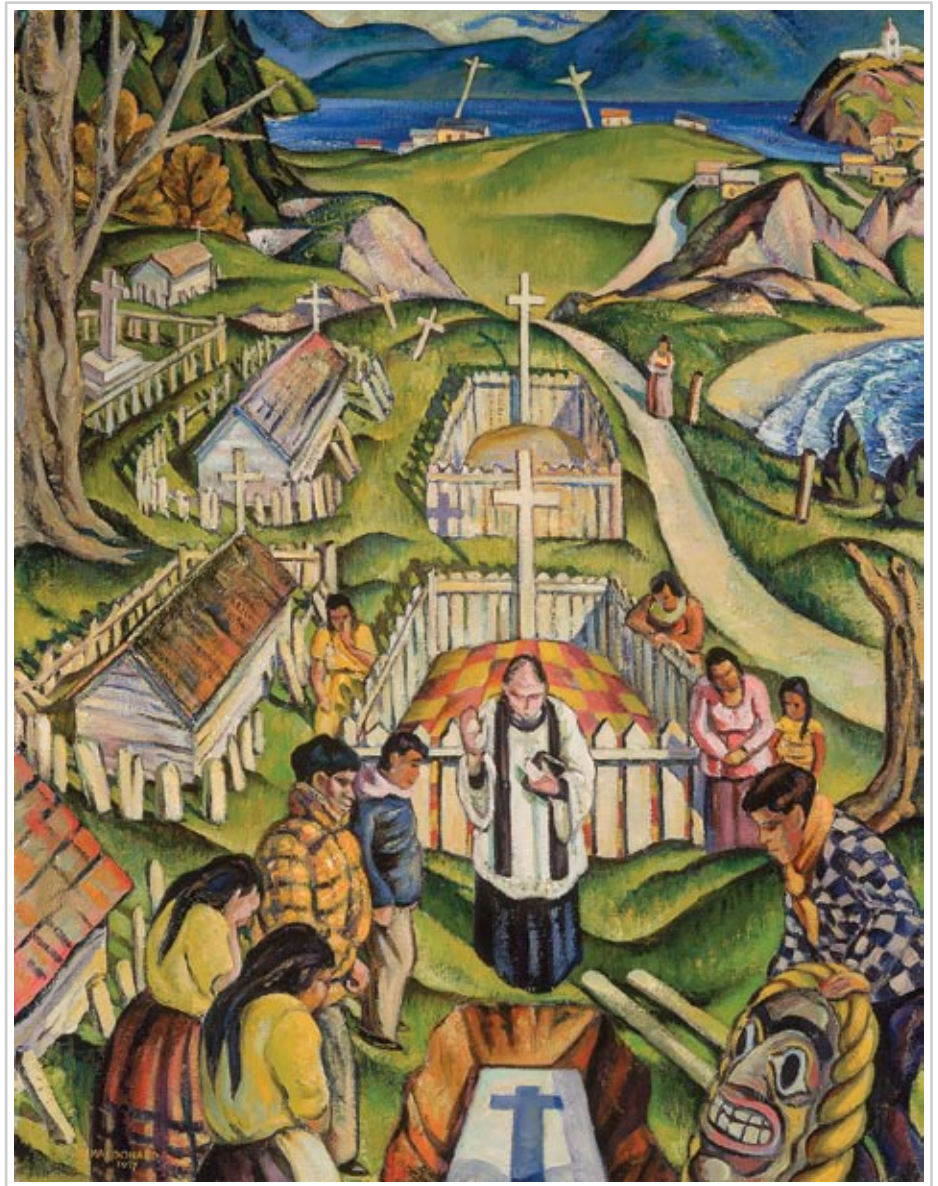


Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

oil on canvas
91.9 cm x 71.8 cm

Collection of the Vancouver Art
Gallery, Founders' Fund
VAG 38.1



Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Image source: Joyce Zemans. *Jock Macdonald: The Inner Landscape*. Toronto: Art Gallery of Toronto, 1981.

Artist's Biography

Nationality: Scottish-born Canadian

Born: 1897-05-31, Thurso, Scotland

Died: 1960-12-03

A graduate of the Edinburgh College of Art, Macdonald emigrated to Canada in 1927 to become head of design and instructor in commercial advertising at the newly-established Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (now the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design). Inspired by the natural environment, Macdonald and his colleague Frederick Varley, head of drawing, painting, and composition, spent much of their free time on weekends and summer vacations on sketching and camping trips in the Garibaldi Mountains. Macdonald's rendering of the familiar Table Mountain, Black Tusk, Castel Towers, and Howe Sound are early representative pieces included in the exhibition along with other well-known canvasses such as *Lytton Church, B.C.*, in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada and *Indian Burial, Nootka*, in the collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

When the Depression forced severe salary cuts in the art school budget, Macdonald and Varley decided to found the B.C. College of Art, in premises on Georgia Street later occupied by Maynards Auctioneers. It quickly established a reputation as a centre of new and stimulating ideas in a variety of art forms including music, dance and photography as well as the visual arts. The school operated for two years before declaring bankruptcy, but its influence on the local cultural community of the period is now legendary.

Macdonald himself was infected by the exciting ideas fostered at the College and he began experiments in abstraction. He soon found landscape painting in the tradition of his Group of Seven contemporaries too confining whereas abstraction opened up new vistas of expressive freedom.

During his twenty years in B.C. Macdonald was active as artist, teacher, exhibitor, and arts organizer. He was a member of the B.C. Society of Artists, with whom he exhibited regularly, a charter member of the Federation of Canadian Artists and a member of the Vancouver Art Gallery Council for eleven years, serving on its judging, exhibitions and hanging committees, and implementing its popular Saturday morning classes.

The Vancouver Art Gallery accorded Macdonald his first one man show in May 1941 and five years later mounted a solo exhibition, of his "automatic" watercolours.

Macdonald moved to Toronto in 1947 and became instructor of painting at the Ontario College of Art. In 1953 he was instrumental in the founding of Painters Eleven, a group dedicated to the promotion of abstract art.

Artistic Context

Nationality: Scottish-born Canadian

Training: Edinburgh College of Art; Studied under Charles Paine and John Platt

Group: Painters Eleven; B.C. Society of Artists; Canadian Group of Painters; Royal Canadian Academy; Ontario Society of Artists; 20th century

Peers: Frederick Varley; Lawren Harris; Jack Bush; William Ronald

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Provenance: purchased from the artist by the Founders in 1938

Subject: landscape; North Westcoast First Nations motifs; transcendentalism

Other Works in the Vancouver Art Gallery Collection

Jock Macdonald
Landscape Sketch, 1934
oil on wood panel
McLean Foundation Fund
VAG 64.15

Jock Macdonald
Indian Salmon Rack - Fraser Canyon B.C., 1931
linocut on paper
Gift of Harry Hood Estate
VAG 77.51

Jock Macdonald
Indian Salmon Rack - Fraser Canyon B.C., 1931
linocut on paper
Gift of Harry Hood Estate
VAG 77.52

Jock Macdonald
Mountains, 1933
pen and ink on paper
Gift of Harry Hood Estate
VAG 77.53

Jock Macdonald
Mountains, 1933
pen and ink on beaver bond paper
Gift of the Harry Hood Estate
VAG 77.54

Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial at Nootka, 1935
black ink and pencil on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 86.94

Jock Macdonald
Graveyard of the Pacific, 1935
oil on board
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 89.14 a

Jock Macdonald
Mt. Kitchener and Glacier, Columbia Icefields, Alberta; Mt. Kitchener & Glacier, Columbia Icefields Alberta, 1941
oil on wood panel
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 89.27

Jock Macdonald
Peaks at 10 A.M. - Near Banff, Alberta, 1953
oil on canvasboard
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 90.10

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Jock Macdonald
Old Trees, Chekamus Canyon, 1929
ink on wove paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 90.11

Jock Macdonald
Skyscrapers, 1929
ink on wove paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 90.31.1

Jock Macdonald
The Black Quartet; The Black Quartette, 1946
ink and watercolour on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 90.31.2

Jock Macdonald
B.C. Indian Village, 1943
gouache, ink and pencil on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 91.36

Jock Macdonald
Footsteps in the Sand, 1946
watercolour and india ink on wove paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 92.41.2

Jock Macdonald
Castle Towers - Garibaldi Park B.C., 1943
oil on canvas
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 93.36

Jock Macdonald
Red Bastion, 1957
oil and Lucite 44 on hardboard
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 93.43

Jock Macdonald
Fall (Modality 16), 1937
oil on canvas
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 93.71

Jock Macdonald
Bird Romance, 1946
ink and watercolour on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 94.44

Jock Macdonald
Drying Herring Roe, Friendly Cove, 1936
oil on panel
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 95.17

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Jock Macdonald
Pine Tree, Indian Lake, Nootka, B.C., 1936
ink on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 98.6

Jock Macdonald
Nootka Lighthouse, Nootka B.C., 1936
watercolour
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund with the financial support of the
Department of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property
Export and Import Act
VAG 98.8

Jock Macdonald
Fall Sunlight, 1957
oil on canvasboard
Gift of Charles W. Humphries
VAG 99.28.1

Jock Macdonald
Forest Glimmer, 1957
oil on canvasboard
Gift of Charles W. Humphries
VAG 99.28.2

Jock Macdonald
Playtime, 1936
watercolour on paper
VAG 99.29.1

Jock Macdonald
Untitled, 1945
watercolour on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.2

Jock Macdonald
Untitled, 1945
watercolour and ink on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.3

Jock Macdonald
Untitled (Automatic), 1946
watercolour and ink on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.4

Jock Macdonald
Untitled ("Barbara and Jock"), c.1952
watercolour and ink on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.5

Jock Macdonald
Untitled (Santa Claus), 1956
watercolour and ink on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.6

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Jock Macdonald
Untitled (Street Scene), c.1957
ink, pastel and watercolour on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.7

Jock Macdonald
Untitled; Untitled (Lighted Windows at Christmas), 1958
watercolour, ink on paper
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 99.29.8

Jock Macdonald
Bald Hill, (near Rutland) B.C., 1944
oil on canvas board
Vancouver Art Gallery Acquisition Fund
VAG 2000.44

Jock Macdonald
The Black Tusk, Garibaldi Park, B.C., 1932
oil on canvas
Gift of Michael Audain and Yoshiko Karasawa
VAG 2004.24.1

Jock Macdonald
Autumn Orange, 1956
oil on canvas
Purchased with the assistance of a Movable Cultural Property grant accorded by the Minister of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act/Acheté avec l'aide d'une subvention des Biens culturels mobiliers accordée par la ministre du Patrimoine canadien en vertu de la Loi sur l'exportation et l'importation de biens culturels
VAG 2005.1.1

Jock Macdonald
Memory of Music, 1959
oil on canvas board
Purchased with the assistance of a Movable Cultural Property grant accorded by the Minister of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act/Acheté avec l'aide d'une subvention des Biens culturels mobiliers accordée par la ministre du Patrimoine canadien en vertu de la Loi sur l'exportation et l'importation de biens culturels
VAG 2005.1.2

Jock Macdonald
Untitled, 1960
oil on canvas
Purchased with the assistance of a Movable Cultural Property grant accorded by the Minister of Canadian Heritage under the terms of the Cultural Property Export and Import Act/Acheté avec l'aide d'une subvention des Biens culturels mobiliers accordée par la ministre du Patrimoine canadien en vertu de la Loi sur l'exportation et l'importation de biens culturels
VAG 2005.1.3

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Bibliography

This Place: Works from the Collection

Internal Publication

[transcription]

This Place works from the collection

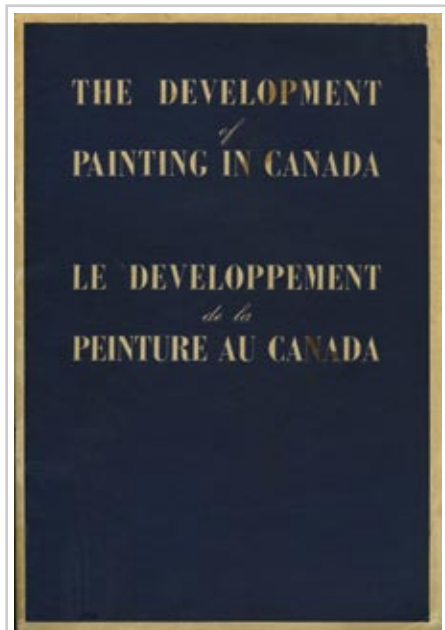
This exhibition presents more than 90 significant works from the permanent collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, organized into three thematic groupings: the land, indigenous cultures and the self as place. The exhibition focuses on important contemporary and historical artworks by British Columbian artists or by artists who have visited British Columbia and addressed these themes.

The first section, on the subject of the land, presents divergent visions of the land produced from the 1880s to the present. With watercolour, printmaking, painting, photography and sculpture, these artists have created an expansive study of rural and urban landscapes of this province.

The second section addresses historical representations of indigenous cultures from the 1920s to mid-century, as well as the growing body of artworks produced by First Nations artists representing their own cultures within the contemporary world.

The third section presents a survey of artworks that examine notions of the self as formed and defined by place. In this instance, the idea of place is more than the physical geography of a region, it is the place formed by diverse histories of immigration, and within generations of beliefs and ideas, or even by historical art produced from this region.

This exhibition is curated by Bruce Grenville, Senior Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery.



The Development of Painting in Canada

Publication

1945

[transcription of excerpt]

Sec. VI-3

Here the dominant decorative pattern is maintained, but whereas its originators worked closely together, these painters were widely scattered. Their style is more varied and in many cases their subject matter is different and painted with a different emphasis.

173. MacDONALD, JAMES WILLIAMSON GALLOWAY

INDIAN BURIAL, NOOTKA

35¾ x 27¾—s.d. 1937

Vancouver Art Gallery

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Souvenir Catalogue: Opening the New Vancouver Art Gallery, 1951.

Publication
1951-09-26

[transcription]

SOUTH GALLERY

CANADIAN PICTURES FROM OUR PERMANENT COLLECTION

Soon after its foundation, the Vancouver Art Gallery was presented by the Founders with three Canadian paintings, by James W. Morrice, A. Y. Jackson, and H. Mabel May respectively. These three pictures are hanging in this exhibition and, as one may see, constituted an auspicious beginning for the building of a Canadian collection.

The Morrice, "On the Beach, Dinard", is a small but fine example of this most sensitive and lyrical of Canadian painters who died in 1924. The A. Y. Jackson, "Road to St. Fidele" is typical of the full rhythmic style which distinguishes his position in the Group of Seven, the first concerted movement in Canadian painting history. A dramatic Arthur Lismer, "Pine Trees, Georgian Bay", a soberly splendid J. E. H. MacDonald, "Church by the Sea", a discerning and painterly portrait of H. Mortimer Lamb by F. H. Varley (all three the gift of Mr. Lamb), and a brilliant later Jackson, further represent work by the original 'Seven'. Lawren Harris, also a member of the Group, is represented in this selection by a very recent work.

The influence of the Group was evidenced in the broad landscape style which dominated Canadian painting for some years, a good example of which is here shown in Mabel May's "Autumn in the Laurentians". (This spring the Gallery will hold an exhibition of the work of Miss May who now lives in Vancouver). The tradition of landscape, of course, has continued right up to the present in varying personal interpretations: David Milne, best known for his delicate imaginative watercolors, here shows a brilliantly executed oil; Edward Hughes, a Victoria painter, hangs a landscape of arresting intentness; James MacDonald, a young Vancouver painter, brings the landscape to the city in a richly painted canvas.

Since the time of the Group of Seven, new elements, new trends, already manifest elsewhere, have been finding their expression in our painting. Some of them are reflected in this exhibition. There is the showy realism of W. A. Winter's "Midnight at Charlie's"; the melancholy of Jack Nichols' turpentine wash painting of children, the loneliness of Don Jarvis' "Old Man"; the element of expressionism present in Fritz Brandtner's semi-abstract landscape. There is too, the concern with form, to a greater or lesser degree stripped of its representational references: as in Molly Bobak, for its sensuous life; as in B.C. Binning for its own structural life; as in the Lawren Harris as a means to a metaphysical meaning.

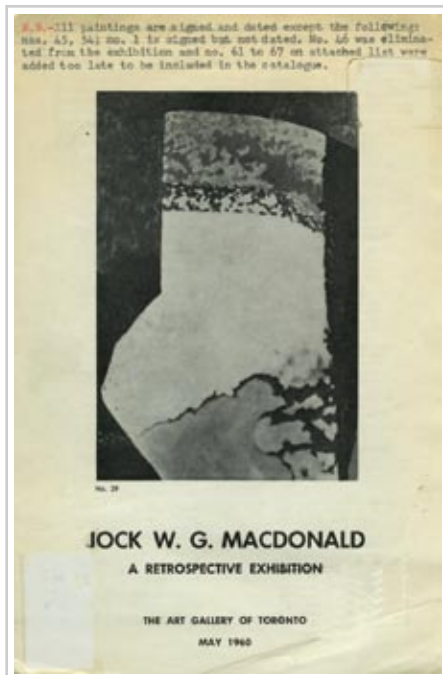
This selection of painting well demonstrates that this Gallery may be proud of its Canadian collection, and Canada of her painters.

DORIS SHADBOLT
Vancouver Art Gallery Docent



Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Jock W.G. Macdonald: A Retrospective Exhibition

Publication
1960

[transcription of excerpt]

N.B.—All paintings are signed and dated except the following: nos. 45, 54; no. 1 is signed but not dated. No. 46 was eliminated from the exhibition and no. 61 to 67 on attached list were added too late to be included in the catalogue.

JOCK W.G. MACDONALD

Born in Scotland in 1897. Studied at the Edinburgh College of Art. Came to Canada in 1926 to take up the appointment of Head of the Design Department of the Vancouver School of Art which post he held from 1926 to 1933. Co-Director British Columbia College of Art with F.H. Varley from 1933 to 1935. During the war years his duties as deputy district warden with the A.R.P. in North Vancouver curtailed his painting. In 1946 moved to Calgary to become Director of the Art Department of the Institute of Technology and Art. Since 1947 he has been on the staff of the Ontario College of Art. In 1954 he spent a year in France on a Royal Society of Canada Fellowship.

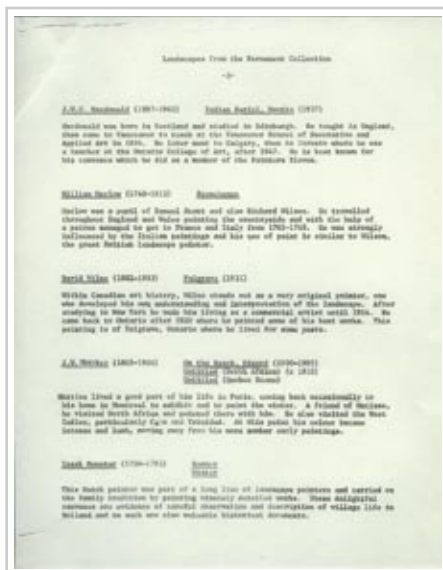
PAINTINGS

9. INDIAN BURIAL, NOOTKA

Oil on canvas 36" x 28"

Dated 1937

Lent by The Vancouver Art Gallery,
purchased from the Artist, 1938



Landscapes from the Permanent Collection

Publication
1980

[transcription of excerpt]

J.W.G. Macdonald (1897-1960) Indian Burial, Nootka (1937)

Macdonald was born in Scotland and studied in Edinburgh. He taught in England, then came to Vancouver to teach at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Art in 1926. He later went to Calgary, then to Toronto where he was a teacher at the Ontario College of Art, after 1947. He is best known for his canvases which he did as a member of Painters Eleven.

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Alumnus
Publication
1981

[transcription of excerpt]

ONE OF THE UNFORGETTABLES J.W.G. MACDONALD

PAINTER TEACHER FRIEND

When Jock Macdonald qualified for his Art Specialist Teachers' certificate in 1922, his assessor deemed him "a born teacher". The several generations of students who encountered Macdonald in one of the many teaching posts he held would certainly agree. During a lifetime devoted to teaching (he spent seven years at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts, two years at the British Columbia College of Art, a year at the Provincial Institute of Technology in Calgary and fourteen years at the Ontario College of Art, six summers at Banff and three at Doon), Macdonald came into contact with many of the artists working in Canada today. His philosophy as a teacher was to influence not only students but his own artistic career and he quite freely exchanged ideas between his classroom and his studio. The richness in both enterprises provided stimulation in his teaching and in his art.



Macdonald's teaching philosophy might at first appear contradictory in nature for it relied at the same time on strict discipline and the greatest freedom possible. As a teacher of design and later of painting, Macdonald created a series of rigorous classroom exercises to strengthen his students' comprehension of fundamental principles. But skill and mastery of technique were only the beginning, for Macdonald, art had to be a living thing which reflected the philosophic, scientific and mathematical concerns of the artist's time. Without an understanding of the spiritual qualities of art, and the relationship of art and nature, the most accomplished art would be stillborn. So Macdonald encouraged his students to move beyond the exercises and to explore new and sometimes esoteric directions. There were no rights and wrongs — only the constant possibility of growth and change. He wrote later:

"In training young students I believe it absolutely necessary that the student be provided a programme of study which forces him to observe nature very closely in many diverse directions. After some two years of such study I encourage the student to expand his inner self and begin to expand his personality. I am quite aware that the young student is often intuitively aware of his consciousness of the twentieth century and could create in modern ways but I believe that every student should, first of all, increase his vocabulary of form and colours by observing nature forms and be initiated into the laws of balance and dynamic equilibrium."

Macdonald did not reserve the rigours of discipline for his students alone; Dorothy Hoover recalls that each summer he would drill his colour sense by painting flowers from nature, selecting a painting by Georges Braque and working in its colour scheme and at one period in his career, subjecting himself to a disciplined work-over such as that offered by Hans Hofmann at his Provincetown school.

Yet Macdonald seems almost never to have been remembered as a disciplinarian; it was the

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

complementary aspect of his teaching which students remember in such glowing terms. Macdonald encouraged his students to look at art, particularly abstract art, and often accompanied them to the galleries. For the most promising, he suggested reading that would encourage and stimulate them — among others, the works of Hans Hofmann, Wassily Kandinsky and P.D. Ouspensky. He was a sympathetic mentor, prepared to offer students understanding in their struggle and to encourage them at whatever point they found themselves. He offered reassurance, guidance, enthusiasm and where necessary, a few dollars and a good meal.

When Macdonald arrived at OCA in the fall of 1947, he assumed the last in a series of distinguished teaching posts. His teaching career had begun in 1925 in England when he served as head of the design department at the Lincoln School of Art. In 1926 he came to Canada as the head of design at the newly formed VSDAA. These first few years in Canada were crucial ones for the artist for they were to lead him in heretofore unimagined directions in his art and in his career as an educator.

In 1926, Macdonald had never painted in oils. Under the tutelage of his new VSDAA colleague, Fred Varley, he was soon painting landscapes which would represent Canada in exhibitions throughout the world. At the same time, Macdonald was confronted with new ideas about the nature of art and art education and in 1933, with Varley, he left the VSDAA to embark upon one of the most significant experiments in art education to occur in Canada's history — the British Columbia College of Art. The school was dedicated to an interdisciplinary approach to the arts and to the integration of eastern and western philosophy. Music flowed through the studios and metaphysics dominated the discussions.

In his own painting, influenced to some degree by the atmosphere which dominated the College, Macdonald turned from representation of the landscape to an exploration of the spiritual aspects of nature. The mystery of the noumenal world replaced the phenomenal in his art and he embarked upon his lifelong exploration of abstract art.

In 1935 the British Columbia College closed; the depression had made financing impossible and the dream ended. The Macdonald family moved to the west coast of Vancouver Island and for two years Macdonald continued his painting experiments in the isolation of that rugged environment. During the next few years Macdonald taught at several Vancouver institutions but it is clear from his correspondence that neither the high school nor the technical school provided him with the caliber of student, or the collegial environment, he required.

It was not until 1946 that Macdonald once again found a teaching environment which seemed to offer such stimulation. In the spring of 1945 he had, in fact, two offers for employment: one from OCA, the other from Alberta. Macdonald, who considered himself a Western artist, chose Alberta. But in spite of the great promise the position initially held, and despite the artists whom he came to know and who would remain lifetime friends, and even despite his crucial role in the formation and fostering of the Calgary Group, Macdonald soon realized that he could not continue at the Provincial Institute. He had little time for his own work; he found himself isolated from the artistic mainstream and engulfed in the narrowness and provincialism of his environment. There was no place for an artist then experimenting with surrealist inspired "automatics".

The next spring Macdonald once again was offered two teaching positions: one at OCA and one in Winnipeg as a sabbatical replacement for Lemoine Fitzgerald. This time he chose OCA for Toronto held many promises — the opportunity to work closely with people he admired, two days a week to devote to his own work

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

— time which never did materialize — and four summer months to devote to his own painting.

On the first day of class, Macdonald wrote prophetically, "my impression is that something more modern has to be introduced into the study — work I will be responsible for." Macdonald would later term the

atmosphere he found at the College "academic sleepwalking" and it became more and more clear to him that he would carry a heavy burden as a teacher dedicated to making students aware of the most recent developments in the art world and the possibilities which such developments proffered.

If OCA did not offer the artistic mainstream which he sought, the first few years in Toronto were nevertheless not without rewards. Macdonald produced a body of automatic paintings in watercolours that was without peer in Canada and he was twice recognized for his teaching ability when he was the only artist selected to participate as faculty at the UNESCO seminars in Breda, Holland (1949) and Pontigny, France (1950). In 1951, Macdonald became an executive member of the Ontario Society of Artists. In 1952 he was elected president of the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour. During these years, he served on numerous juries for the OSA, and for other exhibitions, often speaking publicly on topics related to abstract art, encouraging an appreciation of abstraction not only in his classroom but amongst the general public. Ultimately it was in his role as a senior member of Painters Eleven, the group which Macdonald felt represented the future of art in Canada, that he was finally able to establish an artistic climate favourable to abstract painting in Ontario.

It is not surprising then, that it was Macdonald who became the mentor to a young generation of abstract painters. He championed students like William Ronald, Richard Gorman and Dennis Burton and derived satisfaction from their accomplishments, writing, "Apart from my own efforts in the field of art my greatest happiness is in the opportunities I have to fight for the worthiness I sense in the work of our younger artists".

In 1954, Macdonald took a year's leave of absence from OCA and with the assistance of a fellowship awarded by the Royal Society of Canada, he was able to devote himself to his own work. He came back to Toronto, certain that he had found the answers to the problems he faced in his painting and he had. In the next four years, Macdonald produced his major body of work with one man shows in every year, culminating with a semi-retrospective at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1960. Throughout this period he continued to teach full time at OCA, with part time teaching in the evenings, on Saturdays and in the summer. He felt it his job to stimulate his students, encourage their sense of adventure and to promote an awareness of abstract and non-objective painting.

Macdonald died the day after the beginning of OCA's Christmas vacation in December, 1960. He had taught until the day before his death. For him teaching was not only a vocation but a responsibility, always "true to himself no matter what the consequences", he was steadfast in his commitment to a modern approach to art education.

As an artist Macdonald was fortunate to receive recognition for his achievements within his lifetime. In 1957, Robert Fulford called him "the best young artist in Canada, even though he was born in 1897." As an educator, recognition has come from the ranks of devoted students who acknowledge Macdonald's leadership role and confirm his position in the forefront of Canada's teaching community.

Joyce Zemans

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Jock Macdonald: The Inner Landscape

Publication
1981

[transcription of excerpt]

The Macdonalds had intended to stay two years in Nootka but in the fall of 1936, after only fifteen months, they returned to Vancouver. A troublesome back injury discouraged Macdonald from spending another winter in Nootka, "fell[ing] trees, buck[ing] logs and pack[ing] supplies." Before departing for Vancouver, Macdonald and his family visited the lighthouse by the Friendly Cove settlement where they assisted the lighthouse keeper; this respite provided not only an interesting challenge of scene and closer contact with Friendly Cove but also enabled Macdonald to obtain new subjects for future work.



Barbara Macdonald suggests that her husband was not overly distressed at the prospect of returning to Vancouver, for "he liked the art world and liked people." But the transition proved less carefree than he might have wished, for in the midst of the Depression jobs were scarce. The Macdonalds had left Vancouver with few funds and had subsisted on the land and the meagre returns from the pictures that were sold. Fortunately, Mrs. Bernulf Clegg, a friend and patron, offered the Macdonalds a comfortable home for a month, alleviating somewhat the immediate pressure to find work.

Although Macdonald was still mentally and spiritually absorbed with the artistic experiments he began in Nootka, his first concern was to find employment.

In spite of assistance he solicited from both Harry McCurry at the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and A.Y. Jackson in Toronto, he was unable to secure a full-time teaching position. Ultimately he compromised and took a part-time job at the Canadian Institute of Associated Arts, a privately operated vocational art school that had opened a few months previously. At first he was optimistic; in December 1936, he wrote, "I am feeling my way with its possibilities and hope in time to again give some attention to the development of enthusiasm in art matters in this



city." By March 1937, however she wrote, "the school I am in now cannot possibly succeed and be worthwhile."

Since the job at the institute paid Macdonald only about forty dollars a month, he began also to give private instruction, often to former students of the British Columbia College of Arts. Many of his assignments echoed the interdisciplinary fervour of the old B.C. College. For Macdonald this teaching was rewarding since he used it to "enrich his own painting technique."

At the same time, Macdonald determined to paint works that represented his Nootka sojourn—landscapes he felt the public would accept—and to keep his thoughts on experimental work entirely to himself for the present. He approached his landscape painting with an almost missionary zeal. He wrote to John Varley, "Perhaps I am not worthy of carrying on the excellent work your father did in painting in Vancouver but I feel I may be better able to do so than any other here and I wish to do all I can to keep in the forefront of Canadian painting." In the landscape paintings done after his return to Vancouver, Macdonald abandoned the starkness of earlier landscapes for a new clarity of light and heightened colour values. His new paintings depicted his impressions of events or scenes observed at Nootka. Their primary stylistic characteristic is their uniformity of treatment: Macdonald ties his landscape to the surface by carefully articulating elements of the composition in patterns on the surface of the canvas. Landscape details are seen in relief against the dominant

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



foreground motif. The compositions are more decorative in their imagery and in the overall patterning of the surface; yet, strange though it may seem, they are more timeless. By reorganizing elements of the scene in tightly knit hieratic compositions, Macdonald creates statements that, like his modalities, represent the essence of a scene or an event rather than any particular moment in space or time.

Shortly after his return from Nootka, Macdonald sold to his patron, Mrs. Clegg, the first of these large landscape paintings. In *Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound, B.C.* (1935), a formal dramatic style prevails. The curve of the bay in the background complements the strong vertical of the central totem pole. Reminiscent of Emily Carr's paintings, this work presents a compromise between Carr's descriptive Indian village scenes and her monumentally formalized paintings of the late twenties, in which a single image, extracted from the larger scene, dominates the composition. Macdonald also focuses on a powerful totemic image, but he maintains the descriptive, narrative elements surrounding it. Thus he establishes a tension between the synergized forces of nature and the central figure; the final result is one of dynamic symmetry.

In 1937, Macdonald complete another major landscape, *Indian Burial, Nootka*, purchased by the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1938. Based on the

Nootka years, the painting derives from a thumbnail sketch Macdonald made during his sojourn there. The work is striking in its organization. A number of fenced burial plots form the dominant central image. In the immediate foreground, mourners and a vivid mask surround a newly excavated grave. The priest, his hand raised, creates a strong vertical focus. As in all his major landscape paintings, Macdonald carefully controls the viewer's eye movement. In the centre foreground, a blue cross on the casket provides a complementary image for the two clearly defined, rigorously vertical crosses in the immediate centre of the middle ground. Despite the strongly recessive elements and the perspectival reduction in the size of the images, depth is counteracted by the strong patterning of the scene. Blues are complemented by the red and yellow chequerboard of the central grave. The composition displays a designer's delight in carefully balanced areas of colour. It is interesting to note how the organization and handling of this composition resembles Jean Paul Lemieux's *Lazare* (1941), and one can but wonder if Lemieux had seen Macdonald's painting reproduced on the cover of the Vancouver Art Gallery *Bulletin*.

These were stressful years for Macdonald. In March 1937, he wrote to McCurry, again inquiring about job possibilities elsewhere in Canada and spoke of "ek[ing] out a near starvation existence." He found the Canadian Institute impossible and had decided that, if nothing better arose, he would abandon the institute and turn to private classes. He had "to earn money in order to live...the financial side of it has been hell and still is."

During this difficult period, a strange painting entitled *Pilgrimage* (1937) emerged; Macdonald said it came to him in a dream. The canvas is penetrated by descending rays of light; the trees arch to enclose the central pathway and create a natural sanctuary. In the foreground, boats are drawn up as if on a shore. It is obviously a forest glade, but

right:
Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937
 Oil on canvas
 92.6 x 71.9 cm
 The Vancouver Art Gallery

above:
 Sketch for *Indian Burial at Nootka*, c. 1935

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Ink on paper with pencil grid laid on top
4 x 3 cm
Private Collection

the airless space and stylized images of nature suggest a dream world rather than the recollection of a specific scene. The mood of this painting must surely reflect Macdonald's longing to be out of the anguish that financial strain, ill health, and exhaustion had created in the year after his return from Nootka. Recognizing its anomalous position within his work, Macdonald wrote of this painting that it "might not be conservative enough" for a national exhibition.

Already burdened with physical and psychological frustrations, Macdonald suffered a collapsed lung in April 1937. Upon his recovery in the summer of 1937, the Macdonalds travelled to California. In San Francisco they spent a day at an exhibition, where he admired Cézanne's painting:

"Cézanne is undoubtedly a magnificent colourist, exact and sure, in a very mellow beauty and yet of rich purity. I was surprised to find how thinly he painted his landscapes and how exceedingly heavy the pigment was palette knifed on in his portraits."

In his Okanagan paintings of 1943, Macdonald would hearken back to Cézanne's landscapes for a vision more perfectly suited to this new terrain, and later he would speak of Cézanne's perfect understanding of the spirit that guides art.

In Los Angeles, Macdonald saw an exhibition of works by "the world's recognized leaders in modern art movement." The exhibition which included works by Picasso, Braque, Modigliani, Derain, Ernst, Kandinsky, and Archipenko, was held in a private gallery and organized by two New York dealers. Having himself experimented with "modern expression," Macdonald submitted two of his own works for consideration and was encouraged by the favourable response he received.

In Pomona he saw an exhibition of work done by leading American artists during 1936, but

he observed that no single spirit informed that country's art, no "unity for a definite American Art." Such unity was something Macdonald identified with strongly, and at every opportunity he placed his own work clearly within the Canadian landscape school, naming Varley as his mentor and spiritual benefactor.

Macdonald considered moving south, but after weighing the relative advantages of the United States and Canada, he concluded that "British Columbia is the land of inspiration. British Columbia has that vapour quality that seems to me to be much more clairvoyant in its inspiration than that blazing and relentless sunshine down south! Canada is the land for artists to find the environment for true creative activity". He decided to remain in Canada and continue painting in the Canadian tradition established by Varley and the Group of Seven.

It is difficult to assess the exact impact of the California exhibitions on Macdonald. Landscape studies of the Okanagan in the forties suggest, in their handling of space and colour, that Macdonald was aware of Cézanne's *St. Victoire* studies.

Certainly he was impressed by the Cézannes he saw in San Francisco. It is less likely, however, that he was influenced much by the abstract works he saw. Macdonald had developed his abstract style several years before he visited California. In fact, he considered his own work comparable to that which he

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

admired by distinguished Europeans. It is more than likely that the opportunity to see such works first-hand simply renewed his own commitment to abstraction.

After his return to Vancouver, Macdonald painted only one more Indian landscape, *Drying Herring Roe* (1938), which he considered to be "the best picture [he] ever painted. Typically west coast, much purer in colour [and] in directing composition."

Macdonald clearly felt a strong need to explicate in words the subject of *Drying Herring*

Roe. He worried that the painting would not be understood because of its unusual subject matter and the unfamiliar colour of the bleached herring roe. He explained the background of the canvas at some length:

"About the time the herring are due to spawn, the Indians cut long twenty foot branches from spruce and cedar trees, take them out in canoes to deep water close to headlands and sink them twenty feet in the water. In two weeks the branches are raised up, plastered with herring eggs. They are taken to the villages and hung up on wires, ropes, etc., to dry out and cure in the sun. The village festooned with masses of mimosa coloured (yellowish) hanging foliage...branches are taken down, the eggs shaken off and packed for winter food. Eggs are boiled before eating."

Emphatically structured, the work presents a clear pictorial statement of the Indian village as the artist remembered it. Colour values in it are even stronger than in previous works. Macdonald creates a decorative surface pattern with the roe, which integrates the foreground and the middle ground and links diverse compositional elements. It is not incidental that this work, like *Friendly Cove* and *Indian Burial*, was conceived in the studio and based remotely on sketches made outdoors in Nootka. *Lighthouse at Nootka*, on the other hand, was literally transcribed from an *in situ* water-colour. The naturalism of the latter work is replaced, in the Indian paintings, by a decorative composition in which Macdonald captures the spirit of Nootka and its life rather than accurately portraying a particular scene.

Drying Herring Roe completed, Macdonald determined to return to his greatest passion, and wrote "now I can get back to my modalities which are for me much more exciting than landscapes."

Canadian Pictures, 1951

Publication
1982

[transcription]

The Vancouver Art Gallery

CANADIAN PICTURES, 1951

December 4, 1982 - March 20, 1983

This exhibition was first hung in September, 1951, for the opening of the expanded and renovated Vancouver Art Gallery. The exhibition was meant to show the gallery's Canadian holdings. Needless to say, 31 years later, our Canadian collection is much richer than this small but strong beginning. In rehunging this exhibition as we prepare to leave this building — cramped and

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

out-of-date now, but Canada's most modern gallery then — we have an opportunity to see what Canadian painting meant over thirty years ago.

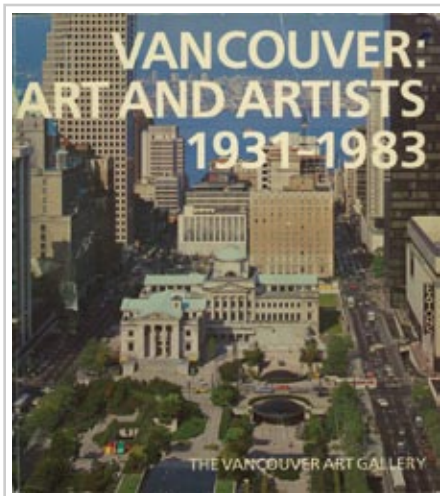
The works demonstrate currents in Canadian art history which were prevalent at the time. The Group of Seven are represented with their spiritual topographies of Canada's North. Social Realism, a movement in Canadian painting of the 30's and 40's which reacted to the lack of a human element in the Group of Seven's work, is represented by Bill Winter and Orville Fisher; the existential city by Don Jarvis, Jim MacDonald and Ghitta Caiserman, and the move to abstraction in the work of Lawren Harris, Fritz Brandtner and B.C. Binning.

Painted before the influx of American ideas about painting, these works are all fairly small in scale. They are easel paintings, meant for private homes in an era, before Art Bank, The Canada Council and the growth of corporate collecting, when the sale of pictures to a private patron was still the major source of income (other than teaching) for artists in Canada.

These works also deal with images and subject-matter and have a great deal of interest as documents. That is, they record personal views of the world the artists lived in and are kind of a window to the past. Although the styles exhibited here might seem rigid or stiff today, we should remember that many of these artists were emerging from training that was grounded in nineteenth century techniques that emphasized drawing over "painting". And works like these, where line and colour are used for their emotional impact, are very much in a tradition which, far from being dead, we see revived in the "new" painting of the 1980's.

Scott Watson
Curator

Pine, Georgian Bay [in blue ink]



Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983

Publication
1983

[transcription of excerpt]

The Macdonalds, with Harry Täber and Les Planta, moved to Nootka, on Vancouver Island. Macdonald had grown more interested in interpreting concepts of nature beyond external representation. He became familiar with the writings of Ozenfant and Blavatsky, and of theosophists Jeans, Kinkowski, and Peter Ouspensky and his time and space theories. In *Tertium Organum*, Ouspensky stressed that the noumenal world could not be comprehended in the same way as the phenomenal world. During the early thirties in Vancouver, the search for unity and external or cosmic reality was through philosophical and religious concerns—a goal that Macdonald established for his art. As early as 1934 he had painted *Formative Color Activity*, which he later referred to as

"automatic" painting. The isolated environment at Nootka encouraged a return to these earlier concerns and he experimented with what he called "thought expressions" or "modalities." Each of these works was about some aspect of nature: a cosmic event, the seasons, a mood. Unlike his later "automatic" work (and Kandinsky's *1914 Abstraction*, which appears similar), Macdonald's "modalities" never abandoned a reference to nature.

Ill, and short of money, he returned to Vancouver in November 1936, to suffer a collapsed lung the following year. The Vancouver Art Gallery's purchase of *Indian*

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Burial, Nootka (1937) brought some respite; the Macdonalds broke out of Vancouver isolation with a trip to California. In San Francisco, Macdonald admired Cézanne's paintings (their influence appears in his Okanagan landscapes of 1943) and, in Los Angeles, works by Picasso, Ernst, Kandinsky, Braque, and Archipenko. Back in Canada, he returned to teaching, developing a strong and loyal following in the arts community. The "modalities" developed at Nootka were to remain his chief concern during the last year of the decade. Not only had he been offered showings on his California trip, but the Vancouver public was attending his exhibitions and lectures on abstraction in increasing numbers. In a letter to Harry McClurry (July 22, 1936) he explains the term "modalities" and the reaction to Vancouver to his work:

Those semi-abstracts I call "Modalities" this new word dug up from the dictionary, and so far as I think it is the only classification which interprets the expression of this work., It means 'expression of thought in relation to nature' and was considered by Kant to relate to creative expressions which did not relate to nature (objectively), nor relate to abstract thoughts (subjectively) about nature, but rather included both expressions...Strangely enough the Vancouver people have not scoffed at these canvasses, and many appear interested. What I find so interesting is the complete lack of scoffing. The desire for new thought expressions in the arts appears to be more general than one might imagine."

Vancouver: Art And Artists 1931-1983. Vancouver: The Vancouver Art Gallery, 1983.

Although the interest was there, in public curiosity for "the new," Macdonald's support came from a small circle of friends. They included photographer John Vanderpant, Emily Carr, and eventually Lawren Harris when he arrived in Vancouver in 1940. But it was not enough. Macdonald had to make the decision to leave that is so often forced upon westcoast artists—the result of deprivation of direct contact with prevailing art interests, and lack of financial support (compounded, in Macdonald's case, by the depressed economy). In 1946 he left for Calgary, eventually settling in Toronto.

J.W.G. (Jock) Macdonald *Indian Burial, Nootka 1937*

Jock Macdonald
Publication
1985

[transcription of excerpt]

Macdonald's dwindling fortunes and his growing desire to get closer to nature, which he believed was the basis for all important art, led him, with his wife and daughter, to Nootka, an Indian village on the west coast of Vancouver Island. They occupied an abandoned cabin several miles from the main Indian community. For a year and a half, they lived close to the sea, relying on it heavily for food. In favourable weather, they travelled by boat to the Nootka village to pick up mail and supplies and to visit friends who kept the lighthouse there.

In the highly stylized and autobiographical *Pacific Ocean Experience* (pl. 9), also titled *Myself in a Nine Foot Boat*, the artist is seen from above, rowing through the swelling waves. Whales leap about in the upper right-hand corner; in the centre, the artist is contained in a protective mandala of waves, while the sea surges about him. The smallness of the figure emphasizes its isolation, but the

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



strange vantage point emphasizes that he is protected in the womb of nature.

In 1935, at Nootka, Macdonald painted *Departing Day* (pl. 10), which may have been the first of a group of semi-abstract paintings he called "thought-expressions." (John Vanderpant used similar words to describe his close-up photographs of natural objects; the term likely comes from theosophy.) Each of these works treats an aspect of nature: a cosmic event (*Etheric Form*, pl. 11), the seasons (*Fall*, pl. 14, *Winter*, p1. 16, *Birth of Spring*, pl. 18, *Spring Awakening*), or the mood generated by observing a particular natural phenomenon (*Rain*, *The Wave*, p1. 17, *May Morning*). "[I] put down in paint, in a concrete form, my feelings about the sea, wind, rain, etc. — feelings which had nothing to do with the visual effects of seas, windstorms and rainstorms. The feelings must have been something similar to those which brought Cézanne to the awareness that the 'life energy of a tree does not end at the visual limitation of the tree's silhouette form.' [In a similar way,] I felt that the curve of a wave, the breaker on the beach and the foam on the sand wasn't all of sea."

These "thought-expressions" or "modalities," as he would later call them, resulted from Macdonald's belief that abstraction was the necessary expression for a contemporary artist. During his stay in Nootka, he resolved to move toward complete abstraction. In 1937, he wrote:

My time in Nootka has provided me with a new expression (which is only yet being born) which belongs to no school or already seen expression. To fail to follow through the force which is driving me would be destruction to my soul.

To accomplish his goal, "his experiments required him to live with nature and to be in touch with himself."

Such luxury was not to be his. A back injury forced him to return to the economic difficulties of life in Vancouver. Unsure of the reception abstract art would receive there, Macdonald vowed to keep his experiments to himself, and emphasized instead a series of landscape paintings of Indian life at Nootka. In four major paintings, stylized and strong in colour, Macdonald attempted to imbue landscape with the inspiration of his "thought-expressions" and with the

tical relationship he had discovered between the Nootka people and nature.

The earliest of these paintings, *Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound* of 1935, in a private collection, highlights the powerful totemic image that dominated the inlet. *Indian Burial, Nootka* of 1937 (pl. 12), is rigidly symmetrical: crosses lean awkwardly into the centre of the painting, drawing the viewer into the composition. The vivid blue of the sea and the strong perspectival reduction force the eye to the surface of the canvas again. The bright colours and stylized forms of these paintings synthesize the artist's experience in a boldly formalized and decorative manner.

In 1938, two years after his return from Nootka, Macdonald painted *Drying Herring Roe* (pl. 15). In a letter accompanying the painting to the National Gallery in Ottawa, he described at length the Indian custom of submerging huge logs to catch the herring roe and then hanging the roe, looking like brilliant yellow "foliage," to dry and cure in the sun. "I believe it to be the best picture I ever painted, typically west coast, much purer in colour and direct in composition." Macdonald was thrilled when the painting was selected for the "Century of Canadian Art" exhibition at the Tate Gallery in London in the fall of 1938.

In 1939, Macdonald, Charles Comfort, Lilia Farley, and others were commissioned to decorate the new Hotel Vancouver. Macdonald was to do a large mural for the dining room and chose for his theme a composite study of

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

the Nootka landscape. The mural format gave him a unique opportunity to synthesize his feelings about landscape painting and abstraction. "Cubist-futurist" in style, the mural integrates the spirit of the Nootka landscapes and the abstract modalities that had become his private obsession.

(See fig. 3.)

12

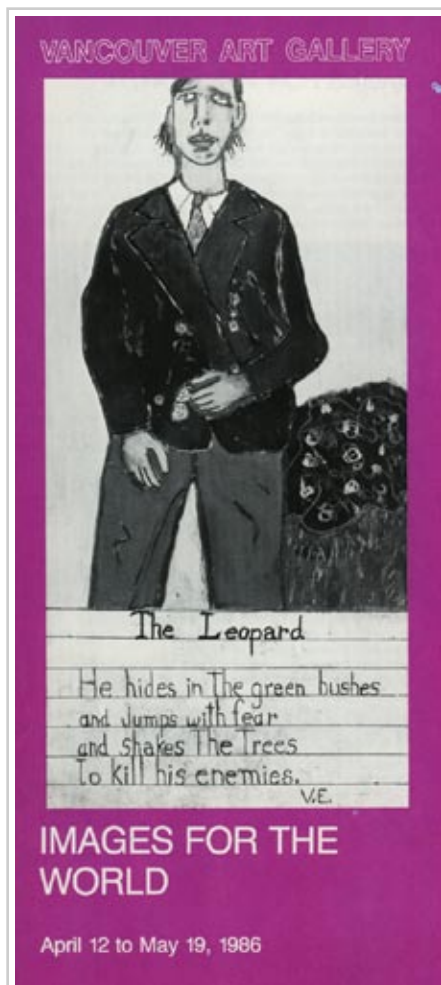
Indian Burial, Nootka 1937

Oil on canvas

92.6 x 71.9 cm

Vancouver Art Gallery

Purchased 1938



Images for the World

Publication

1986

[transcription]

IMAGES FOR THE WORLD

As Vancouver celebrates its centennial and plays host to the world audience of Expo '86, the Gallery has mounted an exhibition of Canadian art from the past 100 years. The exhibition shows not only the Canadian landscape and the people within it, but the changing vision of Canadian artists in their approach to both the history of the country and its art. Three of the artists included in the exhibition are Bertram Brooker, Paterson Ewen and Lucius O'Brien.

Bertram Brooker (1888-1955), *Driftwood* 1945

Bertram Brooker was born in England and immigrated to Canada with his family in 1905, settling in Manitoba. In January 1927 he gained great attention with what was the first exhibition of abstract painting in Toronto.

A year later, Brooker turned away from pure abstraction and began to pursue a more realistic idiom in which he painted for the next 25 years. *Driftwood*, painted in 1945, shows that Brooker never left abstraction completely behind him. The driftwood stump floats in space, no longer anchored in the earth or washed by the sea, its contours and roots flow with spirit.

Paterson Ewen (b. 1925), *Portrait of Vincent* 1974

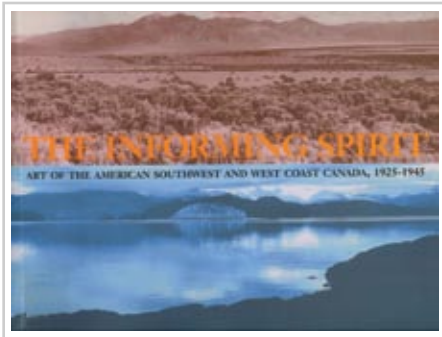
Paterson Ewen is one of Canada's foremost contemporary painters. To convey his vision of a world invested with magical elements, he has established a unique method of working by carving out images on large sheets of plywood, in effect drawing with a router and then collaging on pieces of tin, fabric, and other materials.

Portrait of Vincent is a portrait of Ewen's son, based on a photograph taken at the boy's grandmother's funeral. The photograph was the last frame on the role of film and cut the image off at the head and knees. Written by the artist's son, who is emotionally disturbed, the poem at the bottom of the painting contrasts the violence of the tiger killing out of fear with awkwardness and emotional tension.

Lucius O'Brien, *B.C. Coastal View with Figures in a Sailing Boat*, 1888.

Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Lucius O'Brien was the first president of the Royal Canadian Academy and one of the most prominent watercolourists of his generation. Each summer from 1886 to 1888, he took advantage of the fall travel passes given out by the Canadian Pacific Railway to members of the Academy, and travelled to Western Canada. On his final trip to the West Coast, O'Brien spent most of the summer canoeing in Howe Sound just north of Vancouver. In his journal and letters he enthused over the British Columbia landscape and pronounced it to be something approaching heaven on earth.



The Informing Spirit
 Publication
 1994

[transcription of excerpt]

A DESIGNER GOES WEST: J.W.G. (JOCK) MACDONALD

By answering a newspaper advertisement in his native Scotland, James Williamson Galloway Macdonald was hired as design instructor under C.H. Scott at the new Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts. Trained at a time when the traditions of William Morris and the styles of Art Nouveau were still strong influences, Macdonald appreciated the importance of nature as a source of inspiration. It was a concept that was to intrigue him, in altered and complex form, throughout his painting career.



Knowledgeable in the history and principles of symbols from around the world, Macdonald became equally intrigued by the Native cultures of his new surroundings, encouraging the use of legends as subjects for students and, in his own design work, adapting traditional decorative motifs. As well, he began to explore and draw the countryside around him. He started to paint, encouraged and instructed by Varley who he accompanied on sketching trips into the mountainous interior. At sixteen years Macdonald's senior, Varley was an important mentor to the young artist, integral to his move from designer to painter. A major early canvas, *Black Tusk, Garibaldi Park, B.C.* (cat. 74), combines a Group of Seven propensity for powerful landscape forms with an individual and dramatic sense of composition and paint handling. Works such as this gave Macdonald a place as a founding member of the Canadian Group of Painters.



As a teacher at the Vancouver School and then at the rebel B.C. College, Macdonald found himself at the centre of the lively Vancouver art scene. Although Varley was a profound influence, several other inventive personalities also had lasting impact. Macdonald attended the "musicales" at John Vanderpant's studio. An admirer of Vanderpant's work, he felt that the photographer "radiates personality," and, indeed, after Varley's departure from Vancouver in 1936, was "the only 'living' being" left in the city. As for many others, the energetic figure of Harry Täuber brought knowledge of European avant-garde philosophies and art styles. Macdonald also came to know Emily Carr, seeing her as "undoubtedly the first artist in the country and a genius without question." Writing in 1938 about her solo exhibition at the Vancouver Art Gallery, he continued,

I feel in her work the first conscious expression of the rhythm of life, relating this rhythm to all nature, and definitely causing the observer of her work to be conscious of the fact that he or she is also related, even though there is no physical body represented.

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Through friendship with Varley and Carr, and through Bertram Brooker's *Yearbook of the Arts*, Macdonald became acquainted with the ideas of Toronto's art circle. By 1932, his energies were clearly devoted to painting and the landscape, and he wrote to the National Gallery requesting various reproductions of works of art, "one or two of the older styles of landscape work," as well as the Canadian moderns—Varley, [Tom] Thomson, Jackson, Lismer, Clarence Gagnon, FitzGerald, [J.E.H.] MacDonald—and of Harris' recent, stylized works inspired by the North Shore of Lake Superior, the Rockies and the Arctic.

In such an environment, Macdonald's course headed increasingly toward an exploration of the spiritual revelation of nature. The surrounding mountains took on the mystical symbolism of the pyramid, "the Holy Mountain or High Place of God...the first Temple of the Mysteries, ...a repository of those sacred truths which are the certain foundation of all arts and sciences." In stating that "the unfolding of man's spiritual nature is as much an exact science as astronomy or medicine," Macdonald echoed the esoteric philosophies discussed by his colleagues. At the same time, like many of those philosophers, he was intrigued by the discoveries of science and mathematics.

In 1934, the artist began a series of experiments to enhance his understanding of colour. Setting up a still life, he concentrated on

a small section of the flowers. One of the results was *Formative Colour Activity* (cat. 75). As his "first automatic oil canvas," the painting was produced "in an ecstasy," leaving the artist "pale and exhausted but terribly exhilarated." Its format visually recalls and, perhaps, was instigated by Vanderpant's close-up photographic images of flowers and halved vegetables, an approach that he had been exploring for several years. In a passage that could also describe Vanderpant's beliefs, art historian Joyce Zemans has related the painting to Kandinsky and Ozenfant's ideas about subject matter removed from descriptive reference, stating that Macdonald "turned to the spirit of nature rather than to the representation of a specific image."

With the collapse of the B.C. College of Art in 1935, Macdonald and his family, in the company of Harry Täuber, retreated for a year to the remote west coast of Vancouver Island, settling near the small Native community of Friendly Cove, Nootka Sound. Living in an extremely simple way, in fact at a subsistence level, Macdonald felt very close to the elements of nature. He often remarked on the presence of the sea, which overwhelmingly replaced the presence of the mountains. Not long after arriving, Täuber wrote back to a former student. Although feeling the lack of comforts, he noted the nearby "interesting Indian settlement...with poles and

figure remains and a burial grotto," and remarked that there was "an ideal beauty in the natural environment out here, and most inspiring to deep thinking and dreaming about life reformations." He also commented on "eight Anthroposophical Magazines" that had been lent to him and several lectures he was preparing on "Man's Spiritual and Cultural Development." When in Europe, Täuber had thoroughly studied anthroposophy, even meeting its founder, Rudolf Steiner. At the B.C. College he had hoped that his lectures "on dimensions and consciousness" would better "give the key to a higher understanding, than by the ordinary three-dimensional outlook." Given their isolation and Macdonald's interest, it is difficult to imagine that the two men did not discuss such philosophical ideas. One of Steiner's theories held that "man is a citizen of three worlds."

Through his body he belongs to the world which he also perceives through his body; through his soul he constructs for himself his own world; through his spirit a world reveals itself to him which is exalted above both the others.

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Steiner's three worlds and Macdonald's responsiveness to nature seem to be almost literally illustrated in sketches such as *Pacific Ocean Experience* (cat. 76).

In addition, like Täuber, Macdonald's attention was caught by the life of the neighbouring Native community. Perhaps, like many Europeans, the artist was fascinated by "exotic" North American indigenous society, but, as we have seen, he also deeply admired the work of Emily Carr, much of whose inspiration had come from Native peoples as well as the landscape of Vancouver Island. In fact, Friendly Cove was the site of Carr's 1929 canvas, *Indian Church* (cat. 47).

In the canvases of the late thirties, after his return to Vancouver, Macdonald developed themes discovered at Nootka. Canvases depicting Friendly Cove recognize the Natives' deep sense of relationship between nature and life, both spiritual and physical. In *Indian Burial, Nootka* of 1937 (cat. 71), traditional Native beliefs are represented by a single totemic gravemarker in the lower right corner, seemingly alone in a situation otherwise Christian. However, the crosses and the exaggerated compositional lines of the landscape lead the eye back to the far distance where the outstretched wings of leaning Thunderbird poles seem to create a vestigial arch over the scene. Given the subject matter, the spiritual is certainly a concern of *Indian Burial*, a preoccupation that the artist even dreamed about, resulting in the more abstracted and symbolic forms of *Pilgrimage* (cat. 77), whose title and composition recalls not only Christianity and a monastic cloister but pays homage to the great forest interiors of the Coast. The following year, Macdonald again depicted Friendly Cove, interestingly, in a style less abstracted than either of the earlier paintings. He was "quite convinced" that *Drying Herring Roe* (cat. 72) "is my best landscape by a long way." The decorative but strong design integrates a traditional totemic figure with a scene of everyday life. The diagonals of the village buildings, the beach and the suspended yellow branches create a dynamic and interlocked composition.

During his year on Nootka, Macdonald, while making small drawings and sketches of the Friendly Cove village, had also produced a series of panel paintings which he called "thought-expressions," a name reminiscent of Vanderpant's terminology and of theosophical "thought-forms." The symbolic *Pacific Ocean Experience* fits well within this description, as do other small paintings depicting planets and stars. In 1937, back in Vancouver, it was clear that Macdonald had discussed his work with Vanderpant. In a letter to H. O. McCurry at the National Gallery, he wrote,

I think Vanderpant can tell you that I have been searching for a new expression in art and that my time at Nootka has provided me with a new expression (which is yet only being born) ... To

fail to follow through the force which is driving me—and which I clearly believe is a true creative art—would be destruction to my very soul.

The following year, Macdonald again wrote to McCurry stating that "in my new experiments I have to live with nature, be in constant touch with its life force." The experiments were "semi-abstracts" called "modalities," a term "dug up from the dictionary," which meant "the expressions of thought in relation to nature." *Fall* (cat. 78) has been compared to esoteric charts and to contemporary works by Lawren Harris, 2 and may well relate to Macdonald's own training in symbols and design. In addition to these more geometrical compositions, other abstracted works from the same period are more derivative of natural forms, have a freer handling, and convey a greater feeling of intuitive construction. In December of 1939, Macdonald wrote to McCurry commenting that the "degradation" of war "brought a feeling ... that the continued search for an understanding of life through art would be impossible." His solution was to move into a studio with an eastern light so that he could see the rising sun, "the life giver." The modalities "lift me out of the earthliness, the material mire, of our

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

civilization I believe as definitely as ever that there can be no art with aesthetic values which has no contact with nature."

The war, however, had two positive outcomes for Macdonald. Lawren Harris had been living in the United States since 1934 but, in 1940, with his Canadian funds frozen, he left to take up residence in Vancouver. The two artists became close friends and began to sketch together in the interior mountains. Interestingly, both men seemed to need the direct contact with nature and Macdonald produced a number of representational mountain paintings between 1939 and 1944. Undeniably, however, *Castle Towers, Garibaldi Park* of 1943 (cat. 73), carries high-keyed emotional overtones in its clarity and low horizon line, opening above into an expansive, ethereal blue sky. Throughout, Macdonald continued to contemplate the abstract; the pull between that route and representation must have been understood by Harris. No doubt, the two shared ideas about the relationship of the physical to the ideal, in particular "the fourth dimension" which had fascinated both for some time. Macdonald reported in 1943, that although he was painting landscape, he found, "my semi-abstracts, or what I name 'Modalities,' a deeper value to me." They contained "a nature form *in extension*," which was the same as saying *the 4th dimension is an extension of the third dimension; ...And the awakening of a new consciousness will arise out of the new knowledge, from the slow understanding, of the 4th dimension. For me, abstract and semi-abstract creations of pure idiom, are statements of the new awakening consciousness.*

The second benefit of the war was the timely 1943 arrival in Vancouver of the British Surrealist painter, Grace Pailthorpe. Wartime had brought a number of surrealist writers and painters to North America, particularly to New York, with results that reverberated in the development of Abstract Expressionism. Pailthorpe, a medical doctor and Freudian analyst, and a friend of the art critic and historian, Herbert Read, had explored automatic painting as an art form revelatory of the subconscious. Macdonald's search to depict "inner consciousness" and the essence of nature must have responded immediately to Pailthorpe's approach. As the artist himself had observed in 1940:

Do we limit nature to our visual perceptions or are we to extend our conception of Nature to include the whole universe. Art is not found in the mere imitation of nature, but the artist does perceive through his study of nature the awareness of a force which is the one order to which the whole universe conforms. Art in all its various activities is trying to tell us something, some—

thing about nature, something about the universe, and something about life.

... The laws of nature are also written within us. They are part of the essence of our minds....Intuitively artists create within the structural forms of nature.

Pailthorpe's methods were a catalyst for Macdonald's early experiments with automatist watercolours (fig. 16).

Jock Macdonald left Vancouver in 1946 to take a teaching position in Calgary. He soon moved on to Toronto where he became an influential teacher and colleague of a rising generation of artists, Painters Eleven, who were exploring the new possibilities of abstract expressionism. Macdonald's later paintings, stained, rubbed and brushed abstracts, helped pave the road to these developments in eastern Canada. The automatist watercolours had been a new direction, opening a way for the analogous depiction of nature's essence—a natural human act reflective of Nature's forms. It was a journey initiated in the landscape and art community of the West Coast, transformed but never losing sight of the microcosmic and monumental wonders of nature.

71. *Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937*

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Art BC: Masterworks from British Columbia.

Publication
2000

[transcription of excerpt]

J.W.G. Macdonald

James Williamson Galloway (Jock) Macdonald was trained as a fabric designer and came to Canada from Scotland in 1926. He was hired by Charles H. Scott to teach design at the Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts. Macdonald's introduction to painting was through the example of Frederick Varley, a colleague at the art school. The two became close friends and travelled to the Garibaldi region to sketch outdoors. Initially, Macdonald showed all of his paintings to Varley to get his comments, and the early work has a stronger sense of line than form. By 1930, however, he was independent of Varley's influence and received a major boost in 1931, when the National Gallery of Canada purchased his *Lytton Church, British Columbia*.

Although Macdonald was a good and popular teacher, he and Varley left the art school in 1933 to found their own institution, the B.C. College of Arts, along with Harry Tauber and several of their former students. However, the Depression did not allow for two schools of art in Vancouver, and theirs closed in 1935. Macdonald, desperately poor and wanting to get closer to nature, moved, with his wife and daughter, to the west coast of Vancouver island and settled on Nootka Sound. This region, which had been visited and painted by Emily Carr, proved to be a vital source of inspiration, although the living conditions were harsh. Macdonald and his family struggled to survive, and when he injured his back, they were forced to retreat to Vancouver.



Although the Nootkan interlude was only about eighteen months long, it resulted in an important series of works. Like Carr, Macdonald was struck by the power of First Nation images that he saw, and he was also interested in spiritual issues. He was reading the philosopher Rudolf Steiner and studying the theosophical writings of Madame Blavatsky. *Indian Burial, Nootka* was likely begun in Nootka but was finished after his return to Vancouver. It is a powerful work that depicts the conjunction of Christian and First Nations spirituality and, of course, the scenery of the village within the landscape. The Christian elements (the priest, the crosses, the fenced burial plots) dominate the image, but the people are clearly First Nations, and a striking mask is being held by the figure at the lower right. Macdonald bathed the entire scene in a rich light and used his strong design sense to animate the image. The checkerboard patterns of the gravesite and man's jacket, and the repeated shape of the crosses, all serve to engage the eye and control our perception of the image. The iconography of Christian and First Nations beliefs within the wonder of nature is reinforced by the dramatic, distant landscape, which suggests the richness of this environment. The painting is based on a small ink drawing, also in the collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, which contains many of the elements but lacks the key juxtaposition of the two worlds in the foreground.

Indian Burial, Nootka, although in many ways not the most dramatic of the First Nations subjects produced as a consequence of Macdonald's sojourn in Nootka, is the most profound. Simply and directly, it suggests something of the uneasy tension between white missionaries and the more deeply rooted indigenous cultures. What makes it a great painting is that it achieves this end almost by stealth. Viewers are seduced by the colour and design, and through these elements come to the message of the work.

Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Further Reading

Bates, Maxwell. "Jock Macdonald, Painter-Explorer," *Canadian Art*. XIV (Summer 1957): 151-53.

Jock Macdonald. Toronto: Roberts Gallery, 1962.

Murray, Joan. *Jock Macdonald's Students*. Oshawa: Robert McLaughlin Gallery, 1981.

Pollack, R. Ann, and Dennis Reid. *Jock Macdonald Retrospective Exhibition*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1969.

Zemans, Joyce. "The Impact of Automatism on the Art of J.W.G. Macdonald," *RACAR* VII (1980): 15-24.

Exhibition History

Exhibitions at the Vancouver Art Gallery

Opening the New Vancouver Art Gallery, 1951. September 26 - October 14, 1951.

Landscapes from the Permanent Collection. February 8 - April 20, 1980.

Landscapes from the Permanent Collection. July 1982 - August 1982.

Canadian Pictures, 1951. December 4, 1982 - March 20, 1983.

Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-1983. October 15, 1983 - December 31, 1983.

Images for the World. April 12, 1986 - May 19, 1986.

Contemporary and Historic Art from the Collection. January 1, 1990 - December 31, 1990.

The Informing Spirit: Art of the American Southwest and West Coast Canada, 1925 - 1945. June 15, 1994 - September 5, 1994.

Art in B.C.: From Desolation to Splendour. March 25, 1995 - November 1995.

Art in B.C.: J.W.G. Macdonald. January 1, 1996 - December 31, 1996.

Emily Carr: Art and Process. March 21, 1998 - June 7, 1998.

The Rhetoric of Utopia: John Vanderpant and his Contemporaries. August 21, 1999 - February 13, 2000.

This Place: Works from the Collection. June 29, 2002 - January 2003.

75 Years of Collecting: British Masters, Group of Seven and Pop Icons. February 4, 2006 - May 14, 2006.

75 Years of Collecting: First Nations: Myths and Realities. May 6, 2006 - August 27, 2006.

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Selected Exhibitions outside of the Vancouver Art Gallery

Royal Institute Galleries, London. *Exhibition of Paintings, Drawings and Sculpture by Artists of the British Empire Overseas*. May 8, 1937 - May 29, 1937.

Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. *The 63rd Autumn Exhibition*. October 16, 1937 - January 8, 1938.

Golden Gate International Exhibition, San Francisco. *Contemporary Art: Canadian 1939*

Art Gallery of Toronto, Toronto. *Miller Brittain, Adrien Hebert, J.W.G. Macdonald, Bernard Middleton*. April 1941.

Art Gallery of Toronto, Toronto. *The Development of Painting in Canada 1665-1945*. January 1, 1945 - January 31, 1945.

Art Gallery of Toronto, Toronto. *Jock W.G. Macdonald: A Retrospective Exhibition*. May 1960.

Art Gallery of Toronto, Toronto. *Jock Macdonald: The Inner Landscape*. 1981



Archival History

Note to File

Miscellaneous History

[transcription]

J.W.G. MACDONALD, 1897 - 1960

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Oil on canvas

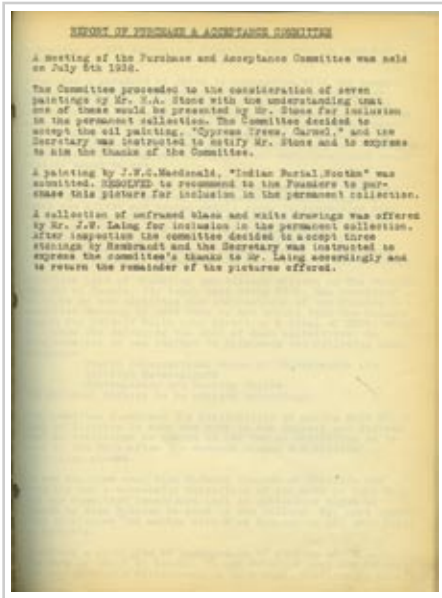
VAG 38.1

his painting depicts a Christian burial in a remote Indian village on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. A priest performs the last rites over a white coffin placed in an open grave, surrounded by a group of native men and women carrying a large mask. Beyond the white-fenced cemetery is a view of the coastal settlement, with a lighthouse on a bluff at the right.

In 1935 Macdonald moved from Vancouver to Nootka with his family. Upon his return to Vancouver in 1937, he executed a series of landscape paintings based on his sketches of Indian life. By means of pure, vivid colour and stylized forms,

Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

he expressed his impression of the mystical relationship between the native people and their natural surroundings. The choice of a Christian burial in an Indian village as a subject for the painting allowed Macdonald to explore the spiritual contact between his own Western culture and that of the Nootka people.



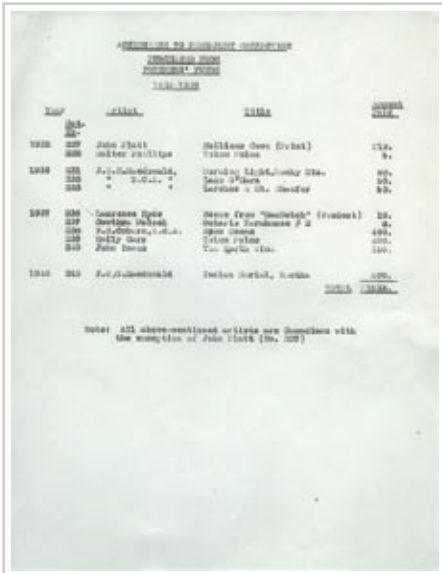
Report of the Purchase & Acceptance Committee
 Acquisition Record
 1938-06-08

[transcription of excerpt]

REPORT OF PURCHASE & ACCEPTANCE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Purchase and Acceptance Committee was held on July 5th 1938.

A painting by J.W.G. Macdonald, "Indian Burial, Nootka" was submitted. RESOLVED to recommend to the Founders to purchase this picture for inclusion in the permanent collection.



Accessions to Permanent Collection
 Acquisition Record
 1939

[transcription]

ACCESSIONS TO PERMANENT COLLECTION
PURCHASED FROM
FOUNDERS' FUNDS
1935-1939

Year: 1938

Cat. No. : 243

Artist: J.W.G. Macdonald

Title: Indian Burial, Nootka

Amount Paid: 400.

Note: All above-mentioned artists are Canadians with the exception of John Platt (No. 227)

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

Artist: J.W.G. MACDONALD ARCA: CAN GROUP OF PAINTERS
School: Canadian
Title: INDIAN BURIAL, NOOTKA
Medium: oil on canvas
Size: H. 36" W. 28"
Signed: (L.L.) J.W.G. MACDONALD
Source: Purchased 1938 from the artist
Ex Collection:
Insurance Value: \$500
Photograph No.
Cut No. C18 Old Cat. No. 243

Catalogue No.: C 18 59
Biography:
Born Thurso, Scotland. Studied at Edinburgh College of Art. Came to Canada 1926. Head of department of design, Vancouver School of Art 1927-33. Director, Art Department, Institute of Technology and Art, Calgary instructor at Ontario College of Art. Member Canadian Group of Painters.
Represented in Permanent Collections of Toronto Art Gallery, Hart House and Vancouver Art Gallery.
C18 loaned to Art Gallery of Toronto April-May 1960
1954

Catalogue Card

Miscellaneous History
1959

[transcription]

[(Jock) C.38.1 in ink]

Artist: J.W.G. MACDONALD ARCA: CAN GROUP OF PAINTERS [in blue ink]

Cat. No. 1897-1960

School: Canadian

Dates: 1897-1960

Title: INDIAN BURIAL, NOOTKA

Medium: oil on canvas

Size: H. 36" W. 28"

Signed: (L.L.) J.W.G. MACDONALD

Dated: 1937

Source: Purchased 1938 from the artist (funds provided probably by Mr. Stone)
[in pencil]

Ex Collection:

Insurance Value: \$500

Photograph No.

Cut No. C18

Old Cat. No. 243

Catalogue No.: C 18
38.1 [in pencil]

Biography:

Born Thurso, Scotland. Studied at Edinburgh College of Art. Came to Canada 1926. Head of department of design, Vancouver School of Art 1927-33. Director, Art Department, Institute of Technology and Art, Calgary, instructor at Ontario College of Art. Member Canadian Group of Painters. Represented in Permanent Collections of Toronto Art Gallery, Hart House and Vancouver Art Gallery.

C18 loaned to Art Gallery of Toronto April-May 1960 [in blue ink]

1954 [in blue ink]

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Press Release
Miscellaneous History
1982-09-05

[transcription]

VANCOUVER
ART GALLERY
PRESS RELEASE
1145 WEST GEORGIA, VANCOUVER, BC., CANADA V6E 3H2 (604) 682-5621

February 9/82-05

Reference:

Dorothy Metcalfe
Information Officer
Local 20

MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF
FORMER B.C ARTIST/TEACHER
JOCK MACDONALD
OPENS FEBRUARY 13

A retrospective exhibition of paintings by Jock Macdonald, a pioneer in the development of abstract art in Canada, and an artist/teacher who played a seminal role in the establishment of a vibrant art community in Vancouver from 1927 to 1947, will open February 13 at the Vancouver Art Gallery. The exhibition, organized by the Art Gallery of Ontario under guest curator, Joyce Zemans of York University, includes 158 works produced between 1930 and 1960, the year of Macdonald's death in Toronto.

A graduate of the Edinburgh College of Art, Macdonald emigrated to Canada in 1927 to become head of design and instructor in commercial advertising at the newly-established Vancouver School of Decorative and Applied Arts (now the Emily Carr College of Art and Design). Inspired by the natural environment, Macdonald and his colleague Frederick Varley, head of drawing, painting, and composition, spent much of their free time on weekends and summer vacations on sketching and camping trips in the Garibaldi Mountains. Macdonald's rendering of the familiar Table Mountain, Black Tusk, Castel Towers, and Howe Sound are early representative pieces included in the exhibition along with other well-known canvasses such as "Lytton Church, B.C.", in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada and "Indian Burial, Nootka", in the collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery.

- more -

/2

When the Depression forced severe salary cuts in the art school budget, Macdonald and Varley decided to found the B.C. College of Art, in premises on Georgia Street now occupied by Maynards Auctioneers. It quickly established a reputation as a centre of new and stimulating ideas in a variety of art forms including music, dance and photography as well as the visual arts. The school operated for two years before declaring bankruptcy, but its influence on the local

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

cultural community of the period is now legendary.

Macdonald himself was infected by the exciting ideas fostered at the College and he began experiments in abstraction. He soon found landscape painting in the tradition of his Group of Seven contemporaries too confining whereas abstraction opened up new vistas of expressive freedom.

Although Macdonald always looked to nature as his primary source of inspiration, he preferred to capture the spirit of nature rather than its physical manifestations or, as he put it, "the inner rather than the outer landscape." It is from this that the exhibition "Jock Macdonald The Inner Landscape" derives its title.

During his twenty years in B.C. Macdonald was active as artist, teacher, exhibitor, and arts organizer. He was a member of the B.C. Society of Artists, with whom he exhibited regularly, a charter member of the Federation of Canadian Artists and a member of the Vancouver Art Gallery Council for 11 years, serving on its judging, exhibitions and hanging committees, and implementing its popular Saturday morning classes.

The Vancouver Art Gallery accorded Macdonald his first one man show in May 1941 and five years later mounted a solo exhibition, of his 'automatic' watercolours.

Macdonald moved to Toronto in 1947 and became instructor of painting at the Ontario College of Art. In 1953 he was instrumental in the founding of Painters Eleven, a group dedicated to the promotion of abstract art.

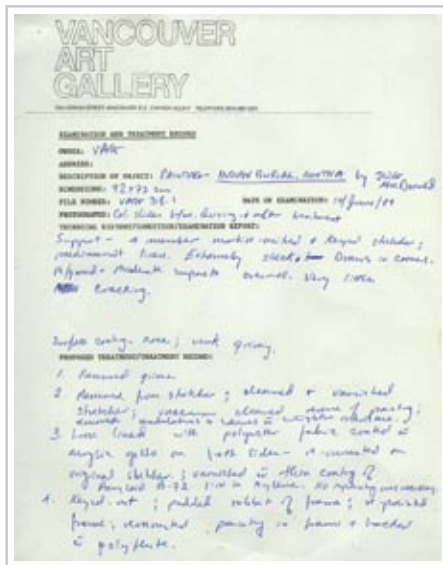
A 283-page illustrated catalogue written by Joyce Zemans which traces Macdonald's career, will be on sale in the Gallery Shop.

The exhibition, which runs through March 21, is financially assisted by the Canada Council and Teleglobe Canada.

-30-

SPECIAL LECTURE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15 at 3:00 pm, Vancouver Art Gallery, FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC: Joyce Zemans, guest curator and Professor in the Department of Visual Arts, York University, will give an illustrated talk on Jock Macdonald in conjunction with the current exhibition

Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Examination and Treatment Record

Conservation
 1984-06-10

[transcription]

EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT RECORD

OWNER: VAG

ADDRESS:

DESCRIPTION OF OBJECT: PAINTING—INDIAN BURIAL, NOOTKA by JWG MacDONALD

DIMENSIONS: 92 x 72 cm

FILE NUMBER: VAG 38.1

DATE OF EXAMINATION: 10/June/84

PHOTOGRAPHS: Col. slides before, during and after treatment

TECHNICAL HISTORY/CONDITION/EXAMINATION REPORT:
 Support—4 member mortise-mitred and keyed stretcher;
 medium-wt linen. Extremely slack; Draws in corners;
 pt/9 mud— moderate impasto overall. Very little cracking

surface coating—none; work grainy

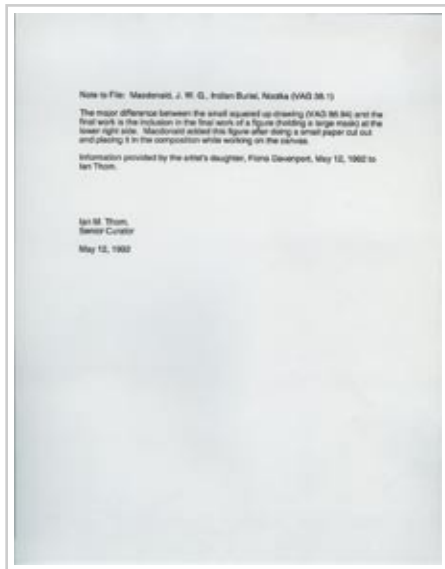
PROPOSED TREATMENT/TREATMENT RECORD

1. removed grime
2. removed from stretcher; cleaned and varnished stretcher; vacuum cleaned reverse of painting; removed undulations in canvas with weights and moisture
3. loose lined with polyester fabric coated with acrylic gesso on both sides— remounted on original stretcher; varnished with thin coating of Acryloid B-72 1:10 in xylene. NO inpainting was necessary. Keyed out; padded rabbit of frame; repainted frame; remounted pointing in frame and backed w [with] polyflute.



Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Note to File
Miscellaneous History
1992-05-12

[transcription]

Note to File: Macdonald, J. W. G., Indian Burial, Nootka (VAG 38.1)

The major difference between the small squared up drawing (VAG 86.94) and the final work is the inclusion in the final work of a figure (holding a large mask) at the lower right side. Macdonald added this figure after doing a small paper cut out and placing it in the composition while working on the canvas.

Information provided by the artist's daughter, Fiona Davenport, May 12, 1992 to Ian Thom.

Ian M. Thom,
Senior Curator

May 12, 1992



Circulating Condition Report
Conservation
1994-04-15

[transcription]

**McMichael
CANADIAN ART
COLLECTION
D'ART CANADIEN**

CIRCULATING CONDITION REPORT

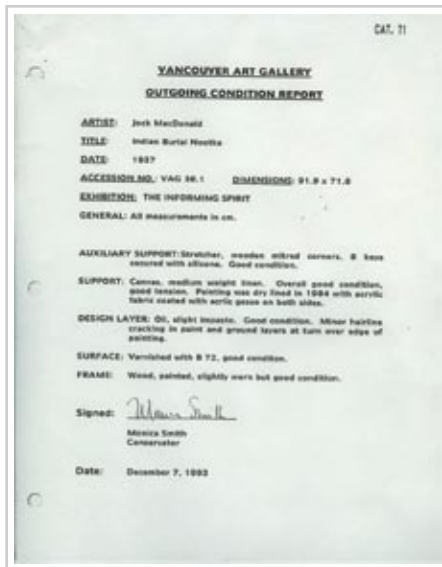
EXHIBITION: THE INFORMING SPIRIT

WORK:
Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial Nootka 1937
oil on canvas
91.9 x 71.8
The Vancouver Art Gallery Founders Fund
Cat. #71
Crate #20

CONDITION REPORT

Painting:
—slight ripple in canvas upper 1 edge and just below c r edge
—otherwise SPR
—see VAG report attached

Jock Macdonald
Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937



Frame:
—soiling upper l and r
—generally sound
—see VAG report attached

[signed]
Conservator

APR 15 1994 [in ink]
Date

SPR May 10/95 Monica Smith [in ink]

SPR July 30.02 BW [in pencil]

CAT. 71

VANCOUVER ART GALLERY
OUTGOING CONDITION REPORT

ARTIST: Jock MacDonald

TITLE: Indian Burial Nootka

DATE: 1937

ACCESSION NO.: VAG 38.1
DIMENSIONS: 91.9 x 71.8

EXHIBITION: THE INFORMING SPIRIT

GENERAL: All measurements in cm.

AUXILIARY SUPPORT: Stretcher, wooden mitred corners, 8 keys secured with silicone. Good condition.

SUPPORT: Canvas, medium weight linen. Overall good condition, good tension. Painting was dry lined in 1984 with acrylic fabric coated with acrylic gesso on both sides.

DESIGN LAYER: Oil, slight impasto. Good condition. Minor hairline cracking in paint and ground layers at turn over edge of painting.

SURFACE: Varnished with B 72, good condition.

FRAME: Wood, painted, slightly worn but good condition.

Signed:
Monica Smith [in ink]

Monica Smith
Conservator

Date: December 7, 1993

Jock Macdonald

Indian Burial, Nootka, 1937

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