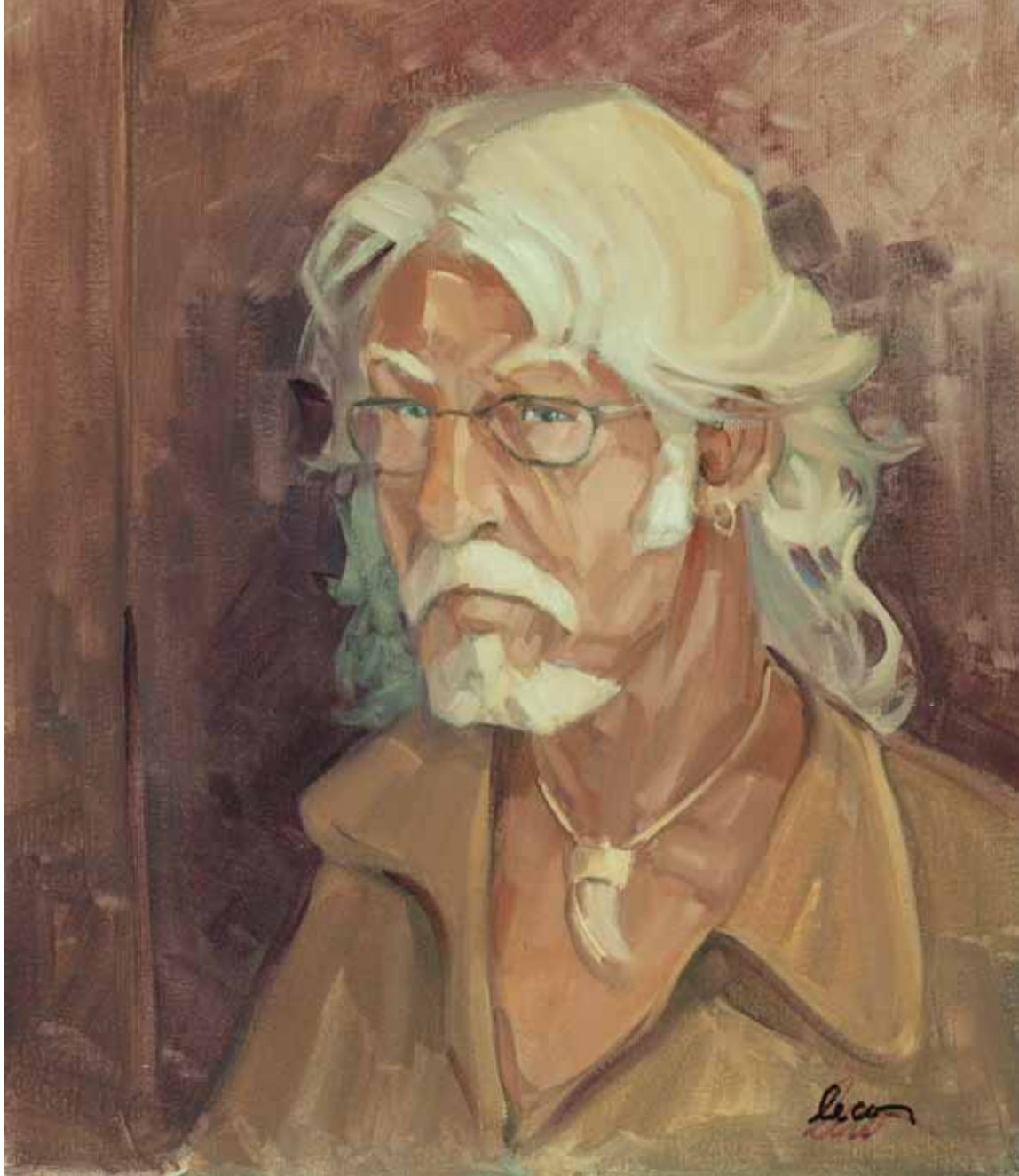


Artist to Collect

Tex Lecor







Sans Titre, 14" x 12"

Paul Tex Lecor A Living Legend

written by Debra Usher

photography by Yves Sauvageau

Being Tex

Paul 'Tex' Lecor is a living legend. If you are not familiar with the name, this story will help you understand and come to know an unusual and gifted man who has always been larger than life.

I met him over twenty-five years ago in Calgary, Alberta at Masters Gallery on 17th Avenue. Rod Green, the owner, graciously gave me one of

Tex Lecor's books, Panorama, because he knew I would not be able to buy a painting that day. Even back then too many people knew of the show and red 'SOLD' dots were on most of the paintings.

When Tex walked in the room the air moved with him and people stopped and paid attention. His smile was infectious; his handshake strong and familiar. It struck me then without even knowing him that this was a man who lived life well and truly understood the meaning of a road well travelled. His life was, and today continues to



Le Chevrolet, St. Michel, 20" x 24"



Narcisse Poirier, 24" x 20"



Grande Rivere, 20" x 24"



Retour Au Quai, 12" x 16"

be, a unique and special adventure.

Although his painting style has changed a bit his sense of capturing a moment in time that might be missed by most of us is still a predominant feature in his paintings.

Paul 'Tex' Lecor has lived a life that most people starting out today could not recreate. Things were different back then, there was a belief that anything was possible. Today a lot of the magic in life is missing and without that sense of adventure it is hard to replicate the genius of Tex Lecor. A master storyteller, his paintings capture humour,



Et Tarzan Est Heureux, 20" x 24"

love and wandering the countryside. All this is illuminated on canvas in luscious colour and seeing the images makes us want to know more.

Born June 10, 1933 in St-Michel-de-Wentworth, in the Laurentian Mountains, Paul 'Tex' Lecor is a household name in Quebec. His career has spanned over six decades and the freedom to paint whatever he wanted has always been the path he chose. Freedom seems to have been integral to who and what he is.

Tex Lecor paints the inner strength reflected in the people of the country he loves. He takes everyday images of individuals and captures the soul of the country and the humour in their life, and brush stroke by brush stroke makes them come alive in the scene.

The strength of his images comes from his deep love of both Quebec and Canada and the people who pursue the rural farming and fishing way of life – people who are still searching for freedom and the right to live as they choose. Tex listens and understands these people and gives them a voice in his paintings.

At an age when most men seek rest and tranquility, something still pushes this talented artist to seek a muse that never fails to find him. Even though he occupies a larger than life



Le Musée, St. Joseph, 12" x 16"

persona, this character never takes precedence over the painter.

Although Tex's life has been free and at times even carefree one must not confuse this with his painting skill. Tex Lecor's images are a reflection of his imagination and sense of humour as well as the countryside and people who work there. But for all the wild and carefree imagery, he is an artist in full possession of his craft and of techniques and luminosity learned over generations. In the dance of colours and the stroke of his brush one can find painting lessons that would not pale in comparison to the old masters.

The scenes of everyday life in Tex Lecor's paintings are always new and fresh. He never falls into a comfortable rut by recreating the same time and place. Each new batch of paintings contains both surprises and familiar friends. His work glows with spontaneity and freedom. In a field that is sometimes suspicious of individuals who achieve greatness in more than one artistic endeavour, he has suffered his share of cynicism from certain people in the art world. Well known in Quebec as a singer songwriter and humourist, he has been, for some, an easy target.

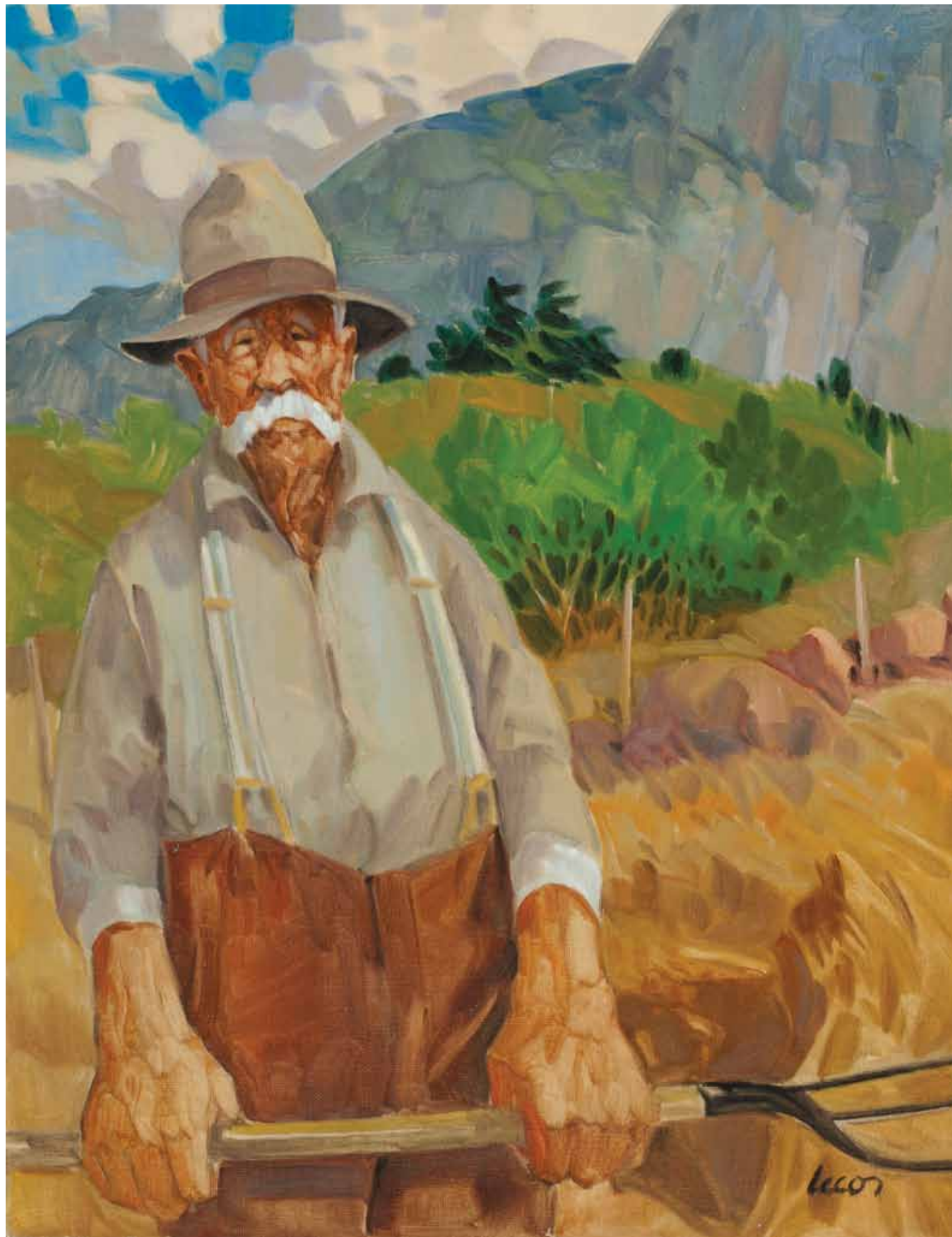
However he was a painter from the start and his reputation has grown steadily over the years

with a growing number of collectors waiting for the next Tex Lecor show. There will always be critics who fail to understand that sometimes it really is as simple as it looks. His work is simple in its heartfelt love of the subject matter and complicated in the skill it takes to portray these images on the canvas.

For over thirty years Paul 'Tex' Lecor has been a fixture in Canada's greatest art galleries and he is present in some of the country's largest art collections. His association with Multi Art and his friendship with Denis Beauchamp served to



Les Ramasseuses, 11" x 14"



Victor Tremble, 20" x 16"



L'Intrus, 12" x 16"

solidify a reputation of excellence for both parties.

Whether he is painting people or landscapes, Paul 'Tex' Lecor's humanism shows and his love of life and appetite for beauty are apparent. When he paints, the setting is very important because it places each object and person in the right place and the right moment in time. The painting becomes a story and the viewer becomes engaged. Like a fireside chat the paintings become familiar friends. The audience becomes part of the story and the door is open to the world that Paul 'Tex' Lecor creates.

Tex is also a master of distorting the story and his subject matter to render it more real. He is a master of caricature and uses that and symbolism to give a perspective far more clear and vivid than a photograph.

Through his narrative painting we are led down the Saint Lawrence River and through the valleys and seaside towns along the "road that walks." He shows us the beauty and the faults in both the scenes and the people in them, letting us find joy and humour in the art of being human.

Paul 'Tex' Lecor is a delightful individual who continues to lead an adventurous life with a smile on his lips and a look in his eye that says he is just looking for the next adventure.



Paul Tex Lecor,
photographed by Natalie Beauchamp of Multi-Art



Les Éboulements, 12" x 16"

It Started Early

At an early age, Tex Lecor surprised those around him with his precocious observations and creativity. To the amusement of his fellow students, his humorous illustrations of children's stories made him a popular friend. His home environment provided much of the inspiration for the awakening of his early creativity. Tex's father was a painter born in Brittany and gave his son a love for the sea, as well as guiding his artistic apprenticeship. His studio was a magical place that helped fuel Tex's endeavours.

When he reached adolescence, Tex studied for over six years with both gifted and knowledgeable painters. He also studied advertising, in case his painting career failed.

In 1956, he began his painting career by renting a small apartment and converting it into a studio. Inspired by the Bohemian lifestyle and picturesque character of the neighbourhood, the young artist got down to work. It was an important time in Montreal and there were painters and sculptors of world renowned fame in his neighbourhood. He was never lacking in friends or colleagues to share stories with and learn new techniques.

It wasn't long before the young artist began to realize it was going to be tough making a living from his paintings. Even though his studio was

open to the public, sales were slim.

A Montreal businessman by the name of Alex Goldstein practically kept him alive for awhile as he would buy all Tex's paintings each month. This money was spent in a few days and insecurity once again engulfed him. To paint 20 canvases and prepare a gallery exhibition was simply unthinkable. His painting supplies alone cost him a small fortune.

He moved in 1960 to a space above a restaurant and bar that was frequented by artists and musicians. Tex possessed a musical ear and started to sing local songs accompanying himself on the guitar. He had a very agreeable voice and the art of a storyteller and people loved



La Véture À Patates, 12" x 16"



La Brume Se Lève, 16" x 20"

to come every night and hear him sing and tell tales. He considered turning to his other training in advertising but the thought of regular office hours and being told what to do was not a road he wished to pursue. For that reason music was a better choice.

To earn extra money he once again metamorphosed, this time into the captain of a freighter that went down the Gaspesian coast. He did this each summer until 1967. He adored this country and began to paint the colourful life in the small villages.

He was also having great success with music – it seemed the public appreciated the satirical content of his songs. An acerbic comic, he was

anti-everything: anti-clerical, anti-politics, anti-social, anti-military. He became the darling of the cafes and bistros of Montreal.

By the time Expo 67 opened, Tex Lecor had made his reputation as a singer and performer. He had become an important star. In 1970, Tele-Metropole engaged him for the television program "Sous mon toit". Its success was immediate and ran until 1976. He also worked as an announcer, transforming the commercial message with his mocking style into a kind of instant sketch, much to the enjoyment of the audience. Money was finally starting to come in.

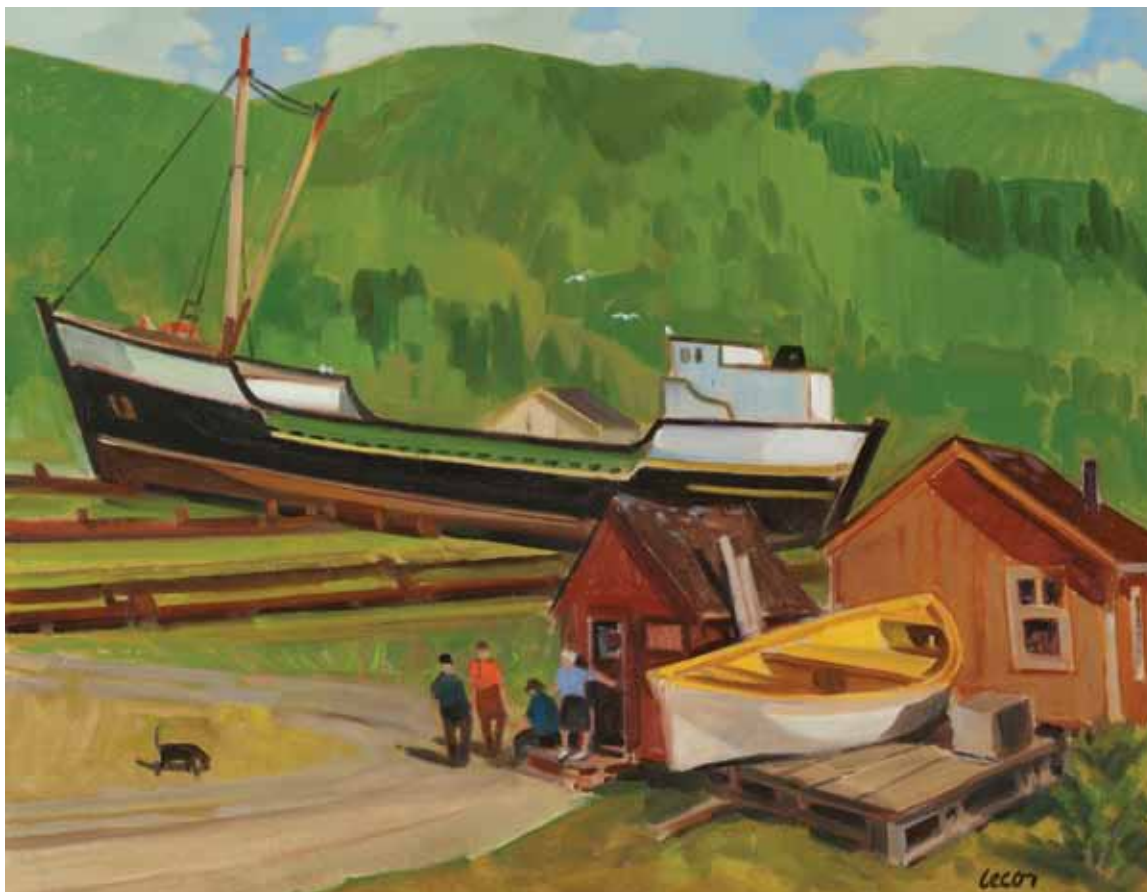
Return To Painting

Success and fame did not turn his head. In 1970, Tex returned to painting full time. His financial situation was greatly improved; he married and moved into a beautiful studio in Montreal. One year before, the song *le Frigidaire*, which he had bought the rights to and interpreted, had become a hit on radio and television. He also made it into a record. Translated into four languages, this amusing song enjoyed a huge success in Germany, Italy, Spain and England.

In 1972, following two years of immense productivity thanks to the time he now had to devote to painting, Tex Lecor met Denis



La Conference, 12" x 16"



La Jean Yvan, 16" x 20"

Beauchamp, owner of an art gallery in Laval who proposed to take over the sale of his paintings. The artist accepted. Four years later, he held his first exhibition at the Galerie des Peintres du Quebec in Montreal.

Little by little, he abandoned commercial announcing. He now reserved his cheeky humour for the *Insolences d'un telephone*, a program which caught its "victims" unaware, in addition to the weekly *Festival de l'humour* and an annual get-together with the French comedians in Paris.

Perfecting His Craft

At first Tex had adopted the painting style of Marc-Aurele Fortin (1888-1970) – the technique of applying a background of black, blue or red to the canvas and working the subject over this. It was a labourious technique that obliged him to use the background for creating a contrast with the colours of the painting.

By applying brilliant tones against a black background, as well as lighter tones, even white, on a blue or red background, the result was almost magical. Although he was not yet working with the stunning palette he would have 10 years later. Tex Lecor continued to perfect his

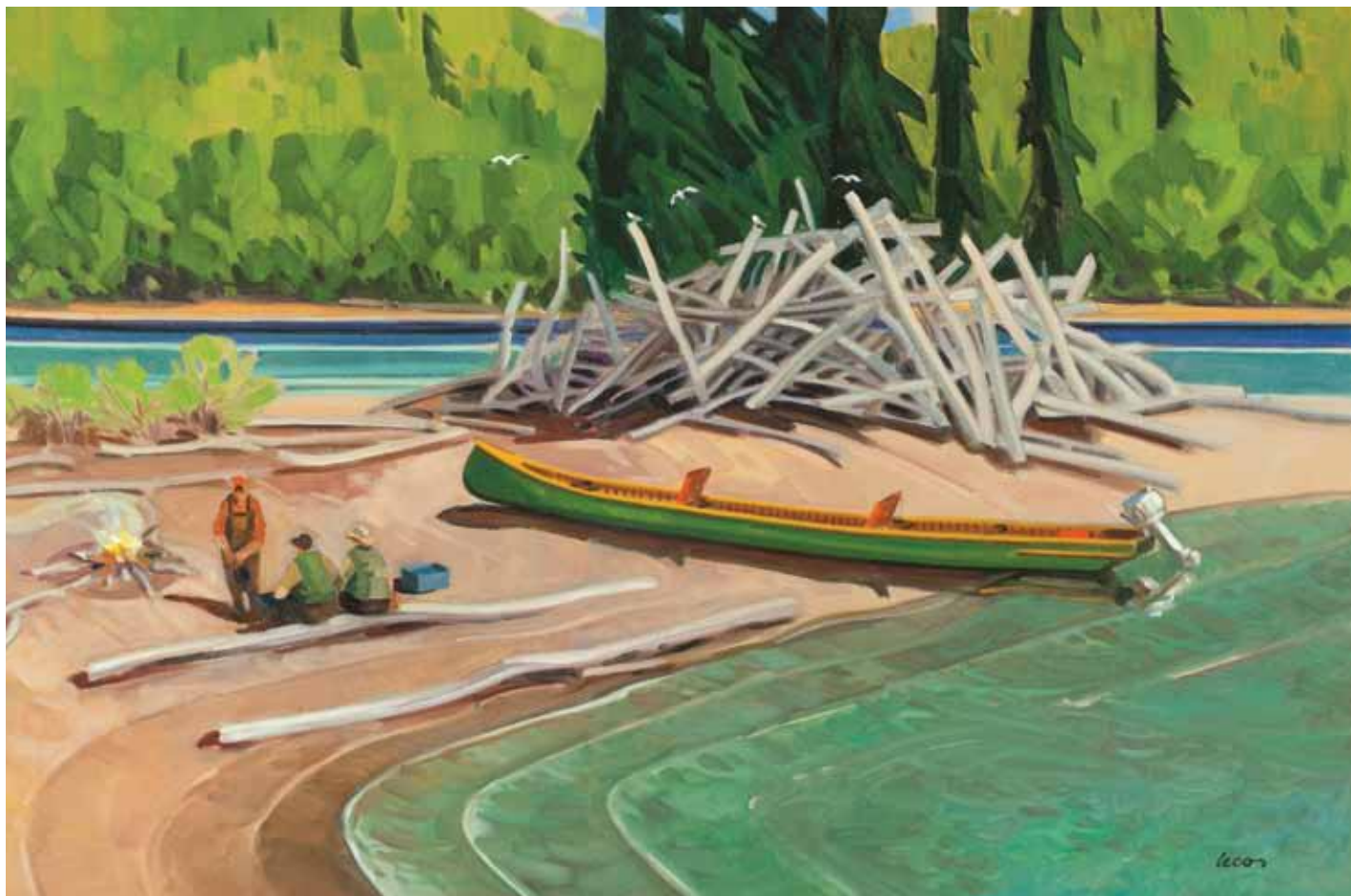
technique. It was particularly evident in his group scenes which he executed both outdoors and in the studio.

Thus evolved his excellent sense of composition in which the smallest details were apparent in his grand landscapes and rural country scenes. His dynamism and skill were present, but his palette did not yet blaze. His study into luminosity evolved slowly.

It arrived during his early travels in Quebec. Since 1970, he had owned a single-engine Stinson airplane which he piloted himself and flew regularly to Schefferville, Fort Chimo, Frobisher Bay. Every year he visited his Indian and Inuit friends to hunt and fish with them. He also painted outdoors, including portraits. Throughout the years, his observations became keen as he developed a new way of seeing, feeling and expressing himself. These were only the harbingers of the brilliant colourist he would eventually become.

The ability of Tex Lecor to use symbols and signs permits him not only to express his personal rebellion but to perfect his technique and master the art of composition as well. If his tones did not yet possess the brilliance of his later paintings,

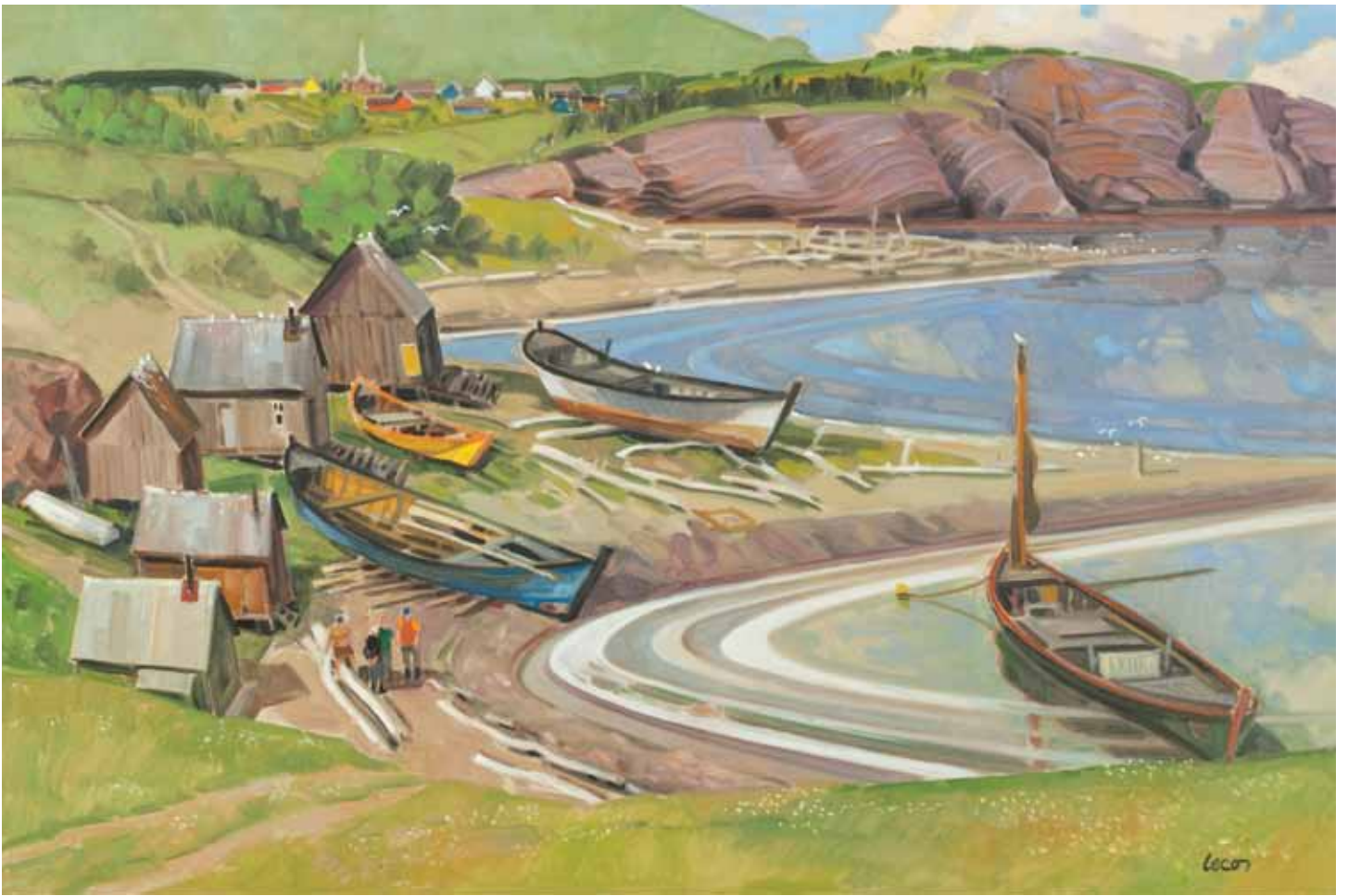
La Pointe De Sable, Cascapédia, 16" x 20"



L'Intrus, 12" x 16"



Petite Anse, 24" x 36"



La Mort De L'Acalmie, 24" x 36"





St. Joseph De La Rive, 16" x 20"

distinguishing him as a premier colourist, they, nonetheless, reveal a subtle harmony which provides the necessary balance to the painting. A perfect drawing supports the work of this artist. The paint is rich and generous; the brush stroke is solid and passionate.

Tex Lecor's technique had begun to change. The tones of his palette were ablaze with a new fire and his manner of applying colour was suppler. A brown juice was replacing the thick layer of paint which until now had served as the foundation for the colour. Acrylic, which is water based, held better on this light background.

His talent had become more refined and at the beginning of the 1980's, Tex Lecor passed out of the shadows and into the light. His manner of spreading colour which had previously been tight, repeated strokes, now become larger and more fluid. The paint flowed across the canvas. His stroke had become solid and proud and brilliant tones replaced the somber tonality of his earlier work.

Tex Lecor Today

Today Tex Lecor paints only what he likes and he knows how to vary his subjects at will. His art is readable and he idealizes reality. The sculptural

characters of his landscapes, group scenes or figures are intensified by the strength of the drawing and the true luminosity that inhabits it.

In Tex Lecor's painting the viewer finds himself bound to the artist by the imagery and story on the canvas. His mocking style shines forth brilliantly. Tex Lecor's canvases showcase the love he feels for the sea and the people around him. His images tell the story of life in the village and on the farm, reflecting a style of life many of us will never see. And so, we are left to view this world through the window that Tex has created for us with his masterful vision and deft brush strokes.

Paul 'Tex' Lecor is a true master and collectors the world over are proud to own works by this unique artist. What heights the work of this giant will reach in the future are hard to forecast. Clearer is the fact that his production of the last few years has shown huge leaps in the evolution of a style that is always fresh and unique.

To those who know him personally he is a rare individual and you can truly say one thing about Paul 'Tex' Lecor – he lives life out loud and in full colour.

To see his work go to www.multi-art.net or visit www.balcondart.com or call 1.866.466.8920.