

Jean-Paul Riopelle

ACQUAVELLA GALLERIES

An eight-volume catalogue raisonné currently being published in Canada asserts the country's claim to this patriarchal figure of modern French painting, who was born in Montreal in 1923. Hometown boy makes good. Yet it was all Jean-Paul Riopelle could do to escape the city and its time-hardened resentments: francophone, Roman Catholic Quebec versus anglophone, Church of England, maple leaf America. Riopelle found refuge from Quebecois revanchism in the alternate AbEx universe of postwar Paris, where he soon became a highly regarded artist, right up there with Pierre Soulages, Georges Mathieu, Vieira da Silva, and other painters devoted to art informel or tachism (as the French equivalent to Abstract Expressionism was known).

