

TED
HARRISON
A RETROSPECTIVE

A touring exhibition prepared by the Art
Gallery of the Whitehorse Public Library,
Whitehorse, Yukon.

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PREFACE

"Ted Harrison - A Retrospective" is the result of efforts by the Art Gallery of the Whitehorse Public Library to foster a better understanding of the artist and his perception of Yukon's incredible landscape. Yukoners, as well as southern Canadians, are already familiar with Ted's flowing, colourful Yukon scenes, his humorous treatment of animals and situations. But are they aware of how this unique style developed? The aim of this show is to help create that awareness.

After its opening in Whitehorse, the exhibition will tour to western Canadian galleries. This is a first for the Yukon and for the Art Gallery of the Whitehorse Public Library. We want to share with the rest of Canada the colour

and uniqueness of Yukon, through Ted's imagination.

Acknowledgements

I want to thank Brenda McLean of Vancouver for her joyful enthusiasm for this project and willingness to act as guest curator. Brenda has done a marvellous job of bridging the distance between her home and Yukon. Appreciation is also extended to the National Art Gallery staff in Ottawa, Morris Flewwelling of Red Deer and District Museum, in Alberta, and the Friends of the Gallery Society in Whitehorse. Their advice and support has helped me enormously in planning Yukon's first touring exhibition.

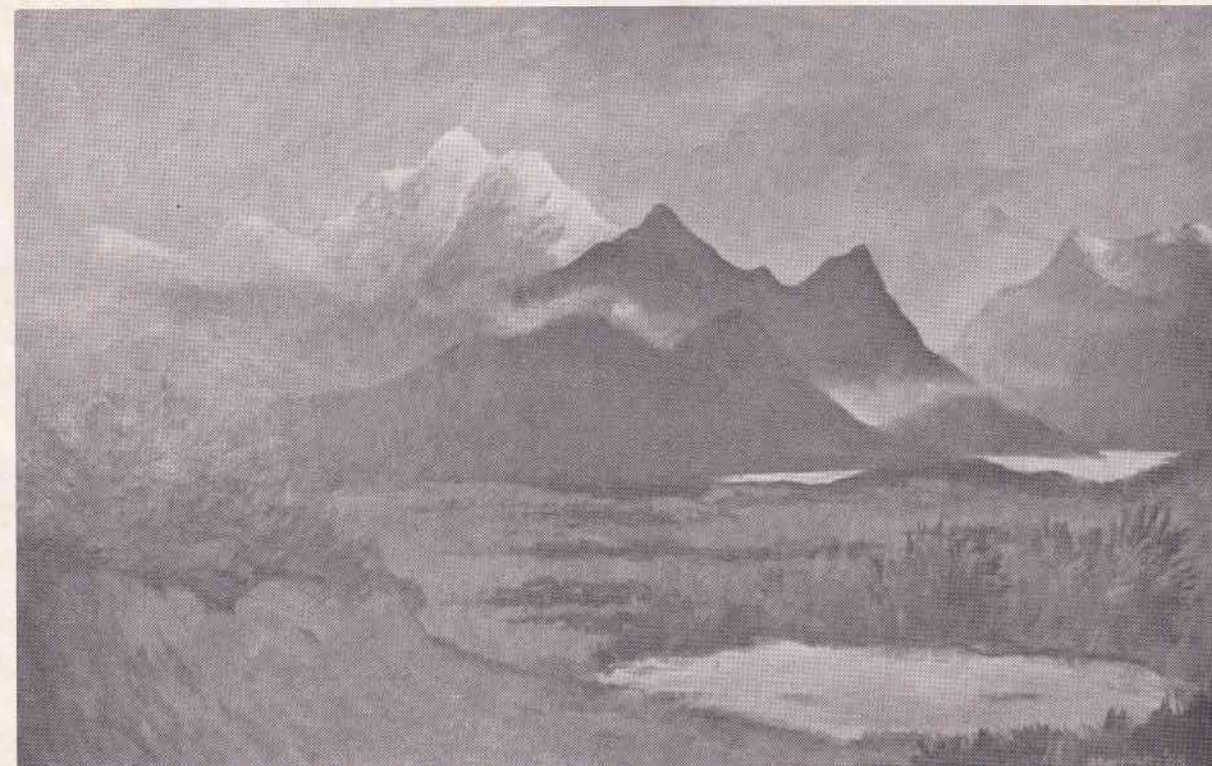
A very sincere thank you must also go to the owners of the paintings, who unselfishly made their special pieces of Ted's work available and ensured a complete retrospective.

Finally, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Ted and Nicky Harrison, whose support and encouragement is always there - and especially to Ted, for allowing us to see our surroundings through his eyes.

Ruth McCullough

Curator

Art Gallery of the Whitehorse Public Library



Mountains Bennet Lake 1968 acrylic on board

FOREWORD

I first discovered Ted Harrison's paintings in 1970 in a Vancouver art gallery. The bright, bold, simple renderings of the Yukon beckoned a welcome across Dunsmuir Street and I ventured over to take a closer look. Outlined with black lines, the colourful paintings immediately exuded a direct and happy statement. From that first encounter, I have followed Ted's work with a great deal of interest. His work has evolved into the current Ted Harrison retrospective.

On a visit to Whitehorse this year, I found myself sitting with Ted, Nicky (his wife and partner) and dog, Brunhilde, in his studio loft. The bright Yukon sun streamed through the skylights and the ever-colourful Harrison paintings made the atmosphere sing with life - a juxtaposition with the gentle peacefulness that emanated from Ted and Nicky.

The paintings in his studio today are impossible to ignore. The magic hues of deep purples, blues, shocking pinks and greens, offer a kaleidoscope of colour that is Harrison's vision of the Canadian North.

The earliest works that we see in the retrospective derive from Ted's English art training at the Hartlepool College of Art. A simple pencil sketch of the artist's father is reminiscent of Harrison's disciplined past as an artist. The major turning point in his development came when Ted and Nicky, after years of living in England, New Zealand and Malaysia, moved to Carcross in the Yukon. The sheer immensity of the environment made him feel hopelessly inadequate as a painter.

It was then he knew that he had to create a new idiom in which to describe his surroundings. What developed was his trademark: coloured simple renderings with people, houses, dogs, all outlined in black. Solid walls of colour depicted ground, sky and cloud. He attributes the colour in his paintings to time spent in Malaysia.

"That warm faraway land, washed by tropical rains and sweltering under the equatorial sun, had somehow linked up with my Yukon experiences. It was as if two lives blended together in the crucible of my mind to produced an alloy of rare and exquisite memory."

"The Last Horizon"

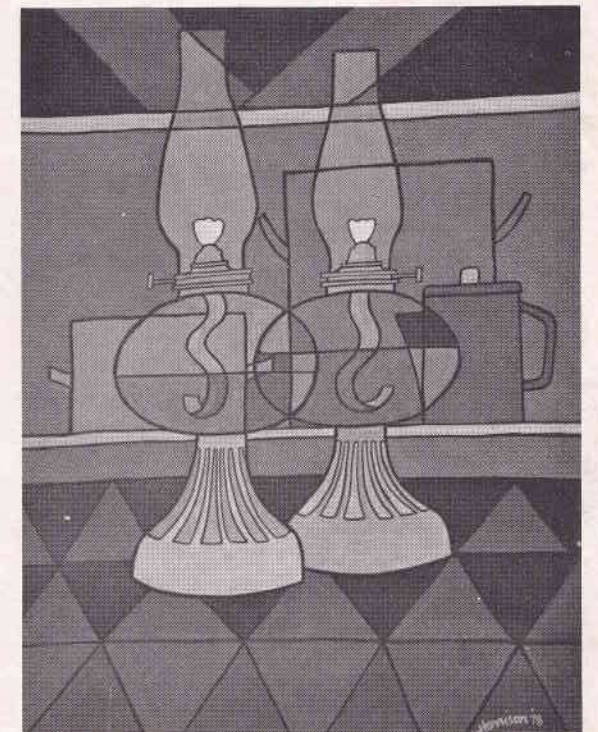
1980, Merritt Publishers

Today the paintings are happier, more colourful and whimsical. The once quiet shades have given way to electric violets, oranges, pinks and reds. The black line which for some years was solidly definitive, has become freer and more imaginative. It too has taken on a bright palette.

The paintings reveal a difference in the treatment of the sky. Initially the northern sky was one large simple colour field. Now there are wavy bands of unleashed bold colour. The skies have, in fact, become paintings within paintings.

Harrison's art is a highly personal vision - one that cannot be categorized. He believes in the innate goodness of man - a belief that we are all born with abilities which we can either abuse or use. This god and teacher has been Nature and he feels that in the vast North the effect is magnified. Ted has been influenced to some degree by the authors he loves: R.M. Ballantyne, Robert Louis Stevenson, Maxim Gorky, and by artists such as Hundertwasser (Austria), Paul Klee, Bruegel, Lawren Harris and Emily Carr.

In looking at Harrison's development in this retrospective, we see that the vision has become more unified and the message is more universal.



Still Life - Crag Lake 1978 acrylic on board

He has increasing control over the environment he paints.

Since Ted has stopped teaching and is devoting himself full time to painting, he has travelled a great deal and become more international in scope. His life has grown from a quiet microcosm in Whitehorse to the larger world including all of Canada, Hawaii, Japan, Germany and England.

Ted Harrison has made a major impact on Canadian art especially through his colourful interpretation of the vastness of the Canadian North. His art is fun - it fills the viewer with warm enlightened feelings. Ted Harrison has done a great deal to bring the Canadian North to the rest of Canada. He has shown a great

capacity to learn and grow and we can expect some interesting works from Ted Harrison in the future.

Brenda McLean

September, 1984
Vancouver, B.C.

The author, Brenda McLean, received her Bachelor of Arts degree in art history and English from Queen's University, in 1968. She worked for two years as assistant curator at the Edmonton Art Gallery, and from 1970 to 1979 was director of Wingate Arts Ltd., the firm which markets Ted Harrison's work. She is currently president of Erinmore Estates Ltd., of Vancouver, and an active supporter of the arts.



Ted Harrison 1981

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

I do not think it is too advisable for an artist to attempt a written critique or interpretation of his own work. Indeed, the work stands or falls in the eyes of the beholder. To some it may appear to have hidden psychological depths, whilst to others it may only seem to have a superficial nature.

Speaking of my own paintings - like Topsy, they "just grewed." Originally their genesis lay in a desire to get rid of all academic encumbrances and simplify the subject matter so that the artist's will predominated over the dictatorship of Nature.

So I proceeded to brain-wash myself. Out of the window went perspective, modelling, shading and realism. Such a simple statement ensued that one would think, "Ah - here is a primitive painter, devoid of any art school training whatsoever." However, such was not the case.

Gradually the elements of an academic training crept back. Figures became more dominant and agile while colour began to assert itself.

In order to aid the simplicity I isolated each colour and form with a stark black line, something akin to the manner of a stained glass window or Japanese painting.

Instead of plain flat sky the mountain shapes appeared, and later simple cloud rhythms, to complement those of the land.

Latterly the sky formations have given way to more complicated patterns, and coloured lines have displaced the ascetic black ones. As a result, a vast new world of colour and line has opened up.

I seek in my work to retain a link with humanism and natural rhythms. The

uncomplicated world of the Yukon enables me to do this. Our northern scene lacks the clutter and noise of great cities. There is still a strong link between the activities of Man and Nature.

However, I do not seek to interpret the Yukon or the North in a way which is instantly recognizable. It is a dream-world, often verging on the surrealistic. Figures of people and animals are often present in each painting because they dominate the environment as I experience it. Abstractions merge with realistic conceptions, while colour floats freely, to dictate a mood or create an atmosphere. The imperfections of life can be eradicated in a painting, and on the canvas an orderly world of tranquillity and peace can be created. The artist always creates his own personal world from the flotsam and jetsam of reality. This is my world, which came to me out of the blue as it were, and whose vastness and mystery I seek to discover.

Ted Harrison

September, 1984
Whitehorse, Yukon

TED HARRISON

Ted Harrison was born in the mining village of Wingate, County Durham, England on August 28, 1926. He was educated in the same village and later studied at the Hartlepool College of Art, receiving the National Diploma in Design in 1950.

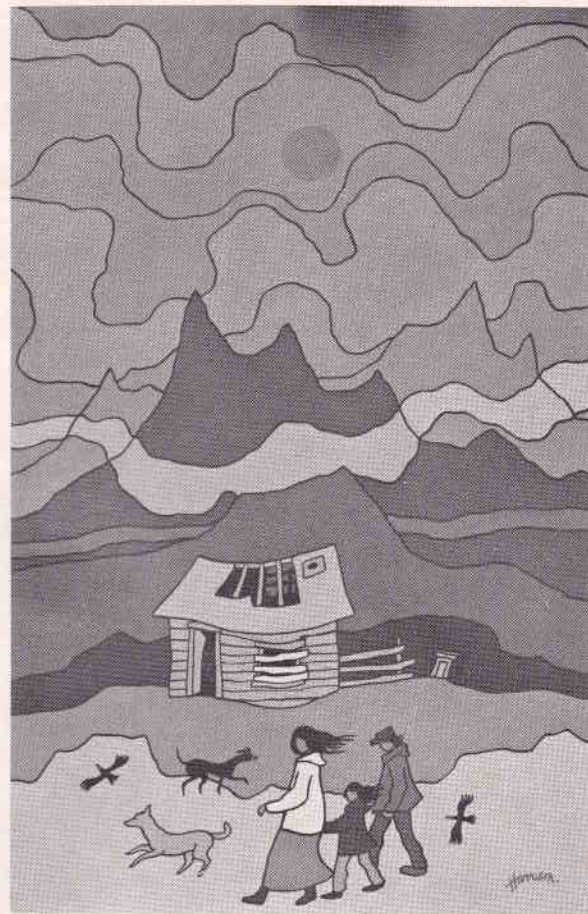
In 1945, Ted was drafted into the British Army and served three years with the Intelligence Corps, in India, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda and Somaliland.

After obtaining his Art Teacher's Diploma at King's College, University of Durham, Newcastle-upon Tyne, in 1951, Ted taught school in England and the South Pacific. In 1960 he married his Scottish wife, Nicky, in Malaysia. After some time in New Zealand they returned to teach in England. In 1967 they emigrated to Canada with their son Charles.

In Canada, Ted taught on the Indian reserve of Wabasca, Alberta for a year before moving to Carcross, Yukon in the summer of 1968.

In 1971, Ted moved to Whitehorse to teach arts and crafts at the local technical school. Four years later he was appointed head of the art department at F.H. Collins High School.

During all this time, Ted continued to paint and exhibitions of his work were held throughout Canada. In 1980, he retired from teaching to devote his full time to painting and writing.



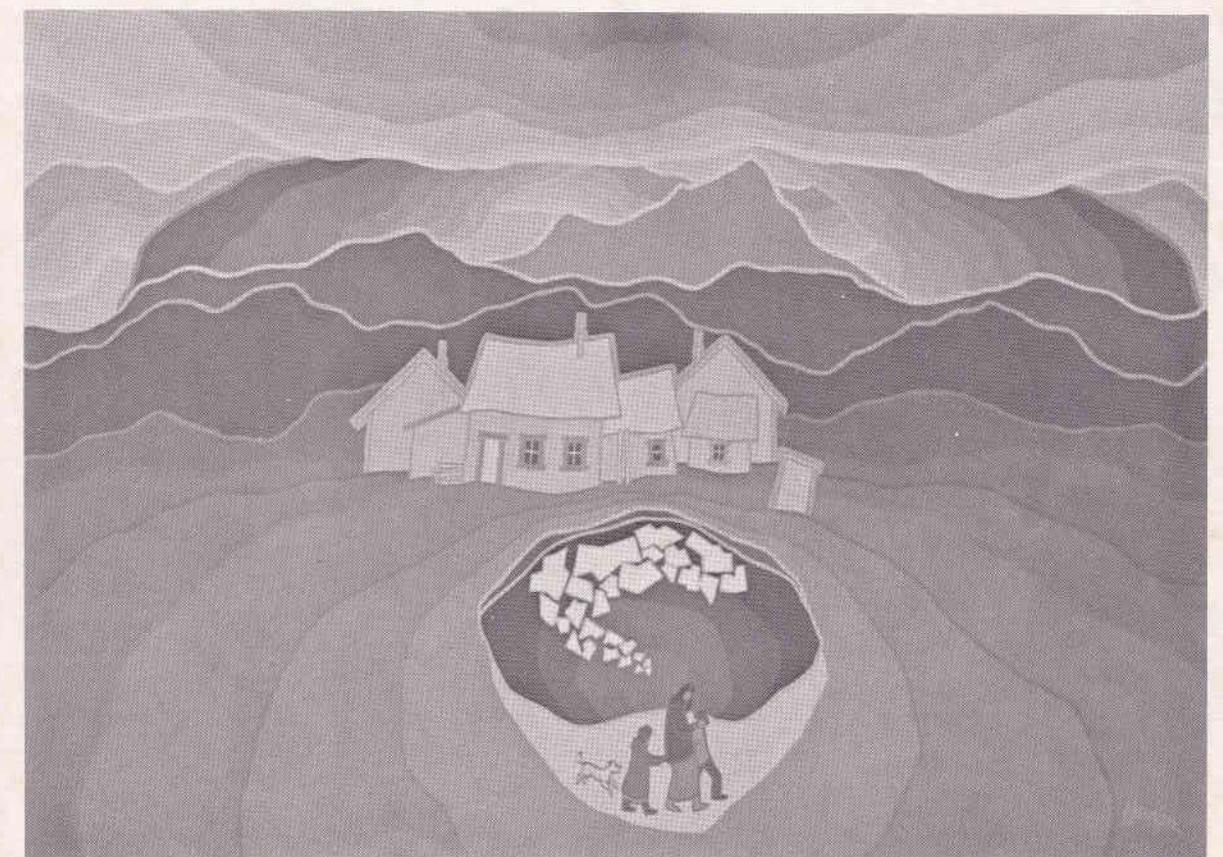
Deep Snow 1982

LIST OF PAINTINGS

- | | | | |
|--|------------------|---|------------------|
| 1. My Father
1949
oil on canvas
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 60.5 x 50 cm | 5. Dulang Girl
1958
conte sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 51 x 68.5 cm |
| 2. Isle of Skye, Kyle of Lochalsh
1956
watercolor
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 46 x 38 cm | 6. Tied Ducks
1960
gouche
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 46 x 37 cm |
| 3. Kyleakin Skye
1956
watercolor
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 46 x 38 cm | 7. The Boy
1961
pencil sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 38 x 49 cm |
| 4. Mei Ying
1958
conte sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 46 x 54.5 cm | 8. Polly Pokaia
1961
watercolour
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 46 x 37 cm |
| 9. John
1961
pencil sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 38.5 x 47 cm | 10. Ischama Daughter
1961
conte sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 48.5 x 66 cm |
| 11. Nicky
1961
pencil and watercolor sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 35 x 45.5 cm | 12. Father
1966
pencil sketch
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 28.5 x 31.5 cm |
| 13. The Miners Funeral
1966
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 98 x 53 cm | 14. Mountains Bennet Lake
1968
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 85 x 56 cm |
| 15. Charles
1968
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 63 x 92 cm | 16. Virginia
1968
acrylic on board
From the collection of Don and Marguerite Roberts. | 43 x 54 cm |
| 17. Portrait of a Girl in Orange
1968
acrylic on board
From the collection of Don and Marguerite Roberts. | 61 x 76 cm | 18. Regina Hotel
1969
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 85 x 51.5 cm |
| 19. Prospector Charles
1970
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 38.5 x 51.5 | 20. Virginia and the Little Bear
1970
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 61 x 39.5 cm |
| 21. Skookum Jim's House - Carcross
1970
acrylic on board
On loan from the collection of Mr. and Mrs. James Whyard. | 62 x 45 cm | 22. The Carcross Triplets
1971
acrylic on board
On loan from Joyce and Al Williams. | 48 x 38 cm |
| 23. Child of the Midnight Sun
1971
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 59 x 74 cm | 24. The Tourists Arrive
1972
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 51.5 x 41 cm |
| 25. The Long Street
1972
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 135 x 61.5 cm | 26. Twin Sternwheelers, Whitehorse
1972
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 45.75 x 35.5 cm |
| 27. Bulldozer at Work
1972
acrylic on board
On loan from Mike and Gail Craigen. | 46 x 36 cm | 28. Whitepass Veterans
1972
acrylic on board
On loan from Brenda and David McLean. | 91.44 x 60.96 cm |
| 29. Arrival by Whitepass
1972
acrylic on board
On loan from Brenda and David McLean. | 91.44 x 60.96 cm | 30. St. Michael's Atlin
1972
acrylic on board
From the collection of Jeanie and Harry Maddison. | 50.8 x 40.64 cm |
| 31. Artist and Family
1973
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 49 x 69 cm | 32. Yukon Funeral
1973
acrylic on board
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison. | 76 x 66 cm |
| 33. Brad's Cabin
1973
acrylic on board
On loan from the collection of Dr. Nesta Leduc. | 48.25 x 37.5 cm | 34. Sam the Musher
1973
acrylic on board
On loan from Sam and Carol Cawley. | 63 x 33 cm |

35. **The Yellow Snowball**
1973
acrylic on board 63.5 x 78.5 cm
On loan from Joyce and Al Williams.
36. **The Pink Stove - Crag Lake**
1973
acrylic on board 40.5 x 46 cm
On loan from Joyce and Al Williams.
37. **Sam's Village**
1974
acrylic on board 52 x 42 cm
On loan from Sam and Carol Cawley.
38. **Together**
1975
acrylic on board 66 x 97 cm
On loan from Sam and Carol Cawley.
39. **Kindergarten Walk**
1975
acrylic on board 50.8 x 40.64 cm
From the collection of Jeanie and Harry Maddison.
40. **Blanket Toss**
1975
acrylic on board 30.48 x 40.64 cm
From the collection of Jeanie and Harry Maddison.
41. **Yukon Scene**
1976
acrylic on board 34 x 44 cm
On loan from Anne and Bill Grauwiler.
42. **Dogsled Racing, Sourdough Rendezvous, Whitehorse**
1976
acrylic on board 61.5 x 46.25 cm
On loan from Helen Weigel.
43. **House in Carcross**
1976
acrylic on board 48 x 38 cm
On loan from the collection of Peter and Sarah Steele.
44. **Windy Road**
1977
acrylic on board 61 x 91.5 cm
On loan from Bill and Valery Braden.
45. **Ravens**
1978
print 42 x 52 cm
On loan from Anne and Bill Grauwiler.
46. **Still Life Crag Lake**
1978
acrylic on board 61.5 x 91 cm
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison.
47. **Yukon Icon**
1978
acrylic on canvas 92 x 123 cm
On loan from Charles Harrison.
48. **Reminiscence**
1978
acrylic on board 91.5 x 61.5 cm
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison.
49. **The Bear**
1979
acrylic on board 47 x 62.25 cm
On loan from Art and Sandra Pearson.
50. **Downhill Blue**
1979
original sketch 57 x 50 cm
On loan from Art and Sandra Pearson.
51. **Skilift Orange**
1979
original sketch 57 x 50 cm
On loan from Art and Sandra Pearson.
52. **Cabin - W5**
1980
acrylic on canvas 61.5 x 92 cm
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison.
53. **Five Geese**
1980
acrylic on board 42.5 x 51.5 cm
On loan from Anne and Bill Grauwiler.
54. **Susie meets Brunhilde**
1980
acrylic on canvas 46 x 61.5 cm
On loan from Joyce and Al Williams.
55. **Dump Burning**
1980
acrylic on board 60.96 x 91.44 cm
From the collection of Jeanie and Harry Maddison.
56. **The Deserted Cache**
1981
acrylic on canvas 61 x 92 cm
On loan from the collection of Rolf and Margaret Hougen.

57. **Blueline experiment No. 1**
1981
acrylic on canvas 26 x 31 cm
On loan from Anne and Bill Grauwiler.
58. **Nicky's Lake**
1981
acrylic on canvas 61.5 x 91.5 cm
On loan from Nicky Harrison.
59. **Hanging Sky**
1981
acrylic on canvas 61.5 x 91.5 cm
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison.
60. **Gail's Yukon**
1982
acrylic on canvas 61 x 122 cm
On loan from Mike and Gail Craigen.
61. **Dog on the Roof**
1982
acrylic on canvas 61 x 46 cm
On loan from Mike and Gail Craigen.
62. **Distant Clouds**
1982
acrylic on canvas 45.75 x 35.5 cm
On loan from the collection of Jerrine and Bill Weigand.
63. **Carcross**
1982
original sketch 43 x 36 cm
From the collection of Don and Marguerite Roberts.
64. **Northern Telegraph**
1982
acrylic on canvas 122 x 61 cm
On loan from NorthwesTel Inc.
65. **Smoky Fires**
1982
acrylic on canvas 91.44 x 60.96 cm
From the collection of Jeanie and Harry Maddison.
66. **Snowfall**
1983
original silkscreen print 59 x 42.5 cm
On loan from Anne and Bill Grauwiler.
67. **Evening of Deep Snow**
1984
acrylic on canvas 91.44 x 60.96 cm
On loan from Brenda and David McLean.
68. **Brunhilde meets Ruth**
1984
acrylic on canvas 121.92 x 91.44 cm
On loan from Ted and Nicky Harrison.



Ice Pond

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS - SOLO

Art Gallery of the Whitehorse Public Library,
Whitehorse, Yukon
The Yukon Gallery, Whitehorse, Yukon.
Gallery of the Golden Key, Vancouver, B.C.
Robertson Galleries Ltd., Ottawa, Ont.
Calgary Gallery, Calgary, Alta.
Horizon Gallery, Edmonton, Alta.
Shayne Gallery, Montreal, P.Q.
Eaton's Gallery, Toronto, Ont.
Downstairs Gallery, Edmonton, Alta.
Gallery Royale, Vancouver, B.C.

SELECTED EXHIBITIONS WITH OTHER ARTISTS

Shaw-Rimmington Gallery, Toronto, Ont.
Arctique Gallery, Anchorage, Alaska, U.S.A.

As a member of the Society of Canadian Artists, Ted
Harrison has also participated in group exhibitions in
Toronto, Quebec City and Hawaii.

COLLECTIONS

Yukon Permanent Art Collection, Whitehorse,
Yukon
Pemberton Securities Collection, Vancouver, B.C.
C.I.L. Collection, Montreal, P.Q.
Cyprus Anvil Mining Corporation, Vancouver,
B.C.
Firestone Collection, Ontario

His work can also be found in many private collec-
tions in Canada and the United States.

PUBLICATIONS - BOOKS

"Children of the Yukon"
1977 (Tundra Books, Montreal)
"The Last Horizon"
1980 (Merritt Publishers, Toronto)
"A Northern Alphabet"
1982 (Tundra Books, Montreal)

AWARDS

"Children of the Yukon" was the first Canadian
work to be selected by an international jury to be
shown at the Children's Book Illustrators' Fair in
Bologna, Italy (1978) and later at the Otani Memo-
rial Museum in Japan.

In 1984, Ted received an Honours Award for Best
Illustrated Canadian Children's Book, for "A
Northern Alphabet".

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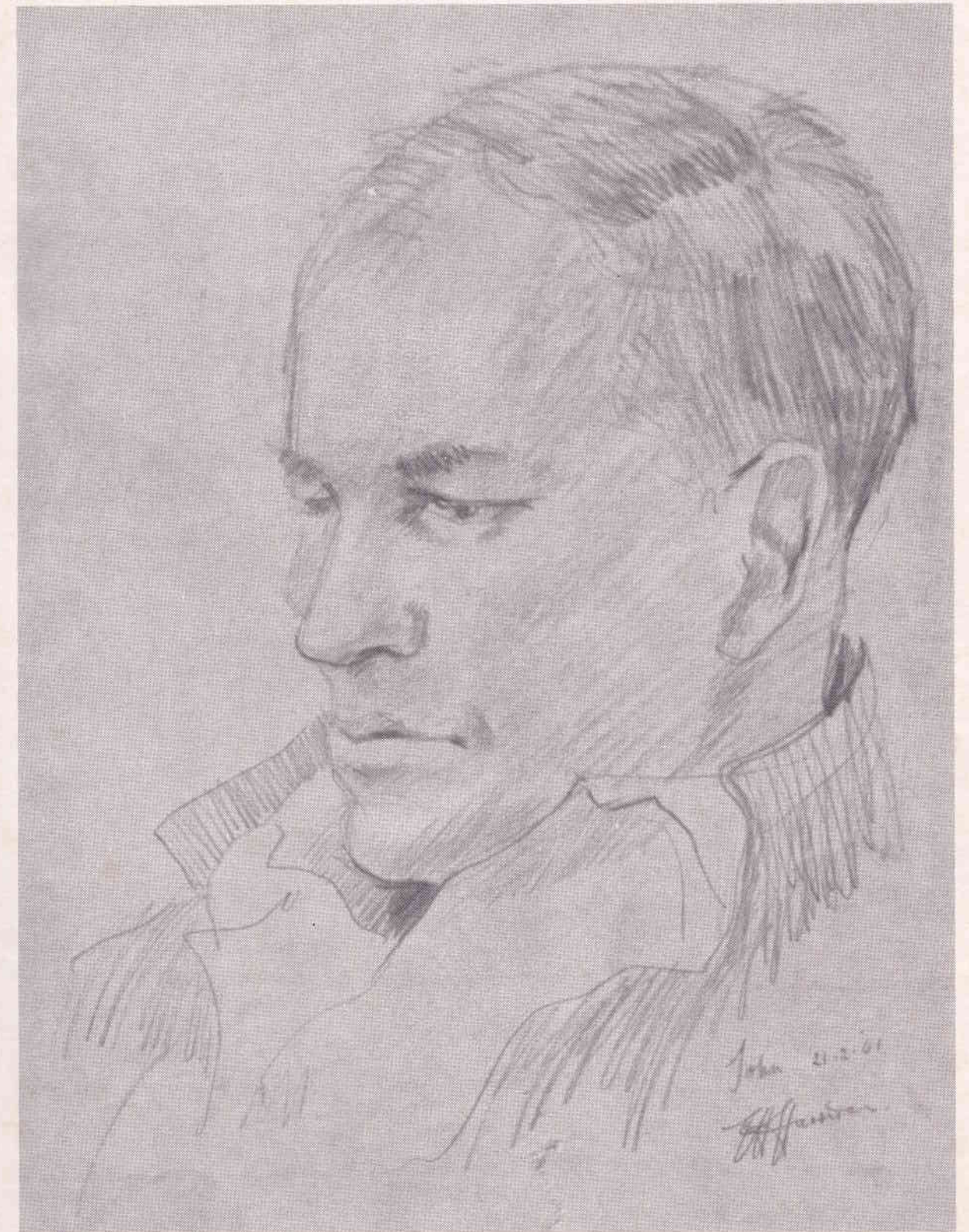
Address: **Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon
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COVER: Flying High

1984 61 cm x 46 cm

Presently in a private collection.

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Yukon Lottery Commission.



John 1961 pencil sketch