

# THREE YOUNG CANADIANS

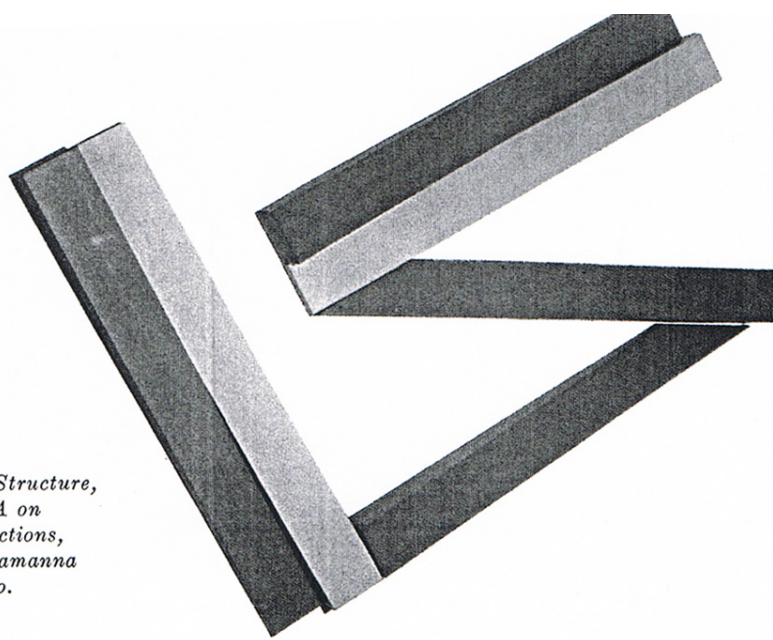
*Milly Ristvedt, color-field painter,  
David Bolduc, shaped-canvas creator, and  
Ed Zelenak, sculptor in grand scale,  
are three young Canadian artists  
who have adapted international styles  
to their own development and environment*

Barry Lord

*Ed Zelenak: Stoattalos, painted  
plywood, 1967-68.  
Collection of the artist.*







David Bolduc: *Structure*, acrylic and PVA on canvas, in six sections, 1968. Carmen Lamanna Gallery, Toronto.

Color-field painting, shaped canvas and primary sculpture are definite style tags for the three young Canadian artists who have shown the most exciting work by new names in Canada since the close of Expo. Color-field painter Milly Ristvedt and shaped-canvas artist David Bolduc mounted the outstanding newcomers' one-man shows of the 1967-68 Toronto season at the Carmen Lamanna Gallery, while sculptor Ed Zelenak, whose scale is too large for most commercial galleries, has been attracting collectors and critics, on the strength of single works seen in group exhibitions, to his field of pieces among the tobacco farms of southwestern Ontario.

Milly Ristvedt, a pretty, blonde twenty-six-year-old born in Kimberley, British Columbia, began exhibiting in Toronto shortly after she moved east from Vancouver four years ago. At first some critics suggested that her broad color-bars were essentially derived from Toronto abstractionist Jack Bush, or that they were simply a horizontal variant on the vertical-stripe format of Montreal

Barry Lord, the Canadian art critic, recently returned from an art-history research trip to England sponsored by the Canada Council.

painter Guido Molinari. She was evidently indebted to Roy Kiyooka, Canada's most stimulating teacher of artists, who had been ridding his work of its last gestural elements and painting color-field canvases during his Vancouver period when she studied with him.

It was not until her successful one-man show at Lamanna last year that Milly's paintings began to be recognized as a youthful but distinctive statement—more insistent than Bush, more consciously structured than Molinari. All her canvases were completely and evenly covered in acrylic in two or three colors. One or two hues were painted in a broad hard-edged band between an upper and lower color area, forming a horizontal bar across the middle of most of the paintings, turned to meet the edges of the canvas at oblique angles.

The Ristvedt paintings, like most of the best color-field work, present objective color, free of allusion to space or volume; but in Milly's pictures there is a particular tension between color areas. While avoiding any image-on-ground or layering effect, she succeeds in making the color-bar obtrusive. This is partly due to the awkward expansiveness of her format, but is largely determined in each painting by the color context of the field in which the bar occurs.

The relation between field and bar is sometimes simply mimetic, sometimes, interacting with the relation between keyed hues in the bar itself tonal.

The color-field also functions ambivalently as a color-form in its own right, defined by center color and the edges of the canvas, varied in size in work above and below the horizontal. The result is an equi-valued surface in which the color statement is obtrusive. In her most recent paintings, Ristvedt has begun to extend the format on this chromatic territory by altering her format, using similar color bands in vertical symmetry.

David Bolduc, twenty-three, was born in Toronto and grew up there, but after a year at the Ontario College of Art he moved to Montreal to study painting under Jean Goguen, one of the original group of *néo-plasticiens* who pioneered hard-edge painting in Montreal in the early fifties. Bolduc was also influenced by Molinari, another *néo-plasticien*, and by Kiyooka, who had moved from Vancouver to Montreal in 1965. The combination of intelligent structure and decorative brilliance characterizes Bolduc's work very much a product of the Montreal environment.

Returning home late in 1968

have to cope with the shortage of economically feasible production facilities that continues to plague those Canadian sculptors wishing to work in new materials on a large scale. This problem has certainly affected the work of twenty-eight-year-old sculptor Ed Zelenak, who, after fabricating two excellent pieces in painted steel in 1966, produced a series of black-painted plywood models intended for plate steel in '67, and last year turned to fiberglass as a medium he can command at reasonable cost.

Born in the southwest Ontario town of St. Thomas, Zelenak began studying art at the H. P. Beal Technical School in London, Ontario, and continued in life drawing at the Minsinger School in nearby Detroit, and in painting and sculpture for two years at the Ontario College of Art in Toronto. In the early sixties he lived with friends in Texas, and received prizes for assemblage work exhibited in Houston and Fort Worth. About five years ago he returned to the tobacco fields of home, built a studio with another sculptor and began to eliminate assemblage in favor of the primary forms that comprise his present work.

Although Zelenak's media and manner reflect the strong influence of Tony Smith and Robert Morris, he does have his

own sculptural ideas: in one brilliant blue steel piece of 1966 and in the best of the plywood pieces, ramparts or prongs with sloping sides set up a relation of inclusion/exclusion with the viewer, which corresponds exactly with the works' assertion of place as defined by the slopes, and of mass as defined by the straight walls of the pieces and by the inside limit of the trench between the prongs. Surface configurations—the slots and stepped-lines where the joins are made—add rigidity to the mass and tend to "slice" all its faces, keeping it wall-like rather than cubic in character, while the chamfered outline shape of the piece lends it an aggressive animal lunge. In his fiberglass pieces Zelenak has thus far been concerned with reiterating this wall-like mass, at least temporarily abandoning the gestural vigor of irregular shape for a more concentrated minimal statement.

What these three young artists have in common, besides a need to continue their own development while sustaining the stimulation of international style changes, is a desire to make the work of art function as an object in a world of objects. In their best pieces we see color, shape and mass respectively as phenomena with fresh, exciting relevance to our environment.