JACK SHADBOLT

UNDERPINNINGS

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Works On Paper From The Collection

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Jesting Grasses, 1953-54, Gouache, ink, and casein on paper, Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

Jack Shadbolt

Jack Shadbolt (1909-1998) is one of Canada's most important artists. He is known for his paintings and murals that draw from his personal experiences and from the social and political conflicts that have taken place in British Columbia and world history such as the struggles of the First Nations, the Second World War, and the environmental movement.

Jack Shadbolt: Underpinnings, is a celebration of Shadbolt's centenary and includes over 150 drawings, sketches, and archival materials that date from the 1930s to the 1980s. One section of the exhibition reveals the artist's technical approaches to large-scale mural work and also shows the artist's creative approaches to themes that continue to resonate today.

Over the past two decades, the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery has benefited from a rich relationship with the Shadbolts. The works of art that have been gifted by Jack and Doris Shadbolt from 1996 to 1998, by Doris Shadbolt in 1998 after the death of her husband, and by the Estate of Doris Shadbolt from 2008 to 2009 have deepened the Gallery's existing collection of important work by this artist. The works are significant to the understanding of Shadbolt's production and to the history of Canadian art.

Jack Shadbolt was born in England in 1909 and with his family, came to Victoria, British Columbia in 1921. He lived and taught in Victoria, Vancouver, and Burnaby. His work is represented in all the major galleries across Canada as well as in corporate and private collections. Shadbolt's numerous awards include The Order of Canada in 1972, an Honorary Degree from the University of British Columbia, and in 1987 he and his wife, art historian and curator Doris Shadbolt, established VIVA, the Vancouver Institute for Visual Arts, which supports and recognizes the achievements of artists in British Columbia.

This publication accompanies the exhibition, *Jack Shadbolt: Underpinnings* (May 1 – August 23, 2009) and is part of an ongoing series of monographs that place works of art in the collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery at the University of British Columbia in critical and historical context.

Presences after Fire: Jack Shadbolt and the Anglo-Colonial Experience

Robert Linsley

Born in 1909, Jack Shadbolt is a member of the second generation of modernists in British Columbia. Taught and inspired by older artists such as Carr and Varley, this generation experienced the beginnings of the polemical differentiation and synthesis of positions that characterizes a healthy culture. At this time discussion of the purposes of art was loosely collected around two positions: a romantic, nationalist landscape art with reference to the Group of Seven and social realism.

But Shadbolt, though he thoroughly absorbed the ideas of the 1930s, emerged as a mature artist after the war, and he is always linked with a later generation that discovered abstraction. He rightly doesn't belong with his cohorts—Vera Weatherbie, Irene Reid, John Koerner, the team of Hughes, Goranson and Fisher etc.—but with a younger group including Peter Aspell, Gordon Smith, Don Jarvis, Al Neil and the Bobaks, and also with some still younger artists, who though twenty years younger than Shadbolt, represent the tail end of this second generation—Takao Tanabe and Toni Onley.[1] With the exception of Neil, all of these artists are landscapists. Most of the artists of this group experimented with abstraction, yet those who later gained commercial success did so by drawing back from abstraction *per se* to a landscape style influenced by their formal studies.

The work of Smith, Onley, Jarvis and Tanabe has much in common. It is often West Coast scenes, generalized and simplified and devoid of social reference and those characteristic themes (clear cuts, native villages) that gave historical resonance to earlier regional painting. This work displays a particular set of problems—of denials and recognitions, of ambitions and accomplishments—which have been described in a preliminary way elsewhere.[2] Within this group, Shadbolt stands above his colleagues in the quality of his engagement and ambition. Of all of them he is the only one who has been continually thoughtful and enquiring about his own practice and about the larger issues at stake, and he is the only one who has consistently theorized and written about those larger issues. Unlike the others, Shadbolt has not searched for a successful style; he has searched for ways to address the big questions at the root of the development of abstraction in the 1950s. These included the double historical trauma of the Holocaust and the atom bomb, and the questions of social order, freedom and individualism.

From the beginning he has demonstrated flexibility and a willingness to change. But now, in the latter part of his career, it is also becoming clear to what extent he was deeply and permanently affected by certain discussions of the 1940s and early 1950s. In painterly terms, I argue, we can still see echoes of Graham Sutherland and Paul Nash in Shadbolt's work. In philosophical terms we can still detect the lingering echo of Herbert Read, and of the tension between the Bauhaus/Constructivist position of the Art in Living Group and Vancouver's organic abstraction of the 1950s. To investigate these roots will send us back over the formalist hump, beyond the painting and painting theories of the American 1960s, to a period when British and Commonwealth artists were attempting to find an abstract symbolism that would preserve art's autonomy and still address the world in an important way. The scale, confidence, and conceptual flatness (otherwise "presence") of postwar American painting made this organic symbolism seem small, scratchy, dark and irrelevant; the British artists were passed over by the *Zeitgeist*. Perhaps, because recent historical events appear to have closed off the period that began with the rise of fascism and the emergence of a bi-polar politics, this work is now beginning to look more interesting than it did a few years ago, and Shadbolt's debt to this historical moment looks less like a liability, less like a mark of the provincial, and more like a proof of his engagement with history.

Shadbolt's works of the postwar period, with titles such as *Presences after Fire* (1950), *Dark Fruition* (1952), and *Remnants of a Dry Season* (1949), participate in a kind of melancholic nature poetry that is also found in the works of Sutherland and Nash. Sutherland's thorn bushes and Nash's dying suns are usually seen in the Blake/Palmer tradition of the visionary landscape; specifically the *British* visionary landscape. Inexplicably lyrical and affirmatively nationalist readings are still common in England, but it seems obvious today that these artists' works contain motifs of pessimism and decline already widespread in the culture of the 1920s and the 1930s which took a new turn in the postwar period. The end of the war brought no reason for hope. Instead, an undercurrent of pessimism and exhaustion was felt alongside the natural inclination to renewal and new beginnings. The opening of the death camps stirred a generalized, universal guilt and brought the highest values of western culture into question. The dropping of the bomb inaugurated a permanent state of anxiety. Though Nash died in 1946, works of the 1930s and 1940s such as *Eclipse of the Sunflower* (1945), captured the new mood as well. Shadbolt was highly aware of all of this as his accounts of the period show. He described the 1950s as a "dim out" and the "dimness" and pessimism of his work at this period is clear.

Against this historical background, the confidence of American abstract painting, though convincing in its way, has a moment of bad faith. Its triumphalism comes into sharper relief against the doubtfulness of the British artists. When Shadbolt moved into a full strength gestural abstraction it is significant that he derived his concept from the sight of bombed buildings he encountered in Britain during the war. His experience of war damage was further associated strongly for him with the shock he felt at the revelation of the death

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camps. His later crossing of nature imagery, particularly references to the subterranean and insect worlds, with abstraction is a response to the American challenge that tries to keep contact with the apocalyptic symbolism of the British school.

In Shadbolt's work of the last ten years we can often see a large "H" or horned "T" form silhouetted against a landscape. This symbolic gateway is a strong recollection of similar shapes in the work of Sutherland. What this form might mean in every case is not necessarily clear, but a recent Shadbolt lithograph, *Winter Sun Trap* (1993), is a clear recapitulation in the late period of an artist's life of a vocabulary of images that spoke to him in his youth. In this print, the menacing horns in the foreground support a skeletal framework that could be the "trap" of the title. Just slipping out, or perhaps moving into view through the middle of the structure, is the disk of the sun. The sun, in Nash's work in particular, was an apocalyptic image—suns in eclipse, black suns, sinking suns, blood red suns—the atomic furnace that radiates life and sustains hope during the cold war became an image of catastrophe. The ultimate symbol of the spiritual dimension of poetry was threatened, blighted, or banished. Shadbolt's use of this image vocabulary is not anachronistic. It is an historical witness to the unfinished business of the postwar period – the need to abreact to a spiritual crisis that could not work itself out because of political pressures.

It has become a critical commonplace that Shadbolt's work is constructed around a moving dialectic of opposites. Individual pieces are routinely described as an achieved balance of opposing forces—tight compositional structure versus disruptive energy. He himself has explained his working process in terms of a struggle between the demands of form and emotion. This formal dialectic also lies deep within the subjects he chooses. The very recent *Quadrant* series (1994), for example, is a group of panels that set a geometrical abstraction reminiscent of Mondrian against pure gesture. This particular duality becomes both more literal and more social with the inclusion of organic images—Shadbolt's trademark butterflies, beetles and birds. The grids and colour fields of the other painterly layer are then more easily seen in their historical relation to architecture.

The "formal" articulation of the painting surface and edges in late abstraction maintains a link, through Mondrian, to a modernist tradition of utopian architectural discourse. This is the affirmative strain of modernism, the techno-optimistic future building current expunged from critical discourse in the great political art purges of the 1950s. The visible link of latter day abstraction, say the work of Marden, Lewitt or Ryman, with this history is only in the uses to which such art is put as decoration in the corporate office tower. Shadbolt stages his critique of this tradition and ideology through his battling, and endangered, organic forms. It is a witness of his public and historical ambition that he should attempt to make monumental modernist decoration a site of struggle between opposing principles—or rather that he should propose that such struggle is constitutive of the modernist movement itself.

In 1950 Herbert Read observed that all modern art falls between the poles of the "realistic" and the "abstract." He goes on to say that: "realism will include…. also those distorted or selected images due to exceptional states of awareness which we call idealism, expressionism, superrealism [surrealism] etc." This dualistic mode of thinking is exactly Shadbolt's way. Read goes on to link abstraction with the constructivist utopian position I have outlined. He also:

> "sees in realism an expression of confidence in, and sympathy for, the organic processes of life. In other words, realism is an affirmative mode of expression, by which we do not necessarily mean the expression of an optimistic mood…. But abstraction is the reaction of man confronted with the abyss of nothingness, the expression of an *Angst* which distrusts or renounces the organic principle, and affirms the creative freedom of the human mind in such a situation."[3]

Like Read, Shadbolt sees the organic principle as antagonistic to the constructive. For Shadbolt, as for Read, this antagonism is also an oscillation between confidence and anxiety, a dialectical tussle between affirmation and pessimism on both sides of the divide. But this is not just a question of influence. If it were only a case of "influence" in the art historical sense Shadbolt would be a much lesser artist. The integrity of Shadbolt's dialectical turn of thought is found in the fact that it is derived from his historical experience as an artist in the formative period of British Columbia's culture.

Shadbolt was certainly aware of the effective propaganda for modern architecture undertaken by B.C. Binning, Frederic Lasserre and others. This progressive modernist position also addressed social questions arising from the effort to integrate workers with the middle class. In North America, with the defeat of the Left movement of the 1930s, it increasingly began to appear that community, necessary in itself, couldn't exist except as an oppressive conformism. The only outside position seemed to be a kind of anti-social individualism, and some artists were led to draw on the Rimbaudian tradition of the *voyant*. While figures such as B.C. Binning were content to decorate new office towers with geometric mosaics, others such as Al Neil attempted to *live* their rejection of the new corporate/bureaucratic order, always drawing strength from the natural and tribal worlds, and often living a semi-rural life. Shadbolt's career since then could be seen as a refusal to take either position—neither the affirmative/modernist nor the critical/expressionist—but to explode the tension they produced by smashing them together. Shadbolt experienced a polarized aesthetic/political discourse as oppressive; the energy released by crossing the poles set his ideas into motion.

But just as energy and natural vitality is always to be balanced off against formal control, so the notion of art as critique, as a social *alternative*, is constantly canceled out by its real social function as design. At the 1993 VIVA Awards presentation, Shadbolt spoke about the usefulness of art as a source of design ideas to meet the marketing needs of Vancouver's Pacific Rim future. He sounded strangely out of time, as if he were reiterating the arguments of the 1950s. Yet he is old enough to remember when the artist's main task was simply to lay the foundation of a local art. He remembers when all the local institutions were new, and his remarks testified to his own enormous contribution to

the building of a vital culture in his hometown. Shadbolt has more to tell us about our origins than we are perhaps able to admit at the moment.

Since Shadbolt is not a true avant-gardist, that is to say, he does not advocate the overcoming of art or its dissolution into politics, in effect he is staging the social dilemma of art as a dramatic struggle within the fictional realm of painting. He doesn't set out to change the world. That possibility is denied from the start and this gives his endlessly repeated movement toward resolution or balance its fatalistic streak. His work is a pictorial dramatization of historical struggle. No real resolution of this struggle is possible within the parametres of art, and if art is then seen as a synthesis of two opposing positions, its critical role is brought into question. This is perhaps the weak point in Shadbolt's work; and this is the point from which my own earlier critiques of his work have started—from its reconciliatory or compromising nature. But the strength of Shadbolt's dualistic method lies in his unwillingness to settle; the productivity of his system of opposites is found in the fact that he doesn't work to a final resolution. Few local artists have been as open, as courageous, or as willing to accept failure—and much better—willing to follow through on the recognition that an ambitious and significant failure is worth much more than a tidy accomplishment. Shadbolt is exemplary among his contemporaries and far beyond his successors in the way that he marshals his resources and then sets the painting process in motion.

The chance he takes is to find something essential and truthful by working through the polarities of his situation. In the end he has found a modern language in which to embody the paradox of the colonial experience—that progress is also necessarily destruction and that affirmation must also of necessity be opposition.

1 Another artist born the same year as Shadbolt who also contributed to later developments was B.C. Binning.
2 Scott Watson, "Art in the Fifties: Design, Leisure and Painting in the Age of Anxiety," in *Vancouver Art and Artists: 1931-1983* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1983), pp. 72-101; Robert Linsley, "Painting and the Social History of British Columbia," in *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), pp. 225-245.
3 Herbert Read, "Realism and Abstraction in Modern Art," in *The Philosophy of Modern Art: Collected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), pp.88, 93.

Jack Shadbolt: The Politics of Emptiness

Scott Watson

Jack Shadbolt is one of Canada's most distinguished artists. His long and illustrious career began in the 1930s and continues to flourish in the 1990s. During that time, he has spoken out as an authoritative voice for an art that reflects the human condition and confronts the modern dilemma. He has insisted that painting is a high calling, serving both the self-understanding of the artist and the development of society's awareness of itself. To that end, he has been indefatigable in his fight to establish a space for the visual arts in the life of our culture, not just for himself but for younger generations of artists. He has also maintained that there is an authentic and original Canadian vision in art that has been instrumental in calling national attention to British Columbia as a vital regional expression.

This book celebrates Shadbolt's drawings, the backbone and inner life of his practice, methods and beliefs. The drawings display his unmistakable, confident hand and way of making characteristic, sure, unwavering marks. Even when he sets himself on automatic pilot in search of chance discoveries, there is no nervous vibration in the line, no faltering tremor, no world-weary ennui. Instead, Shadbolt's typical lines are the result of firm and steady pressure, revealing a preference for the flowing language of curves over the sharp cries of points and spikes. His early interest in Cézanne and northern Renaissance art grounded his own drawing in strong outlines, and his drawings show how much he relies on line to define form and space.

The drawings in this book have been selected and arranged by Shadbolt himself to emphasize a narrative about his exploration of form. He has followed a rough chronological order, interspersed with leaps ahead or backward in order to indicate how this sense of form draws on a reservoir of metaphorical correspondences: a world where pupae suspended from a branch become a bird's-eye view of boats at a wharf, or a forest slash becomes the skeleton of a fallen beast. He has placed the drawings in dialogue with each other, in a conversation that moves from topic to topic. The book has a rhythm, building to dense, thick drawings that approach blackness and then relaxing into passages of line drawings full of light and air. Throughout, the "reader" is invited to notice the interconnectedness of things and how form coalesces and disperses, comes into being and dies within a fluctuating field of energy.

Reprinted from *Jack Shadbolt: Drawings* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre), 1994. 1-12.

Despite the consistency in approach to line and form that a survey of his drawing reveals, Shadbolt has been dogged by the view that his concerns cover too much stylistic territory. In the past his focus seemed to shift abruptly so that, to some critics, he has appeared at different stages of his career to be different artists. At least that is his reputation. The multiplicity and wide range of Shadbolt's art are paradoxically the basis of its steady if alternating current. When all is said and done, the continuities and consistencies to be found in his art considerably outweigh everything in his output that might seem distracted.

However, behind this issue of stylistic continuity, relying as it does on certain values, is a snarl of expectations whose agenda has to do with the commodification of the artist and the art object. Patterns of development, growth and resolution that are the easiest to describe are those most readily marketable. Consequently, artists are encouraged to produce works that refer to a set of concerns particular to each of them in order that clients, once oriented to a given artist's work, can be reassured that the terms that established a reputation will be upheld and reinforced. Shadbolt has stubbornly resisted this market pressure and has, in fact, made it follow his determinedly alinear path. He has convinced his audience that if his path does not conform to the model of the blue-chip painter, then that model must itself be revised.

Shadbolt's history as an artist is tied to British Columbia. Something of the place's repressed, violent colonial history erupts forth in his work. His lifelong search for form and his concern about its inherent instability are both a reflection of his involvement with the guiding existential metaphor of modernism and an allegory about the deep interrelationship between place and identity.

For some, Shadbolt will always be a social realist, albeit one with a sardonic, surrealist edge. His street scenes of Victoria and Vancouver, his documents of Canada preparing for war and of postwar London's bombed buildings, his studies of industrial structures, all testify to his acute powers of observation. These are powerful records of a society in the throes of decrepitude and eclipse. For others, Shadbolt is the triumphant abstractionist, who is able to voice the uneasy mix of modernist optimism and anxiety in paintings that bore into that place where nature and the inner personal world meet. The truth is that he is both these artists and often simultaneously.

In his own terms he has been divided by what he calls lyrical, classical concerns and the need to strike romantic cords of passion and ferocity. Thankfully these conflicts have been mediated by humour and immense self-discipline. Among the dichotomies of his volatile and conflicted creativity has been a pull between mimesis and abstraction. This is echoed throughout a practice of painting that is drawn again and again to particular, expressive and eccentric form while at the same time it embarks on a quest for what is universal and atavistic in form. It is tensions like these that have propelled his immensely prolific and varied output.

In this introduction I want to tie Shadbolt's art to history and the forces at work when we speak of place and identity. In approaching his work this way, I hope to give the term "regionalist" a more rounded and useful meaning than its sometimes negative connotation of parochialism. Global events such as the Great Depression, the Second World War, postwar optimism and anxiety, the threat of ecological catastrophe, are indelibly present in Shadbolt's work. But that work always features the local effect of world drama and highlights the terms under which identity comes into being on the local stage. I believe they re-enact the traumatic and violent relationship to the natural world that has characterized British Columbia's resource-based economy from colonial times to the present. The historical struggle of First Nations people against the obliterating forces of colonialist culture and law is also intrinsic to any attempt to achieve a distinctly regional landscape painting. This sense of an uneasy relationship between cultures—mainly European and native—becomes even more acute in Shadbolt's abstractions, which are not merely based on nature but an attempt to define it.

Shadbolt became an artist at the beginning of Canadian modernism. Although born in England in 1909, he grew up in Victoria, British Columbia. As a young artist, his first inspiration was Fred Housser's *A Canadian Art Movement: the Story of the Group of Seven*, published in 1926. This book was his introduction to Canada's national school of landscape painting and to the exciting idea that the source and inspiration for great painting could be found in his own experience of place. He and his young mentor, Max Maynard, set out to do for the forests and hills of southern Vancouver Island what the Group had done for central Canada and the Pre-Cambrian shield.

This first contact with Canadian art brought with it doubts as well as enthused new convictions. While promising liberation from the colonial mentality of Victoria, it insinuated another. The nationalism that fuelled the Group of Seven and their supporters was framed within an insistent allegiance to the British Empire. In the early years of this century, Canadian nationalism meant shedding colonial status to assume vanguard status within, not without, the context of the imperial world. Shadbolt would reject the vision of the national landscape school in less than a decade.

After all, the mythology promoted by the Group of Seven was an attempt to implant the characteristics of northern Ontario into the national consciousness as the emblem of the nation's bond with the land. British Columbia, especially on its southern coast, is dramatically different in climate and topography from Ontario's Pre-Cambrian shield. There was, thought the young Jack Shadbolt and Max Maynard, a missing piece of the picture, a piece they hoped to provide. A few years after their first contact with the ideals of the Group of Seven, they saw an exhibition of Emily Carr's paintings in Victoria and sought out her studio. They were thrilled to find in their city an artist of such stature who had already forged modernist landscape painting based on British Columbian reality. But their discovery of this great painter in their midst meant that their ambition to create great art with a wholly new subject might now have to take on a different strategy.

Although their meetings with Carr were important and her example has been a formidable one for Shadbolt, the idea that he was a student of hers is an exaggeration. One looks in vain for more than a cursory pastiche of Carr's work in Shadbolt's early œuvre. The example of her isolation was a negative one and, in fact, spurred Shadbolt to insist throughout his

career that the artist must place himself or herself before the public and be an actor in the public realm. What binds Shadbolt and Carr is the conviction that modernist expression based on nature was the key artistic identity in British Columbia. For Shadbolt, Carr, if not to be emulated as a painter or a person, was still a guide to what it might mean to have an original vision of place, and he regarded her as a superior artist to her Group of Seven colleagues.

In the 1930s Shadbolt both taught and studied art. Not a great deal of work survives from this period, since he purged his studio twice before 1936, actions we might lament as I do not concur with the young Shadbolt's low opinion of his early work. During this time, he experimented with surrealism and cubism, but the model to which he kept returning was the classical modernism of Cézanne and Paul Nash, and the regional idiom of Charles Burchfield and John Marin. He also became interested in First Nations carvings in the collection of the Provincial Museum in Victoria which he interpreted as an art of psychological depth. Like Carr, he saw in native art a great tradition of art based on formal abstract principles, whose ancient roots and connection to community validated the modern experiment. They were not the only artists to admire the art of the West Coast, but they were considerably closer to it and the people who produced it than, say, Barnett Newman, who used the example of Kwakwaka'wakw art to legitimize his practice of abstraction in New York.

During the Great Depression, Shadbolt became convinced that his vocation was to render the social space of a culture that was transforming from colonial to independent status. At this stage of his career, he was especially impressed with the murals of Diego Rivera and Thomas Hart Benton. He envisioned art returning to architecture and public spaces through the medium of murals. Years later, when he had turned to abstraction, he still believed in the possibility of the mural as a truly public art. Yet the city he depicts is aging and its citizens furtive. His urban pictures of the 1930s portray the ruins of deteriorating buildings beset by the vitality of nature, which is eroding them. Sometimes he explored whimsical sexual imagery, but at other times nature was represented by violent and untrammeled growth. The works of this period foreshadow what would come later when his paintings openly declared their concern for shattered form and invading tendrils.

He enlisted in 1942, hoping to put his talent as a social realist to use as an official war artist, but was disappointed at not being given a war artist commission after he had been such an effective advocate of the program's revival. The war did, however, send him to Ottawa, where he met Doris Meisel, as they were looking at a Cézanne painting in the National Gallery. His marriage to Doris, who as a curator and writer has played a role in the artistic life of British Columbia commensurate with that of her husband, prefaced Shadbolt's coming into his own as an artist by months. This was probably not a coincidence; rather, this new companionship with another modernist visionary must have provided the impetus to define his voice within the currents of his time.

Shadbolt produced powerful images during the war and its aftermath, especially of the prisoner of war camp at Petawawa, Ontario. His series of drawings and watercolours of bombed buildings in London, the devastated city that was the capital of what had once been the Empire, took his concern for the inner structure of things to a new level of expression. He tried to paint allegories about the horrors of war, peopling rickety Vancouver boarding houses with the survivors of Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen. He made pictures of dogs roaming the city rubble and howling with bestial anguish. Back home, he also made studies of driftwood and forest slash at Buccaneer Bay in British Columbia, a considerably more bucolic place than postwar London. Combining these studies with drawings of animal skeletons, he developed a vocabulary of abstraction. This new language was based on the continuing study of structure in wrecked buildings, the debris of nature and skeletons. But it was alloyed with the artist's urgent need to find an expression for the horror of his time, to get under the surface of things and society. The ruin of cities and the bones of animals were forged together, giving birth to Shadbolt's own unique methods of abstraction.

He had, in the early 1940s, in public lectures on Emily Carr, claimed that while she was the first truly original Canadian artist, her isolation and even her sexual fears had turned her art almost completely toward landscape and ruins, and he asked if it was not possible to incorporate the figure within the regional idiom she had opened up. He himself would take up that task. By conflating bones with forest slash, bombed ruins and landscape structures, he melded figure and landscape into an animated, nature-based abstraction.

In late 1947, flush with his sense of having found a renewed voice and the success of exhibitions in Vancouver and Toronto, he and Doris went to New York for a year so he could paint and consolidate his discoveries in the new artistic capital of the Western world. His guide for this period of transformation was above all Picasso, whose *Guernica* illuminated the path to what Shadbolt called "symbolic abstraction." Shadbolt became convinced that myth and ritual were the necessary foundations for an art of the time. Only through forms that partook in a dialogue with so-called primitive art could he express the anxiety of his age and glimpse some hope for the future. The works he produced in the late 1940s and early 1950s brought this world to the domestic interior and solidified his reputation as a leading Canadian modernist. Although they are abstractions based on vegetable and insect life, they are also battle scenes which refer to such diverse sources as medieval armour and heraldry, Melanesian painted sculpture, and First Nations carving and design. Their implied violence provided a glimpse into the social undertow of postwar restructuring. By the late 1950s, this initial violence was tempered during two year-long painting campaigns in southern France and a growing involvement in the formation of a new, enlightened middle-class, who promised to bring to the city of Vancouver a taste for modern design and architecture.

His work of the 1960s broke new ground as he pursued automatic and calligraphic techniques. Pop art, minimalism and hard-edged abstraction interested him, but they did not in the end persuade him away from the painterly abstraction with symbolic overtones that he had defined in the late 1940s. Shadbolt's positive impression of Marshall McLuhan's utopian communications theories influenced and strengthened his own antilinear thinking. Flux and transformation became primary subjects. The great variation and explosive energy

of his 1960s output was probably what most served to create Shadbolt's reputation as a recklessly protean figure.

It is arguable that Shadbolt's greatest period began in the 1970s and extends to the present. It was then that he stopped resisting his eclecticism and exterior models for painting fell away. He began mining his own past for new paintings. He renewed his conviction that the artforms of the world's first peoples offered the source and inspiration for a relevant modern art. The development of Shadbolt's painterly persona has continued to be wild. He regularly recycles himself, revisiting sometimes decades-old directions. And, especially since the 1950s, no sooner has he schooled his audience in one idiom than he starts out on another. He works in large achronological circles, mapping out a shifting terrain—some might call it a war zone—between the axes of his temperament and the means of expression he has mastered.

In his work of the 1970s, Shadbolt renewed his interest in the figure. In his *Fetish* series, he inaugurated a ritualized, totemic and fractured representation of the figure as messenger from the place where the psyche and "nature" meet. Lush, terrifying, erotic and grandiose, these works stood out in the artistic image-drought of the period. In 1975, a trip to India provided a new and fertile source of references for the figure in art. Many of the drawings of the late 1970s and early 1980s are the result of his study of Indian miniatures.

A particular world view emerges from Shadbolt's work. He has frequently stated his view that underneath the social and sociable exteriors we present to the world lies a world of violent irrationality. His interest in the face as a mask can be seen in his 1940s street scenes and caricatures of army buddies, as well as in his postwar work with Melanesian, Northwest Coast and Navajo masks. His bestiary of imaginary creatures inhabits the night forest and garden. He is interested in the interior of form—where it is most unstable—and in the underworld of roots, bulbs and bones.

There are respites from this rich, enchanted but tragic world of organic birth and decay in his work. The serenity of his owls makes space in his nocturnal bacchanals for meditation and contemplation. He is drawn to classical form and outline, but the pull toward the forces of the night and destruction is "the way in," to borrow the title of one of his most magnificent triptych drawings of the forest.

Shadbolt's investigation into form enacts a view of nature, culture and the self that the artist has had to deal with, whether they are his views or not. Form in Shadbolt's painting is emblematically phallic: the dog, the pruned tree, the uprooted stump, the disconnected limb or wing and the butterfly cocoon are all representations of this emblem under the duress of castration. Shadbolt's thinking about form, his drive to make it compact, pent up, holding energy under pressure, is an allegory of orgasm. In his paintings, form is under threat; the field of energy in which he places form will not allow stability but subjects form to external corrosion. Form is then a fragile ephemeral apparition, defined by the meeting of building internal pressures with external force. At any moment, form can implode or explode. There are Shadbolt drawings of seeds, plants and butterflies which celebrate transformation as a mystery. There are others, of a face being ripped from a skull by tightening constraints, of phallic monsters locked in cages, that give a more terrifying account of experience in a world of ceaseless flux.

Anxiety about virility and the macho posturing that is meant to conceal this fear ran like a river through postwar abstract painting, especially the abstract expressionism of the New York School. Never a brawler, womanizer or heavy drinker, Shadbolt may have lacked these stereotypical stigmata of masculine genius. Nevertheless, like the New York painters, his phallicism contains the struggle for identity to come into being, a struggle that takes place against a field of literal and metaphorical emptiness. The painter confronts this literal emptiness every time he begins a canvas and starts the act of creation, an act that can only begin but never conclude lest the project of painting itself come to an end.

The hopes and despair of the modern imagination are often crystallized in the metaphors of emptiness we build in architecture and use to define modernism's world. Twentieth-century fascists and communists promised that their vast empty plazas, boulevards and mass-housing projects would "empty out" the aristocratic and bourgeois idea of self. In the West, bourgeois culture saw itself and its masses as legions of, as T.S. Eliot put it, "hollow men." In this century we have discovered that our universe is an infinite expanse of mostly dark and empty space and that the things of the world—like our evacuated selves in between the subatomic particles—are mostly nothing.

To the blank canvas, the artist who wishes to discover nature must bring another metaphor of emptiness. Emptiness is the dominant image of the territory occupied by the nation of Canada. Shadbolt's dialogue with emptiness and anxiety is provoked by the encounter with nature as emptiness that is critical for defining his art as one that pictures the crisis of our regional identity, our own "nature."

According to notable critics like Northrop Frye and Margaret Atwood, the history of Canadian painting and writing is threaded with a motif of dread provoked by the expanse of wilderness and its emptiness. It is possible to see Shadbolt's art conforming to this Canadian paradigm. We can imagine that he is responding to the way his culture imagines nature; not just to the majesty and mystery of the impenetrable coastal forests but to their unyielding "foreignness," especially in relation to our tamer pastoral traditions of European art. For Shadbolt, who, like most Canadians, was raised by parents who were born somewhere else, this "foreignness" is the source of instability and homelessness—a lack of roots.

For Northrop Frye, the impetus of Canadian art has been to establish roots for the psyche of the nation. The Canadian dilemma of rootlessness and the need to forge an identity and notion of home has, until recently, been constructed with a European model in mind. The European painting tradition pictures pastoral landscapes psychically owned by peoples who had cultivated the land for thousands of years. But uncultivated Canada, its wilderness and emptiness, could be absorbed into the national psyche only if seen through Canadian, not European, eyes. This is Frye's view, a view that has guided much of the discussion of Canadian landscape painting.

The problem of a lingering colonial mentality has haunted the development of Canadian modernism, a problem that Northrop Frye recognized and lamented when he wrote that Canada is "practically the only country left in the world which is a pure colony, colonial in psychology as well as in mercantile economics." The economy of British Columbia, driven by its resource-extraction industries, fits uncomfortably well Frye's definition of a colony as a place "treated less like a society than a place to look for things." The very name of the province, "British Columbia," indefinitely postpones emancipation from the colonial mentality. If Frye is correct when he says that "the creative instinct has to do with the assertion of territorial rights," then creativity in Canada must be saturated with the history and politics of the acquisition of territorial rights. The difficulties that attend the imagining of nature in Canadian art and the restive search for a sense of home and roots have depended on the idea that the land is "empty," a wilderness. But it never really was. Much of what is now Canada had been inhabited, mapped and named for thousands of years before Europeans arrived. The idea of emptiness is part of the colonialist dream of conquest, serving to erase the trails, names, maps, villages, economies, cultures and peoples that had filled that emptiness.

Nothing could be clearer or more disturbing evidence of our use of this concept of emptiness than Chief Justice Allan McEachern's 1991 reasons for judgement against the Gitksan and Wet'suwet'en land claim which contains this description of a sizable area of British Columbia: "As I have mentioned, the territory [in question] is, indeed, a vast emptiness." It is an irony that within the "vast emptiness" of Gitksan territory are ancient village sites and monuments painted by Emily Carr.

Emptiness, vast space, indomitable nature and wilderness as the poetic picture of the enormous territories of Canada are more than artistic abstractions. These fictions have become aggressive legal instruments in the service of erasing First Nations land claims. But there is a secondary consequence that has been acted out in the history of Canadian painting and literature. As she herself noted, the solution to Margaret Atwood's famous conundrum "the problem is what do you do for a past if you are white, relatively new to the continent and rootless?" has been to assimilate First Nations art into mainstream modernism. Appropriations of this art into the Canadian fabric are designed to locate Canada securely on its territory via the medium of a "shared" artistic heritage, but such fragile constructions of identity are easily challenged. For Atwood and Frye, the colonial mentality that feeds such mythologies is irrevocably scarred and mutilated, caught in a perpetual state of thwarted becoming and permanent alienation from the land.

While Emily Carr's paintings are certainly "about" her personal rapport with nature, signs of just the opposite can be seen in her works. Her forest is, often as not, industrialized. Her point of view is that of the logger, standing on the cleared land and gazing at as yet uncut timber. Her archive of First Nations monuments and village sites is rarely peopled. She calls one painting of an abandoned village *Vanquished*, celebrating a modern displacement as if it were inexorable, destined, natural, organic. Despite our use of Carr's pictures as emblems of "our" British Columbia, perhaps they also testify to a troublesome irreconcilability and the impossibility of the very regional landscape art they seem to propose.

Such an impossibility is close to the foundations of Jack Shadbolt's work. His early enthusiasm for landscape produced drawings and paintings of quarried hills (they reminded him of the landscapes in Mantegna paintings) or sites ravaged by fire. There are few landscapes in his postwar works and those also focus on ecological catastrophe, yet much of his work is undeniably landscape based. He uses a landscape space in many of his abstractions, but of a special kind. Important projects, like the 1962 Edmonton Airport mural or *The Chilkoot Experience* (1971), are views inspired by airplane trips.

The garden, an uneasy meeting ground of nature and culture, is his miniaturized landscape where the allegorical battles of a divided self can be waged and contained. Much of the work that refers to gardens or fields is imagined from the point of view of a ground-crawling animal or from below ground level amongst the exposed roots, bulbs and insect pupae. The point of view of the surveyor of the vista or wanderer through the field is all but absent; paths inevitably lead into the dark tangle of forest. The "avoided" point of view is that of the typical European landscape in which ownership over the vista is affirmed. Instead, there is a kind of panic landscape in which one's bearings cannot be established.

Exceptions to this destabilizing vision are notable in that they occur in pictures of Europe. Like many North American travellers, Shadbolt was fascinated by the relationship of town and country in southern France and Italy when he sojourned there for painting and drawing campaigns in 1957 and 1961. Town and country were still discrete. He could portray a town nestled in the vineyard-covered hills or the economy of a small fishing village. Over many of these European views, he "wrote" calligraphic gestures, signatures that substituted for an ownership that, for the North American, can only be temporary improvisations of a tourist.

The landscapes of Europe offer a view of civilization and the importance of duration and memory in defining place, whereas in British Columbia, landscape is absorbed by the jungle-like tangle of forest and garden. The garden becomes a colonial fortress, peopled with totemic figures made of truncated, painted gnarls of stump and root, guarding the artist's world against malevolent forces. Like Carr, Shadbolt has used First Nations design to locate his art in this region, but his use of the art of the coast has been fraught with the same pressures that bear down on his world of form. The formal imperatives of Haida or Kwakwaka'wakw design have no translation into the form language that Shadbolt has developed. Their symmetry and highly organized pattern are at a polar opposite to his preference for the shattered and the skewed. Representations of masks and faces turn queasy in his hands, as if they registered some inescapable dread. Shadbolt's projections onto landscape and native art might be the gauge of an inner turmoil, but this inner turmoil is our "nature," our struggle to overcome the colonial situation. Behind the push and pull of his surfaces, behind his compacted, trussed and disintegrating forms, is an orchestra of revulsion and attraction that Shadbolt's art tries to categorize and account for. The restless search for form of this resounding chord is impelled by a need to define nature, to give it a shape it does not seem to have when it is simply a tract of valuable timber or vast emptiness.

The plenitude and fecundity of Shadbolt's formal language is a dialogue with just the opposite—emptiness. The crushing, dismembering energy of his painterly arena is an effort to conjure nature into being—a nature that has been "emptied out" by colonialism. His imagination of nature confronts, with considerable violence, the colonial disimagination of nature and the economic distillation of nature into "vast emptiness," nameless rivers and mountains, logs and jobs. In this way, as much as they testify to the viability of painting as a route to knowledge, Shadbolt's works are admonitory, restive rebukes to the colonial mentality.

The border between nature and colonial culture has shifted since it was painted by Emily Carr. In the late 1960s Shadbolt introduced Carr's voice into his work with *Hornby Suite* (1968), a series of charcoal drawings of the forest that paid a direct homage to Carr while at the same time claiming her subject matter for himself. Not just the rain forest and its spectacular density and decay but also the very notion that a quintessential aspect of nature is given voice through the medium of the artist, are subjects and a belief that ground a Carr/Shadbolt tradition. This tradition might even be an "ism." Carr/Shadboltism holds that the local climate and topography of British Columbia are major factors in the formation of a kind of subjectivity unique to this region. Carr saw nature as redemptive, a refuge where the sensitive type, who had turned her back on society, could be harboured and nourished. It was the place where one found God.

Shadbolt's nature, on the other hand, is a vortex, a maelstrom opening onto the forces of darkness and chaos. He guarantees the continuity between this "nature" and society by seeing in it a mirror of the modern soul. Through the powerful synthesizing forces of abstract art, all cultures and times can be transformed by Shadbolt into the idiom given by local nature. But in Shadbolt, this program is disrupted and destabilized. It never returns us to the pastoral paradigm but alerts us to the fact that landscape—the genre in which we look for reassurance that we are somewhere familiar—is not yet home but a dangerously fragmented terrain. His insertion of figurative elements into the landscape, or conversely his flooding of figurativeness with landscape elements, has created a unique abstract genre. Some critics find that his works provide scant solace that the two can be harmonized. Instead, he seems to record forms as they splinter each other. This vision is sometimes apocalyptic, as if Shadbolt saw not just a present crisis but its horrible aftermath—though he is not a pessimist. Art itself is a kind of proof that the crisis can be borne, even if its resolution is far from sight.

Shadbolt believes that in the world that lies just beneath the surface of society are both the atavistic forms he hopes can reanimate a society of "hollow men" and the potential to reimagine nature. Both are the necessary tasks that his art proposes.

Works in exhibition

All works are from the Collection of the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, University of British Columbia unless stated otherwise

Seaport Abstraction, 1933
Watercolour and graphite on paper
56.8 x 38.6 cm
Gift of Professor Hunter Lewis, 1967

Electric Chair, 1934
Gouache on paper
25.5 x 16.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled, c. 1935
Watercolour and ink on paper
55.2 x 38.7 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

The Apotheosis of King Kong Freddy in the Savary Ikon, c. 1937
Graphite and watercolour on paper
45.5 x 61.5 cm
Gift of Peter Ohler, 2001

Notebook Sketch (*Self Portrait*), c. 1937
Graphite on paper
38.6 x 28.4 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Indian Totems, 1938
Charcoal, conté, and gouache on paper
101.0 x 75.8 cm
Gift of Mr. H. Mortimer Lamb, 1944

Notebook Study of Passage, 1938
Graphite on paper
23.0 x 30.9 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Davis Carey, 1939
Conté on paper
62.0 x 51.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Fred Amess, c. 1939
Watercolour and conté on paper
54.3 x 37.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

From the Pantry Window, Christmas Day, 1939
Graphite on paper
56.0 x 36.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Harold Mortimer Lamb, 1939
Graphite on paper
34.6 x 28.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

House in the Trees, 1939
Conté on paper
24.5 x 20.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Mighty in His Melon-Making, c. 1939
Graphite, watercolour, wax crayon, conté, and newsprint on paper
61.0 x 715 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 2001

Numatl Mask, 1939
Conté and sanguine on paper
54.3 x 42.0 cm
Gift of Associate Professor Emeritus John A. McDonald, 1988

Still Life with Silver Tea Pot, 1939
Graphite and conté on paper
42.7 x 50.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Beghie Street Store, Victoria, 1941
Charcoal on paper
26.1 x 32.1 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled, 1941
Graphite on paper
39.4 x 27.1 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

The Bird House, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.1 x 30.2 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Classic Landscape, 1942
Graphite on paper
38.9 x 30.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Fred and Betty, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.4 x 30.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Kay's Market, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.5 x 30.5 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Sewing, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.1 x 30.2 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Spring Garden, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.6 x 30.5 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for United Service Centre Mural, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.4 x 49.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for United Service Centre Mural, 1942
Graphite on paper
31.4 x 48.9 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Untitled, 1942
Graphite on paper
39.3 x 30.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Bug's House (Little Mountain Camp), 1942
Graphite on paper
49.0 x 39.2 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Little Mountain Camp, 1942
Graphite on paper
48.9 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Office Clerk (*Little Mountain Camp*), 1942
Graphite on paper
48.9 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

The Recruits' Nightmare (*Little Mountain Camp*), 1942
Graphite on paper
48.9 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

The Gas Station (The Occupation of Point Grey), 1942
Graphite on paper
38.0 x 28.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

The Hand (The Occupation of Point Grey), 1942
Graphite on paper
38.0 x 28.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

There are Signs of Atrocities (The Occupation of Point Grey), 1942
Graphite on paper
38.0 x 28.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled (*Study for The Occupation of Point Grey*), 1942
Graphite on paper
39.4 x 30.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

White Dove Cleaners (The Occupation of Point Grey), 1942
Graphite on paper
38.0 x 28.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled (Seated Soldier), 1942
Conté and charcoal on paper
76.0 x 56.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Untitled (Seated Soldier), 1942
Conté and charcoal on paper
76.0 x 56.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Fred Kagawa, Canadian Intelligence Corps, Vancouver Tech., c. 1942-43
Conté and ink on paper
39.3 x 30.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

George Obokata, Vancouver Tech., c. 1942-43
Conté on paper
39.3 x 30.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

George Suzuki, Canadian Intelligence Corps, Vancouver Kitsilano, c. 1942-43
Conté and ink on paper
39.3 x 30.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

The Cenotaph, Ottawa (*The War Memorial*), 1943
Graphite and watercolour on paper
47.0 x 37.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

The War Memorial, Ottawa, 1943
Graphite and watercolour on paper
48.9 x 39.4 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Mixing Colours in the Workshop, Camouflage Wing, A-6 (*Little Mountain Camp*), 1943
Graphite on paper
48.9 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Morning Coffee, 1943
Graphite on paper
48.9 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

South Kensington, 1944
Ink, conté, and graphite on paper
39.3 x 30.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Marpole Bridge, 1945
Watercolour on paper
70.5 x 55.0 cm
Collection of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia

Workers Going Home over Marpole Bridge, 1945
Graphite on paper
39.3 x 30.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Coming Home, Musgrave Street, Victoria, 1946
Watercolour and conté on paper
51.7 x 49.9
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 2003

London Bomb Ruin, 1946
Watercolour and ink on paper
78.1 x 55.9 cm
Collection of the Vancouver Art Gallery, Allied Officer's Auxiliary Picture Purchase Fund

West End House, 1946
Watercolour and conté on paper
76.0 x 55.6 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 2003

3 Studies of a Bird Skeleton, 1947
Graphite on paper
48.9 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Bird Skeleton, 1947
Graphite, watercolour, and ink on paper
45.1 x 25.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Deer Skeleton, 1947
Graphite on paper
49.0 x 39.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Dog Among the Ruins, 1947
Watercolour and carbon pencil on wove paper
78.2 x 56.9 cm
Collection of the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Colin Graham Fund/ Canada Council Matching Funds

Dog Study, c. 1947
Graphite on paper
30.4 x 39.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Image in a Cedar Slash, 1947
Conté on paper
39.4 x 48.8 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Image in a Cedar Slash, 1947
Oil on board
58.0 x 73.0 cm
Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

Logging Skid Road, Buccaneer Bay, 1947
Graphite on paper
39.3 x 46.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled (*Buccaneer Bay*), 1947
Graphite on paper
39.3 x 48.9 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Untitled (*Buccaneer Bay*), 1947
Graphite on paper
39.4 x 49.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Skeletal Image, 1947
Ink and watercolour on paper
25.3 x 17.1 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled, 1947
Graphite on paper
49.0 x 39.4
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Granville Island, c. 1947-50
Graphite on paper
39.1 x 45.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Granville Island, c. 1947-50
Graphite on paper
30.5 x 45.7 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Granville Island, c. 1947-50
Graphite on paper
30.3 x 45.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

At the Turn of the Moon, 1948
Watercolour on paper
44.0 x 56.1 cm
Gift of Mrs. Rosalie May Benton, 1997

Night Road, 1948
Watercolour and gouache on board
38.0 x 28.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Alcazar Hotel Mural Conceptual Sketch (study for *Cycle of Seasons*), 1949
Watercolour and graphite on paper
36.9 x 68.1
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Alcazar Mural Panel Study / Mural Panel for Alcazar Mural Lobby (study for *Cycle of Seasons*), 1949
Gouache, graphite, and ink on board
29.4 x 18.1 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for Cycle of Seasons (Alcazar Hotel Mural), 1949
Gouache, ink, and graphite on board
37.2 x 68.4 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for Cycle of Seasons (Alcazar Hotel Mural), 1949
Photographs and black ink on board mounted on masonite
27.2 x 122.1 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1996

Study for Cycle of Seasons (Alcazar Hotel Mural), 1949
Gouache, graphite, and ink on board
21.8 x 175.0 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for Cycle of Seasons (Alcazar Hotel Mural), 1949
Gouache, graphite, and ink on board
21.5 x 73.0 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for Cycle of Seasons (Alcazar Hotel Mural), 1949
Ink on paper
36.9 x 29.7 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Tapestry in Red, Black and White, 1949
Ink and casein on paper
67.1 x 92.1
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Fall Garden Abstraction, 1949-97
Watercolour, graphite, acrylic, and ink on paper
56.2 x 82.4 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Preference for the Old and Ancient Surfaces, early 1950s
Ink and graphite on paper
63.7 x 42.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for the Cadborasaurus Mural, Dominion Hotel, Victoria, 1951
Ink on paper
31.6 x 21.8 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Untitled, 1951
Ink on paper
20.8 x 27.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Canadian Art (proposal for cover), 1952
Gouache, ink, and graphite on paper
26.1 x 19.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Canadian Art (proposal for cover), 1952
Gouache, ink, and graphite on paper
25.8 x 19.4 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Coast Indian Theme, 1952
Pastel, ink, and casein on paper
37.0 x 47.4 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1996

Study for Cockfield, Brown and Co. Mural, Vancouver, 1953
Gouache and graphite on paper
17.8 x 43.1 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Jesting Grasses, 1953-54
Gouache, ink, and casein on paper
76.0 x 101.0
Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

Christmas Calligraphy for Doris, 1954
Ink, watercolour, and conté on paper
55.5 x 68.4 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Bottle cover to accompany Christmas Calligraphy for Doris, 1954
Ink, watercolour, and conté on paper
28.5 x 39.0 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Festival of the Worm II, 1954-63
Acrylic, ink, watercolour, and gouache on paper
69.9 x 103.0 cm
Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

Winter Poppies, 1955
Watercolour, ink, and graphite on paper
55.6 x 76.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

After Fire (Salmon Barbecue), 1956-58
Gouache, watercolour, ink, and casein on paper
56.6 x 77.5
Gift of the Faculty Club, University of British Columbia, 1994

Gouache for Exhibition Poster at New Design Gallery, 1957
Gouache on paper
64.3 x 49.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Mural Design, Canadian Pavillion, Brussels, 1957
Watercolour, ink, and gouache on paper
51.2 x 73.5 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Christmas Card for Mama, from Doris and Jack, 1959
Watercolour and graphite on paper
77.4 x 56.9 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Still Life Variation #1, 1959
Ink, gouache, and watercolour on paper
57.1 x 76.9
Gift of the Faculty Club, University of British Columbia, 1994

Still Life Variation #2, 1959
Ink, gouache, and watercolour on paper
57.1 x 76.9 cm
Gift of the Faculty Club, University of British Columbia, 1994

Queen Elizabeth Theatre Restaurant Mural, preparatory study, 1959
Gouache on board
13.7 x 101.0 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Gouache and graphite on board
20.3 x 43.7 cm
Gift of Jack and Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Graphite and ink on paper
22.7 x 86.4 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Ink on vellum
19.7 x 77.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Ink and graphite on vellum
22.3 x 87.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Graphite on vellum
23.8 x 91.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Ink on board
Dimensions variable
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for Pageant of Transformation in Nature - Growth Cycle (Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restaurant), 1959
Gouache and graphite on board
20.4 x 76.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

*Study for Queen Elizabeth Theatre Mural in Restauran*t, 1959
Ink on vellum
22.4 x 87.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Study for Mural, c. 1959-60
Gouache and ink on board
15.3 x 10.0 cm (27 components)
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Georgia Fascists, early 1960s
Paper collage
35.5 x 27.8 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Study for Untitled (Georgia Fascists), early 1960s
Ink on paper
45.7 x 30.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Untitled (Georgia Fascists), early 1960s
Paper collage
35.6 x 27.8 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2008

Ink Splash Drawing 1 & 2 (*Blob & Scratch, Series 1*), 1960
Ink on paper
22.7 x 30.4 cm each (2 works)
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Sardine Boxes, Collioure, 1960
Conté on paper
83.3 x 49.2 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

They Opened Up the North, 1962
Ink, conté, and graphite on paper
31.9 x 243.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Farm Image, 1963
Ink on paper
37.5 x 45.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Field, 1964
Ink on paper
51.0 x 65.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

Head, 1965
Charcoal on paper
68.3 x 51.2 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

January Bird #1, 1965
Ink on paper
65.7 x 50.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

January Bird #7, 1965
Ink on paper
65.7 x 50.6 cm
Gift of the Estate of Sheila and Wilfred Watson, 1998

Untitled, 1965
Charcoal on paper
50.6 x 65.7 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

White Forms, c. 1965
Pastel and charcoal on paper
51.0 x 65.5 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Calligraphy of Hills, 1967
Ink and gouache on paper
100.0 x 129.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Germination, 1967
Ink on paper
37.5 x 45.7 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Collioure Beach, A (*From My Window, Collioure*), 1968
Ink on paper
66.0 x 50.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Collioure Beach, B (*Window on the Beach, Collioure*), 1968
Ink on paper
66.0 x 50.1 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Navel of the World, the Absolute Onion, 1968
Ink on paper
50.8 x 66.0 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Adjustable Venus, 1969-70
Watercolour, ink, coloured chalk, acrylic, and gouache on board
76.0 x 101.2 cm
Gift of the Faculty Club, University of British Columbia, 1994

Masks & Fetishes, 1969-70
Watercolour and ink on paper
76.3 x 101.5 cm
Gift of Mrs. Rosalie May Benton, 1997

Eros, 1970
Graphite on paper
22.9 x 29.9 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Seed, 1970
Ink on paper
35.8 x 28.1 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Four Owls, 1972
Ink on paper
35.8 x 28.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Erotic Transformation: Fear of Dogs, 1973
Graphite on paper
30.5 x 22.8 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Rhythm of Plants, 1973
Graphite, gouache, and ink on paper
79.5 x 56.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Ring Calligraphy, 1973/1998
Ink and watercolour on paper
99.6 x 64.3 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Moth in the Woods, 1975
Charcoal and acrylic on board
134.6 x 102.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 2003

Christmas Drawing for Doris, 1976
Ink on paper
75.6 x 101.3 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Clearing in the Woods, Hornby Island, 1978
Charcoal on paper
65.5 x 87.1 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Music for the Sultan, 1978
Ink on paper
22.8 x 30.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Dawn Experience, Hornby Island (*Sketch for Grey Day Triptych*), 1981
Graphite on paper
23.0 x 46.0 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Maharajah's Garden, 1982
Ink on paper
30.5 x 22.9 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Working Collage for Tapestry Cartoon (*Preliminary Study for a Tapestry*), 1983
Ink, Photostat, and coloured graphite on board
35.9 x 63.6 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Sculptures in a Field, Hornby Island, 1987
Graphite on paper
35.6 x 42.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Stalking Beast, 1987
India ink on paper
23.6 x 32.7 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Drawing for Chimera, 1988
Ink on tracing paper
28.4 x 19.2 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Denman Island, 1989
Graphite on paper
43.8 x 27.9 cm
Gift of the Estate of Doris Shadbolt, 2009

Drawing for Signs in a Landscape, 1989
Ink on paper
35.4 x 27.8 cm
Gift of Doris Shadbolt, 1998

Mighty in his melon-making
Loomed the London Leonardo.
In his youth he drew the melon,
Making mush of mighty matter,
Till the farmer came upon him
And with his prongs pricked pants and bottom.

Adolescent ambling awkward
Strode among the writhing rhythms,
Tortured trees that turned and twisted,
To the schoolhouse, tension-taught,
Grown to manhood melon-minded
Taught the toddlers melon-making.

Sped the icy sheen of winter,
Spritely skipped with steel the melons.
Melons with his models mingled
In the manner of the masters
L'husty l'haughed the l'hatin l'hote.

Melon magic moved the maidens,
Pined for poem's poignant passion.
Words of wonder, wisdom-winged
Torque and twist + twine and twaddle
Dinned + dazzled dimpled damsels.

MO-HI-LE-TSA
Melon-music mighty mystic Manitou,
Awed and anguished angels argued.
Still the tom-toms beat their bombast,
Hurled the hosts of heaven hell-ward.

Stone's silver symbols' shimmer sheen,
Brave brilliant bosom benisons.
Melon's form was termed casaba
But the rabble roared casava
So at Savary sought he sanctuary
Licked his wounds in mimic mummery.

On his neck the draft descending
Icy blows in fearful portent,
Must he, master of the melon,
Now by melons mastered be?
Marred by maps of melon doodling
General Jack his melon-calling
Paints the leaders mighty warriors –
Kings with cuts of cute casava.

Veers the vortex to crescendo,
And the monster, slimed with carnage,
Beaten backward, blinded, baffled.
Falls into fetid foulness, vanquished –
Hammer, sickle, rose entwined,
Stars and dragons, verdant maple.
Loud acclaim and jubilation
Pales to silence in the knowledge,
New arrived, an inspiration.
Eyes agoggle, hands a-gesture,
Wrinkled forehead, puckered lips –
New the form and great the vistas
In the pickled symbol – dill!

transcribed from *Mighty in His Melon-Making*, c. 1939, Graphite, watercolour, wax crayon, conté, and newsprint on paper

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