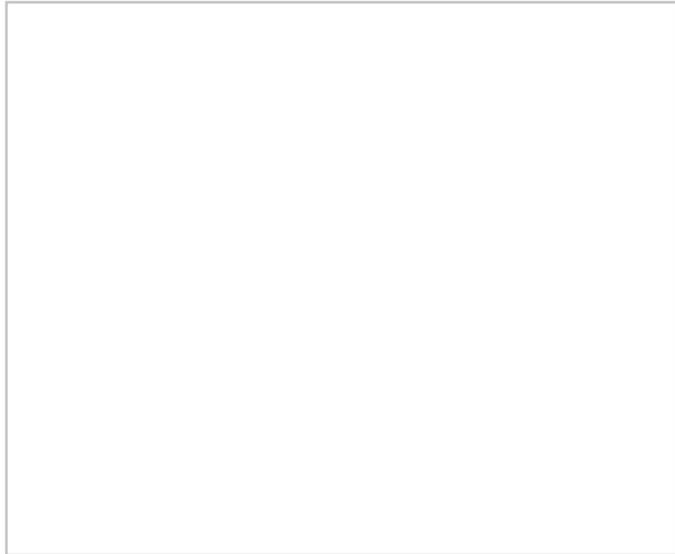
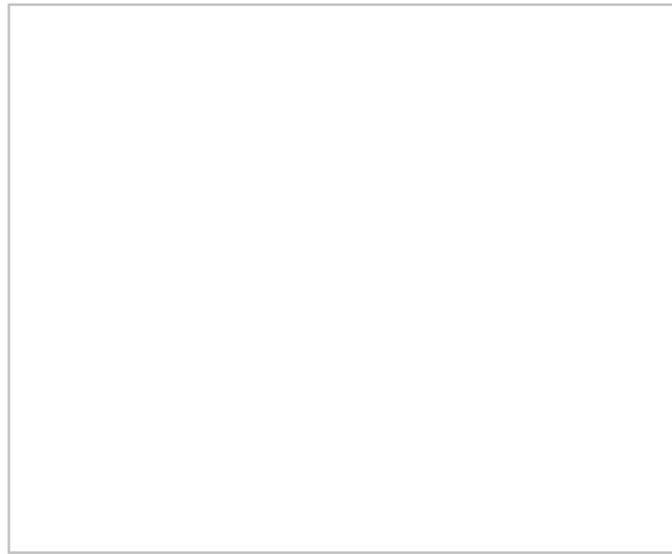


# English Translation for French Art Exhibit June 2 - October 2, 1995



**JUST COMING OUT OF ALGONQUIN PARK, 1991.  
OIL ON MASONITE. 18 x 22**



**RED GRANITE NEAR KALADAR, 1982.  
OIL ON MASONITE. 34 x 40**

The journey which Donald Fraser invites us to take is a marvellous journey across the frozen lands of Canada with its immense snow covered vista, its vast forests, its multitude of lakes, torrents and waterfalls, its heavy days of summer heat and its thousand tints of foliage in Indian Summer.

This poetic description of the vibrant landscapes painted by Canadian artist Donald Fraser was penned by Dr. Thierry Lefrancois, Curator of the Museum of Art and History of La Rochelle, France.

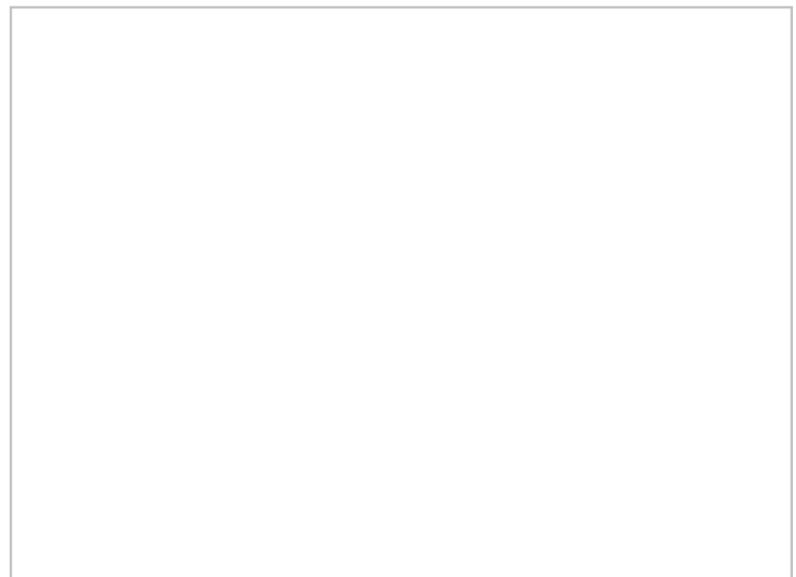
The words were printed in a brochure produced for a special exhibition at the Musee du Nouveau Monde in La Rochelle - a showing of 52 works by Donald Fraser, a resident of Queensborough, Ontario. It was a great honour for Fraser to be selected as the featured artist for this major exhibition.

This international recognition of his talent reflects the great excitement that surrounds Donald Fraser's work today. His vibrant oil paintings depicting the rugged beauty of Ontario are reminiscent of the Group of Seven and are now in great demand. He is an unassuming artist who has never made a special effort to see his work. Today his work hangs in many private, corporate and institutional collections worldwide.

Donald Fraser was born on June 11, 1921 in the northern Ontario town of Charlton, near Kirkland Lake. His family moved to Florida when he was four, and it was there that he first demonstrated his talent for drawing. Birds, snakes and other animals that lived in the woods around his home made their way onto the pages of his sketchbook.

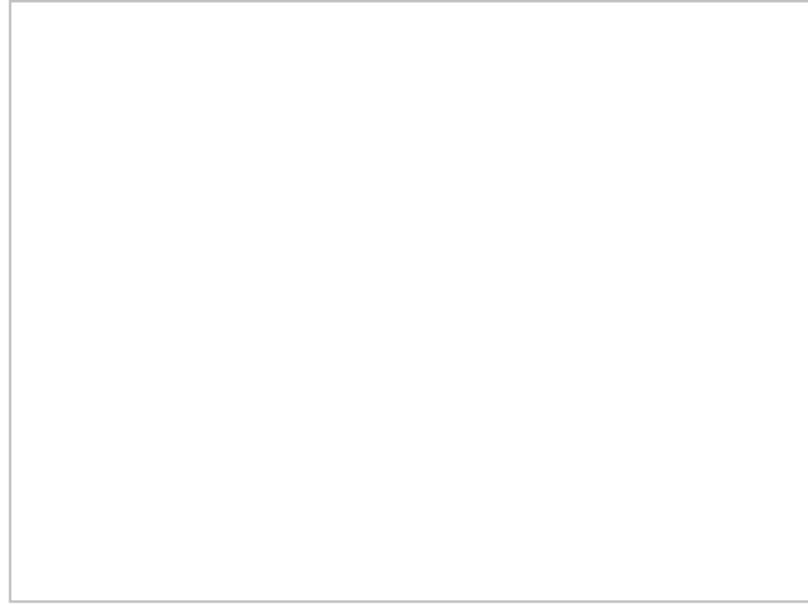
In 1932, when Fraser was eleven, his family returned to Ontario, settling in Bracebridge.

After completing high school in Bracebridge, Fraser was awarded a scholarship to the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. Franklin Carmichael, one of the



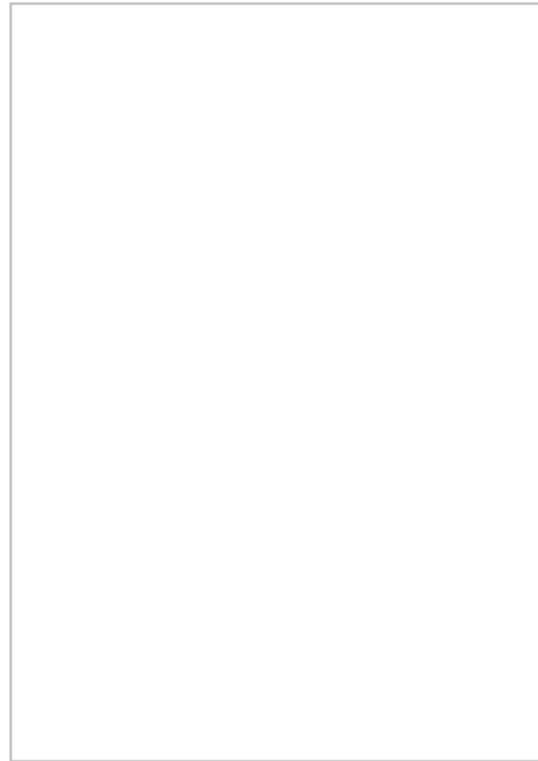
**NORTH SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR, 1986.  
OIL ON CANVAS. 36 x 47**

founding members of the Group of Seven, was his first instructor at the well respected college. Fraser then studied composition, classical drawing and portraiture with John Alfsen. Fraser's talent and dedication during his time at OCA were recognized with yearly scholarships, and on his graduation he was honoured with the Governor-General's Award of Excellence.

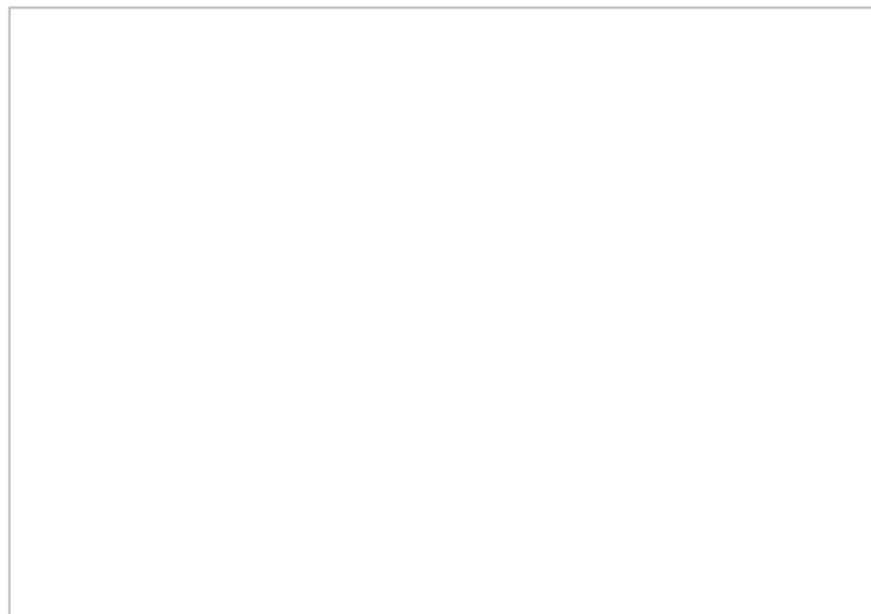


**BROKEN BEAVER DAM, 1993.  
OIL ON WOOD PANEL. 16 x 20**

Fraser returned to the Ontario College of Art after graduation as an instructor, teaching other young artists for four years. He then accepted a position as a professional scenic artist with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in Toronto, where he worked for 26 years, producing many magnificent stage set paintings and portraits of famous personalities and visiting dignitaries. He has also worked as a full-time teacher in secondary schools in Toronto, and for 40 years he passed on his knowledge and skill by teaching evening courses in life-drawing.



**TOM TAYLOR OF CURVE LAKE, 1986.  
WATERCOLOUR. 30 x 22**



**I TOLD YOU SO! 1982. SEPIA. 11 x 14**

In 1986 Fraser retired from the CBC and, together with his late wife Catherine, a talented artist in her own right, moved to a farmhouse in Queensborough, Ontario. He is now enjoying his life as a full-time artist.

At the moment Donald Fraser is best known for his impressionistic landscapes in oil, and indeed he has spent a significant part of his life travelling the countryside in quest of new landscapes to paint. His body of work, however, includes Toronto street scenes painted over five decades and character studies in pen and ink. Fascinated by the human spirit,

Fraser was known to sketch people on subways, and would sit in dim corners of pubs, capturing the faces and feelings of the regulars in his sketchbook. Using black walnuts he developed an unusual sepia wash to use with his portraits, lending them an air of both warmth and mystery.

Fraser paints the majority of his landscapes on location despite the severity of the weather and the insects. (An interviewer once commented on the birds depicted in one of his landscapes. "Those aren't birds," he declared. "They're black flies! The bugs were so terrible I couldn't scrape all of them out of the paint.")

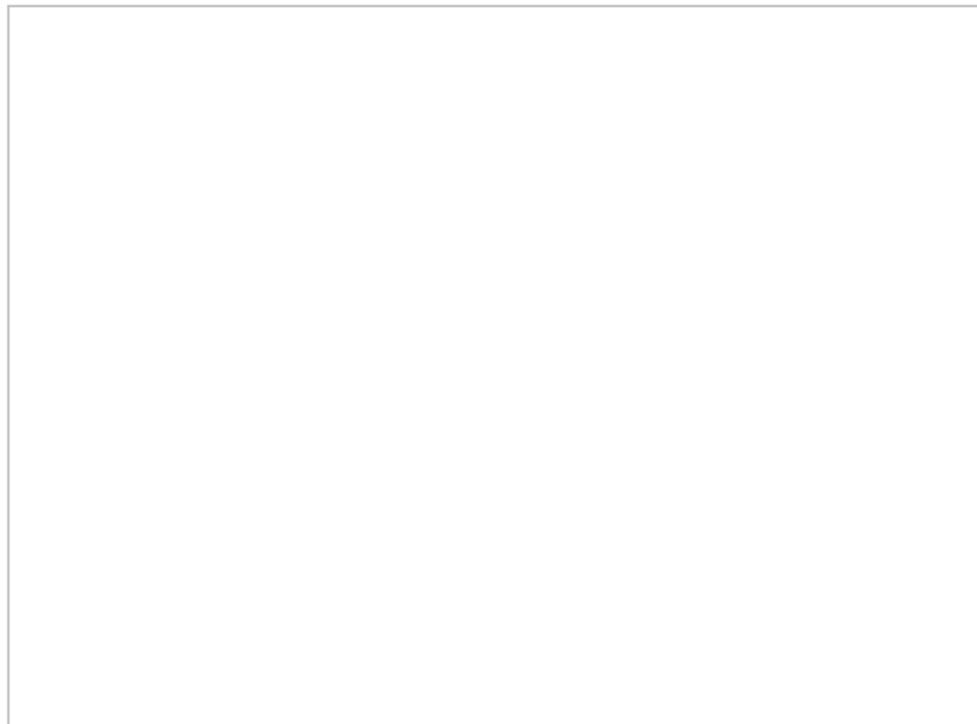
A versatile artist, Donald Fraser uses a wide variety of media: oils, watercolours, acrylics, pastels, pencil, conte crayon, and sepia. Watercolours, pencil or pen and ink are often chosen for sketches on location, then back in the studio he occasionally uses the sketches when painting full-sized canvases, working his oils on a larger scale to give himself more freedom.

Fraser works quickly - spontaneously - to capture a visual impression, feeling that detail is not necessarily equated with accuracy. His speed enables him to catch in a fleeting moment the spirit of his subject, whether a landscape or a face. He has

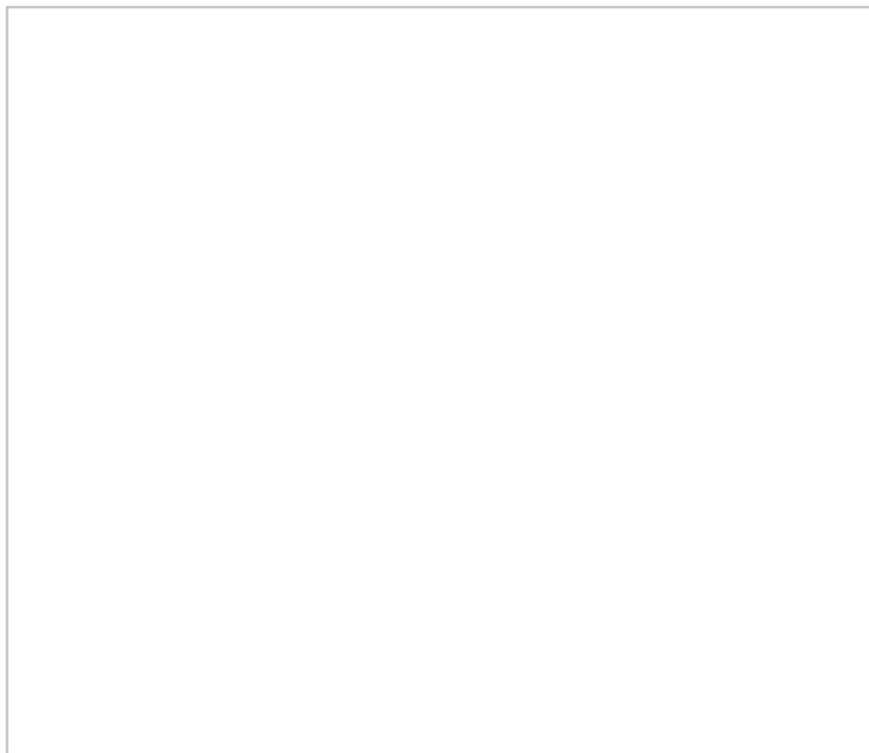
the unusual ability, which he developed as a student at the Ontario College of Art, to use both hands simultaneously when painting or drawing. His right hand draws, while his left hand brushes and softens. "My right hand is precise, correct. With my left hand I feel quite differently. I get a much more emotional response," he has said.

Fraser has explained in the past that his artistic approach is a subtle compromise between objectivity and subjectivity. He finds his imagination stimulated by nature and reality; then he injects his personal feeling towards man and his environment.

Fraser began exhibiting his work in 1952 but continued to do so only haphazardly. He did not



**DESOLATION, 1972.  
OIL ON CANVAS. 33 x 40**



**THE HILLS AT ROSENEATH, 1972.  
OIL ON WOOD PANEL. 18 x 21**

really attempt to sell his work for over 40 years, either while in Toronto, or after having moved to Queensborough. He made an occasional sale while exhibiting his work with other artists, but he never tried to display his work in the Toronto art galleries. He explains: "In the past, I concentrated so much on the development of my artistic capabilities that I made little effort to have my work shown in exhibitions. I deliberately put aside the temptation to commercialize my work and I let my paintings pile up in my attic until there was no room for any more."

painters as John Alfsen, George Pepper, Manly MacDonald, Eric Aldwinkle, Charles Comfort, Yvonne McKague-Hauser and Roly Murphy could not help but develop in me a particular sensitivity to the rugged atmosphere of the Canadian north country and a profound desire to express that atmosphere in my paintings."

Lefrancois has the last word: "The vigour of his drawing, the quality of his brushwork, the richness and the intensity of his palette create an artistic work that is both generous and profoundly original."

"The style and subject matter of my paintings definitely show a certain similarity with the works of the Group of Seven," comments Fraser. "That was inevitable, given that I once took lessons from Franklin Carmichael. And my close contact with such

This show provides a wonderful opportunity to view the works of an internationally acclaimed artist who has chosen to make his home in rural eastern Ontario. Recognition of his talent, both at home and abroad, is long overdue.

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