

Terry Ananny Exemplifies the Magic of Naive Art



VILLAGE IN THE FALL/VILLAGE EN AUTOMNE, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 36 in.

Of the many definitions of naivety – artlessness, innocence, unaffected – none seems entirely appropriate to Terry Ananny's art. It may be that the two strongest influences on her work, Peter Brueghel and Henri Masson, give a somewhat stronger provenance than that of most other naive artists.

"Brueghel's busy canvasses," she says, "are the inspiration for my own

compositions." Ananny's "people paintings" are indeed full of figures crowding into the foreground and always on the move as Brueghel's figures are.

The strong primary colours in which she depicts them derive from Masson. "I've been blessed with an innate sense of colour and composition," she says, but her exposure to Masson, particularly to his later work, seems to have imparted a boldness to the former even as Brueghel imparted

a freedom of movement to the latter.

Like so many other naive artists, Ananny is largely self-taught. She had used paints as a pastime when a girl summering with her family on Lake Muskoka but her career sights were set on journalism. She didn't begin to paint seriously until in her thirties when she was raising her three children.

Ananny paints with acrylics on stretched canvas. It is a medium which,



SKATING/PATINAGE, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 48 in.



CELEBRATING VILLAGE/VILLAGE EN FÊTE, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 in.



WINTER FUN/LES JOIES DE L'HIVER, acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 in.

when employed by a naive artist, will more often than not disdain the subtle blends of colour and stroke which are the signature of the painter in oils and the delicate tones which are the signature of the watercolourist. Nor does perspective cause the same concern.

The naive painter puts colour to canvas and board in such a forthright way that the tonal and dimensional values that inform sophisticated works become meaningless – which, of course, is a large part of growing popularity of naive art. Another reason may be the way naive art transcends the usual limits of time and space.

The works of naive artists, including that of Ananny, are understandably popular additions to the line of Christmas cards issued by UNICEF and other international, inter-racial organizations. Their appeal is universal.

Naive art has come a long way from

“primitive” painting of Grandma Moses and her like in the 1950's and 1960's. Naive artists today may still derive a permissive pride and inspiration from them but the work they are doing now, and which is commanding such attention, while springing from the same artistic roots as the primitives, is generally more disciplined in composition and colour.

Ananny probably speaks for all naive artists when she says she paints the way she does because it “suits her disposition”. Arguably, the recent extension of her interest to larger-than-life sculptures has the same motivation. Her sculpted figures have the same vivid colouring and vivacity as her paintings.

Her first exhibition was at the Ottawa Little Theatre in 1990, and again in the 1991 following a prize-winning entry in the Ottawa Art Society show.

She has since exhibited widely throughout the Ottawa area where she is now represented by the Art Mode Gallery in Ottawa. She was having a solo show there as *Magazin'Art* went to press. The indications were that all 41 of the works she hung would be sold, including the larger ones. █

John Meyer

Terry Ananny is listed in *The Biennial Guide to Canadian Artists in Galleries* and is represented by Yves Laroche, Montreal; Collector's Gallery, Calgary; Michel Blais, and Rendez-vous Art Gallery in Vancouver; Galerie Chez-Moi, Baie-St. Paul; Galerie du Petit Champlain, Quebec City.