

couleurs du u bec... inquant Deux peintre

JACQUES POIRIER I.A.F.

Son of a railroad man who could draw beautifully and of a music-teacher mother, Jacques Poirier, the fourth of seven children, and a childhood filled with tenderness, happiness and beauty. *"..I would sit on my father's knees and he would tell us picture stories...well, he made up comic strip stories. For me, that's something marvellous I remember from my childhood..."* Naturally peaceful and sensitive, little Jacques was very curious, wanted to know everything, to be acquainted with everything." Excessively sensitive, re-resented the inflexibility of his teachers and sometimes reacted negatively to it. "Beginning in the fourth grade, I was the kid who was always drawing pictures in his copy books...that's when they bugged me a bit..." One of his uncles who was a priest offered to pay for Jacques' studies if he went into the priesthood, which was little to his liking: however, he kept his feelings quiet and began his classical studies. The surge to create was born in him every early. *"If we wanted a toy – we had very few- we made it ourselves from a piece of wood or a broken off pencil my father would give me. I believe I was able to satisfy my creative urge that way."* He didn't particularly intend to go into teaching but, under the influence of his teachers, studied pedagogy at the University of Sherbrooke and of Montreal. He taught in the high school at L'Achigan where, in addition to teaching, he directed all the cultural activities at the school. *"Drawings for the school paper, the theatre, the backdrops, I couldn't fight it, if there was anything going on in that field... I offered to do the work..."* He decided to return to his studies and took arts at the university de Montreal. "I stayed there at least seven years... oh; I took various subjects- art, history, English Literature... biology, in fact anything I found interesting. Then at Sherbrooke university, I took a course in...*information media, that left me a lot of time*

to paint and, *to pay for my studies, I did wedding photographs.*” Jacques Poirier was already painting at the age of fifteen when he sold his small camera to buy his first paint box. He has never stopped working with a paintbrush since. “One of my sisters painted rather well when I began.. *I would never let her show me how... I didn't want to paint like she did... I wanted to do it my own way.*” In 1967 Jacques Poirier prepared an exhibition. All his paintings were ready, forty or so, then... utter catastrophe: a fire broke out in the house. “I came out with only my *paint-stained jeans, the ones I work to work, that's all I managed to save.* I lost all my paintings, everything, my photo equipment, everything. A large part of my life was wiped out...that was the *hardest blow I've ever suffered.*” In the following years, he was often to burn paintings. “*By the cartload*” as he says, because he wasn't happy with them. “*I would do a painting and really like it, but two days later, I seemed outdated, I couldn't stand looking at it any more...oh I was very hard on myself... and I'm not sorry I was.*” Jacques Poirier attaches a lot of importance to friendship, which he sees as a two-way street – “*when someone shows me friendship, I return the feeling... in spades*” Asked for a definition of an artist, he'll more than likely answer: “*An artist is pretty much like a tightrope walker... working without a net. You can fall any minute and hurt yourself badly. You're allowed to falter, even fall and grab your tightrope but you have to get back up... Because if you fall all the way.. You're not sure of ever being able to get back up... You could be hurt so badly that you would never recover*” Jacques Poirier is simplicity itself! As nice a guy as you'll ever meet, always smiling with eyes that seem to say: “Welcome to my home... warm yourself by the fireplace.”

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