

Claude Langevin

Dramatist

« Step right up ladies and gentlemen and take your places for the greatest show on earth. You know that Québec is a land of untold riches. You know that even the most cloud covered and miserable looking land can produce incredible human warmth. And now, before the show begins, a warm round of applause for our author, Claude Langevin!»

On a sunny Sunday in the charming village of St-Adèle, I had the chance to meet Claude Langevin. I discovered a painter and a dramatist. His paintings are like theatre pieces that take great care to produce. Langevin has been a landscape painter for 30 years. During that time he has maintained a burning passion for one thing and one thing

only, his native soil. Each of his images shows a real and authentic glimpse of Québécois heritage and culture. His subject matter could be a place that has been lived in , abandoned or isolated. His houses, mountains and snow covered fields, and the people dressed in multihued clothes, all work together to give the places he paints a soul.

Because of the ability that winter provides to play with light and contrast, Langevin is particularly fond of painting winter scenes. At the same time, he likes to paint all four seasons, each of which allows him to produce well differentiated work. Langevin's style has been constant throughout his career, even as his mediums have changed. Until the beginning of the 1980s he used acrylics, the he switched to oils. During the process he never changed his technique. But one thing is certain, In spite of the fact that he has remained faithful to his picturesque countryside, his work evolved in one important way. He is happy to say that over the last ten years his work has become less monotonous.



C.Langevin "Vers Ste Émilie" 12x16 Dig.10363



C.Langevin "Ciel gris" 10x12 Dig.10360

When he started studying it became clear to him that he wanted to be a painter. It didn't come as a great surprise to his father who was familiar with the art world. His brother was also enamoured of painting. Claude's brother became a doctor, but he's also a good hand with a pencil. Like medicine, art appears to run in the family. In the end, Langevin is happy to have become what he has. In elementary school, Langevin drew landscapes. His teacher believed he was a dreamer. They ignored his talent.

After three years of hard work in the furniture store workshop, Langevin decided to "officially" become an artist. He started by opening an art gallery in a shopping mall. To attract customers he offered free coffee. At that time galleries were usually only seen on Sherbrooke Street in Montréal. Most people were surprised to see one in a shopping mall.

In his work as an artist, Langevin traveled the province, exploring each nook and cranny in search of inspiration. During all those years his greatest pleasure was meeting other painters working in the open air. They shared the same crazy enthusiasm for landscape painting in the rough and they worked in places like Charlevoix which features old country. During that time Langevin noticed that as opposed to landscapes made up of new country like the Rockies, older geographical landscapes seemed to call out

for soft colours. Now, with a smile on his lips, Langevin tells me that he has become wiser with time, a little like the men he met when he was younger, too young to understand them.

Claude Langevin may have settled down now but he works as hard as ever. With his work represented in some 20 galleries, he has to. Don't talk to him about artist's block, he doesn't suffer from it. According to Langevin, imagination and creativity come from work. Along with others in the field Langevin believes in 90% work and 10% talent. Langevin had had dreams and realized them. Travel is now beckoning. Greece, Italy, Spain may soon be offering him his next scenes to paint.



C.Langevin "Le départ" 8x10 Dig.10357

Impressively, these works come from an autodidact. His apprenticeship began with his cousin, who had a furniture store, where he applied faux fini finishes to reproduction furniture. In his early 20's he spent three years working day and night in the store's workshop. The skills came and the work bore fruit.

Oddly enough, only a few years earlier Langevin had been engaged in the study of medicine. At the time, he couldn't have done anything else, his father was a doctor and so was his brother. It was a time when families encouraged the next generation to stay in the family business. From a young age Langevin was destined, in the eyes of his family, for a successful career like his father's.