

Montreal, CAS Exhibition, Dominion Gallery, [Nov. 11-24].
(Incomplete list)
Path on Mount Royal [oil]
Summer landscape, St- Sauveur
Portrait
Welder.

1945

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March-April]
167 Welder at U.S.L. [pastel]
168 Welder at U.S.L. ["]

"The Development of Painting in Canada 1665-1945" Travelling Exhibition jointly arranged by the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Le Musée de la province de Québec, Québec; The Art Association of Montreal, Montreal; The Art Gallery of Toronto, Toronto. (The exhibition travelled ro all four co-operating institution).
193 Ste Famille (Wet Day) [oil].

Toronto, Contemporary Arts Society, Eaton's Art Gallery, [October]. (Incomplete list)
Street scenes
Red Portrait.

1946

Montreal, "Seventh Annual Exhibition", Contemporary Arts Society, AAM. [Feb. 2-14].
(Incomplete list, probably same paintings as above).

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March-April].
185 Basement wit. tailor's dummy [oil]
266 William O'Brien [drawing]
267 Nude [sepia drawing].

Montreal, Contemporary Arts Society, Dominion Gallery, [Nov. 16-30]. (Incomplete List)
Summer Morning, Temagami.

1947

Toronto, Contemporary Arts Society, Eaton's Art Gallery, [January] (Incomplete list)
Landscapes.

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March-April]
202 Autumn on Mount Royal [oil]
319 The janitor's child [drawing].

1948

Montreal, Contemporary Arts Society, AAM, [Feb 7-29].
(Incomplete list)
Early Spring
Tadoussac Landscape.

1948 (cont'd)

Montreal, "Exhibition of paintings and drawings by Louis Muhlstock" Royal Victoria College, organized by the Women's Union Art Committee of McGill University, [March 12-17]. (Incomplete list)

Laurentian Landscapes
City Scenes
Still life
Nude studies.

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM, [March-April].

34 At Ste Famille and Sherbrooke Streets [oil]
35 Eva, spring, 1947 [oil]
104 Reclining nude [charcl & conté crayon].

Québec, "Exposition/Exhibition, Franklin Arbuckle,r.c.a., Jean Dallaire, Jean-Charles Faucher, Louis Muhlstock, Maurice Raymond", Musée de la Province de Québec, [mai-juin]. (oil, unless otherwise specified)

55 Autumn on Mount Royal
56 Canadian Jungle, Val David
57 Trees, Rock and Moss, Isola
58 Empty Room with Plant
59 Path in the Woods, Val David, Que.
60 Pines and bed of pine needles
61 Eva, Spring
62 Lilac Still-life
63 Road to Isola, Val David, Que.
64 Welder on a scaffold
65 At Saint-Urbain and Sherbrooke Streets, Mtl
66 In the Sugar Bush, Summer Afternoon
67 Afternoon light on dry pines
68 Reclining Nude [dessin]
69 Nude [sepia]
70 Drawing of an unemployed, Wm. O'Brien [sepia]
71 At Ste-Famille and Sherbrooke Streets, Mtl (Coll. Maurice Chartré)
72 Doreen [dessin]
73 Morning light in the woods, Laurentians
74 DeBullion and Sherbrooke Streets, Mtl
74b Sous-bois (Coll. Musée de la province)
74c Mrs. Breen [d ssin] (Coll. Musée de la province)

Montreal, "Exhibition of Drawings & Paintings" (with Eric Goldberg), Gallery 12, AAM, [Dec. 4 - 19]. (Incomplete List)

Spring on Mount-Royal
View of a room
Head of an old man [drawing].

1949

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM [March-April]
69 Trees, rock and moss, Isola [oil]

1949/50

Calgary (Allied Art Centre); Edmonton (Museum of Art); Nelson B.C. (Civic Centre); Victoria (Arts Centre); Vancouver (Art Gallery); Kimberley B.C. (Public School).
Paintings and Drawings by Louis Muhlstock, Western Circuit Exhibition, NGC, [July 1949 - April 1950]. (Incomplete list, 16 paintings and 6 drawings)
Trees, Rocks and Moss, Isola, 1948
Path in the Laurentians, 1948
Looking into our Garden
Laurentian Landscape
On St. Dominique St., Montreal
Off Sherbrooke St. East
Empty Rooms
Welder on a Scaffold U.S.A. [sic]*
View from my window, Autumn
Laurentian Field Flowers
Reflection in a Country Mirror
Summer Morning, Temagami Ontario
William O'Brien, Unemployed [drawing]
Jamaican Woman [drawing].
Cows resting [drawing]
Homeless [drawing].

* U.S.Y. for United Ship Yards where Muhlstock sketched the workers during the war years.

1950

Montreal, Spring Exhibition, AAM. [March-April]
127 View from a Ste Famille Window [oil]

Toronto, Canadian Group of Painters, AGT, [n.d.]
65 Open Door of Third House, Groubert Lane, Mtl.

Toronto, RCA Exhibition, AGT [n.d.]
103 Eva, spring 1948 [oil]
104 Trees, rock and moss, Isola, 1947 [oil].