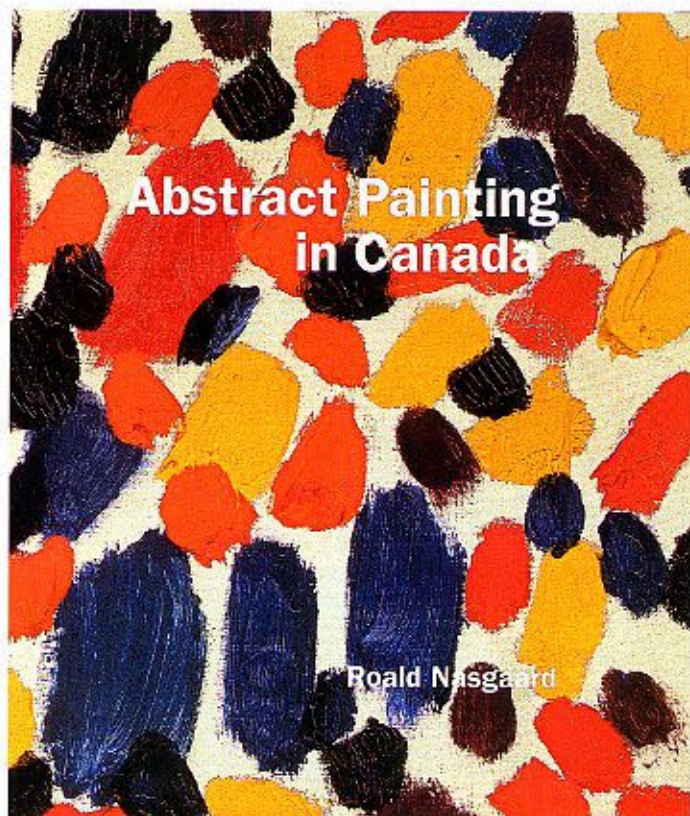


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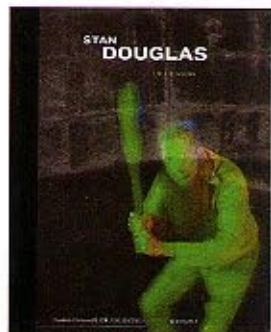
Canadian Art reviews recent art books selected from the lists of national and international publishing houses.



Abstract Painting in Canada

Roald Nasgaard

► **ABSTRACT PAINTING IN CANADA**, Roald Nasgaard, Douglas & McIntyre/Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, 432 pp, \$85.00. In his introduction to this comprehensive overview of abstract painting in Canada, the eminent historian, critic and curator Roald Nasgaard makes clear the difficulties in pinning absolutes to the term "abstract." Instead, he suggests that abstraction is better understood as a synergetic continuum between representation and pure painterly construction. Nasgaard tracks Canadian abstraction from its theosophical beginnings in the 1920s through the "heroic" post-WWII years right up to contemporary painting at the turn of the millennium. Thoroughly researched, highly readable and filled with top-notch illustrations, Nasgaard's book firmly establishes a historical canon and sets a new standard for Canadian art publishing.



► **STAN DOUGLAS**, Philip Monk, DuMont, 184 pp, \$48.00. This new monograph on the work of Stan Douglas is the latest in the con-

troversial Swiss businessman and contemporary-art collector Friedrich Christian Flick's Collector's Choice series. Politics aside, the book offers an excellent portrait of the Vancouver artist's career, providing background notes as well as generous reproductions of each of his film and photo works. A lead essay by the Art Gallery of York University curator Philip Monk adds critical weight to round out the picture.



► **SCISSORS, PAPER, STONE: EXPRESSIONS OF MEMORY IN CONTEMPORARY PHOTOGRAPHIC ART**, Martha Langford, McGill-Queen's University Press, 352 pp, \$55.00. *Scissors, Paper, Stone* complements and expands on ideas from Langford's 2001 study *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* by examining the points at which photographic art and memory intersect. Conversant with a variety of disciplines, Langford leads us, with characteristic subtlety and wit, through three likely sets of thematic pairings—remembering and forgetting, memory and imagination, memory and history—revealing, in the process, what amounts to an impressive history of contemporary Canadian photographic art.



► **MILLER BRITTAIN: WHEN THE STARS THREW DOWN THEIR SPEARS**, Tom Smart and Allen Bentley, Goose Lane Editions/Beaverbrook Art Gallery, 184 pp, \$65.00. Once called "The Brueghel of Canada" by a Montreal critic, the Saint John, New Brunswick, painter Miller Brittain is deservedly famous for his socially

conscious paintings of the 1930s. His experience as an Air Force bomb aimer in the Second World War led to a powerful 1946 painting called *Night Target, Germany*, but after the war Brittain's art changed and its quality fell. While his story is well told here, it's a sad one that ends in alcoholism and isolation.

► **ANARCHY AND ART: FROM THE PARIS COMMUNE TO THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL**, Allan Antliff, Arsenal Pulp Press, 214 pp, \$26.95. With their common emphasis on individual expression

