

TAKAO TANABE

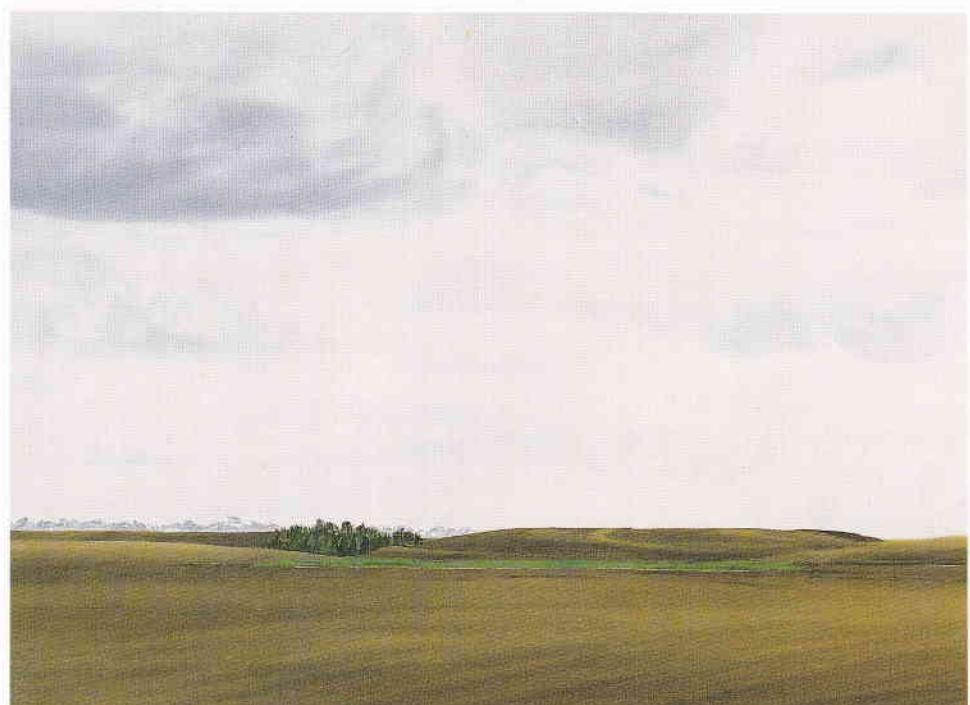
FLATLANDS

CANADA HOUSE CULTURAL CENTRE GALLERY
6 MAY – 9 JUNE 1987

PAINTINGS BY
TAKAO TANABE



Shoderee Ranch, 1984, 50" x 120", acrylic on canvas



Foothills, Looking West 5/82, 1982, 55" x 72", acrylic on canvas

Foreword

Takao Tanabe is one of Canada's most respected landscape painters and is also known as an influential teacher of the younger generation of Canadian artists. In 1954 he attended the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London and has continued to maintain close links with Britain. Although Tanabe has been represented in group exhibitions at Canada House both in 1975 and 1982, this present exhibition will provide an opportunity to see a more substantial body of his work.

We are indebted to the artist for his energetic support throughout the organisation of this project and for making available the works for the exhibition. In addition, we would like to thank Mira Godard for her encouragement and help and Joyce Zemans for writing an introductory text for this publication.

*Michael Regan
Visual Arts Officer*

Exhibition organised by Michael Regan, assisted by Caroline Foxhall

Canada House Cultural Centre (Director: Curtis Barlow), Trafalgar Square, London SW1Y 5BJ. Telephone: 01-629 9492

Takao Tanabe

In late summer 1984, Tak Tanabe spent a week painting in the foothills of the Rockies; he began around Pincher Creek in southern Alberta, and travelled south to the Montana border. The result is Tanabe's last suite of paintings based on the prairie foothills. Painted after Tanabe had quit Banff for Vancouver Island as his permanent residence, they and several earlier Banff paintings, comprise this exhibition. Together, these works illustrate the continuity of purpose in Tanabe's art. For they relate both to the seascapes upon which he had newly embarked and to the ideas that have preoccupied and challenged him throughout his career.

Northrop Frye has suggested that "everything that is central in Canadian writing seems to be marked by the imminence of the natural world." The same, it can be argued, is true for Canadian art. If the natural world has remained the touchstone for Canadian authors and artists, it is the landscape and its vastness that has preoccupied them. Early in this century, Frederick Varley, a British-born member of Canada's Group of Seven, attempted to determine the source of that fascination. He looked to a comparison between the Canadian and the British landscapes. Varley concluded that the Canadian preoccupation with landscape arose out of its vast emptiness — so different from the England of his youth, where even the mountains were "mellowed by history and the presence of humanity."

For the Group of Seven, the landscape, touched by transcendentalism, was the principal source of national pride and the symbol of national potential. For subsequent generations of Canadian artists, the impact of the land has remained inescapable. It is a predominant source for the expressively carved and gouged dramas of Paterson Ewen, the metaphysical colour fields of Otto Rogers, the ecological quilts of Joyce Wieland and the filmic, photographic site pieces of Michael Snow. Many artists are identified by their affinity to a particular region or landscape phenomenon: for example, artists such as Gordon Smith and Tony Onley are considered to be west coast painters, just as Tak Tanabe is a "prairie" artist (even though he has spent the greater part of his life in British Columbia). For many, Tanabe is the ultimate prairie artist.

A brief biography seems essential if we are to understand how Tanabe came to construct his painterly world. Born in Seal Cove, British Columbia in 1926, the son of a commercial fisherman, Tanabe spent his summers in fishing camps on the Skeena River. At the age of eleven he moved to Vancouver. After Japan entered the war, Tanabe, like most Japanese-Canadians was moved away from the West Coast and interned inland as a "security" measure. At art school during the post-war years in Winnipeg, he discovered the work of Josef Albers and of the abstract expressionists. In 1951, he studied in New York City, under Reuben Tam and Hans Hofmann, frequented the Cedar Bar and met Philip Guston and Franz Kline. Works from this period reveal a familiarity and ease with the abstract expressionists' approach.

From 1953-55, he travelled through Europe on an Emily Carr Scholarship. His drawings from Italy are those of a young artist, overwhelmed by the experience of the Renaissance; they are documentary and literal. In Denmark, he was drawn to the coast; and the works from this sojourn are strangely prescient of his later painting. Like Mondrian in Holland half a century earlier, Tanabe sketched and painted the dunes, struck by the endless vista, the energy of the sea, and the simplicity and immutability of the horizon line that define the experience of the coast.

On his return to Canada, Tanabe completed a series of "white paintings" — lighter, looser, more open than previous work. They were based on the dark line Tanabe had observed on the Danish coast, "dividing the land from the sky" and the contours of the dunes studied during the rainy winter of 1954. Canadian artist and critic, Rodolphe De Repentigny described these Danish landscapes in Montreal's *La Presse* as "impressions of nature, a series of paintings which evolved progressively towards invention, pure and simple".¹ Tanabe had begun to create "another sort of realism — the representation of the process of vision itself, reduced to its most minimal and most evanescent aspects".²

In 1959, Tanabe spent two years in Tokyo studying sumi-e painting and calligraphy. The process of simplification and serialization that had begun with the Danish dunes was fortified by the repetition, emotional restraint and contemplation with which the sumi-e artist penetrates the heart of his subject.

Back in Vancouver, Tanabe translated his landscape vision into hard-edge abstract forms in a series of brightly coloured works. Neither the subtlety of the white paintings nor the evanescent landscape forms of 1954/55 are evident in the paintings of the late 1960s. Nor is the impact of his Japanese sojourn, which had resulted in a 1961 Vancouver exhibition of sensitive delicate sumi-e works.

In the early 1970s, Tanabe seems to have recognized the dialectic in his work. Attempting to integrate the cross-currents of east and west — the formal abstraction of his recent work and the intuitive restraint of his sumi-e painting — Tanabe turned to nature and to the prairies, in particular. (In retrospect, we can see that the solution was already inherent in the Danish paintings of the mid-1950s.) Withdrawn from the immediacy of nature and influenced by formal considerations of abstraction, Tanabe was evolving a new and personal artistic language. He called the paintings of this period "my interior landscapes".

Tanabe focussed on the prairies and flatlands, he later said, because "I had travelled across them in the 1950s and I had thought they were an impossible subject to paint. In 1972, I was able to cope with the challenge of the big prairie." The challenge that Tanabe accepted was less the depiction of particular place than the formal problem presented by his subject. The abstracted prairie landscape became the artistic metaphor for space, an extension of Tanabe's "interior land". Within the flatlands,

and the foothills of the prairies are contained both the artist's childhood experience of the west-coast shoreline and his understanding of Japanese landscape art.

The evolution of Tanabe's prairie landscapes is revealing. At first, he painted brightly coloured, intricate compositions of discrete broad shapes of flat colour that had a stylistic affinity with his hard-edge geometric paintings. Within a year, however, the specific reference to geometric abstraction was gone: Tanabe had discovered the solution in the single line of the horizon. Everything else was pinned to it, for it anchored the painting activity to the surface. Thereafter, Tanabe would concentrate on the handling of paint, colour and texture rather than on complicated planar relationships. Most of the prairie paintings are horizontal in orientation; however, Tanabe also experimented with the vertical format. Those works reveal how much we, as viewers, rely on lateral extension to conceptualize the landscape. In the paintings in this exhibition, as in most of Tanabe's work since 1973, the horizon line remains the

insistent axis, forcing the viewer to acknowledge both the artist's source in nature and the possibility of an infinite continuous space.

In this exhibition, however, the works reveal an increased tension between the plane of the canvas and illusionary depth. The horizon line is emphasized by the very proportions of the canvas, yet it is softened. Mountain ranges can be distantly perceived and, in *Shoedee Ranch*, a cluster of trees interrupts the expanse of the land to suggest a penetrable middle ground. Tanabe moves us through the landscape space by playing gently with light. Yet, in works like *North of Maria's River* and *Montana Butte*, the directional brushwork and insistent dark band of colour that traverse the composition reinforce the picture plane.

In these prairie paintings, Tanabe re-examines and reconstitutes time and place, the real and the ideal, experience and emotion. These rich and light-filled paintings synthesize formal means and content. Through his masterful manipulation of light and shade and his tonal control, Tanabe creates powerful visual statements that speak of the essential experience of space.³

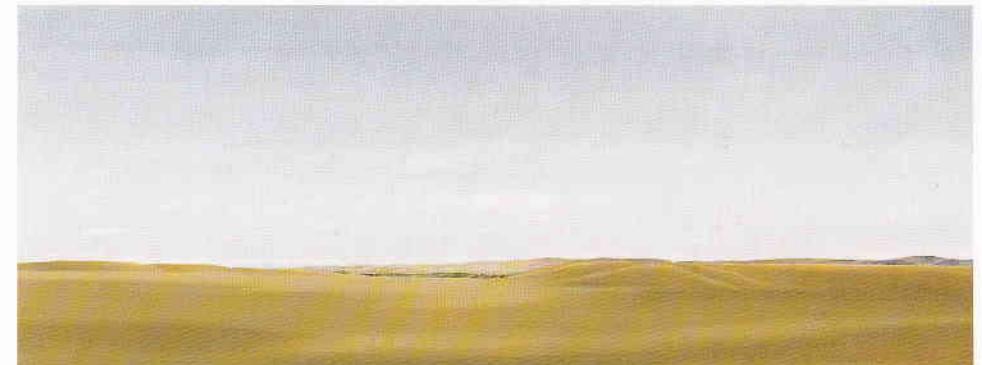
Joyce Zemans, Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts, York University

1. Rodolphe De Repentigny, "Un Jeune peintre de l'Ouest livre quelques aspects de son travail," in *La Presse*, 9 Dec 1955
2. Ibid

3. This essay is based on an article which first appeared in *Vie des Arts*, Volume 28, No. 113 (1985)



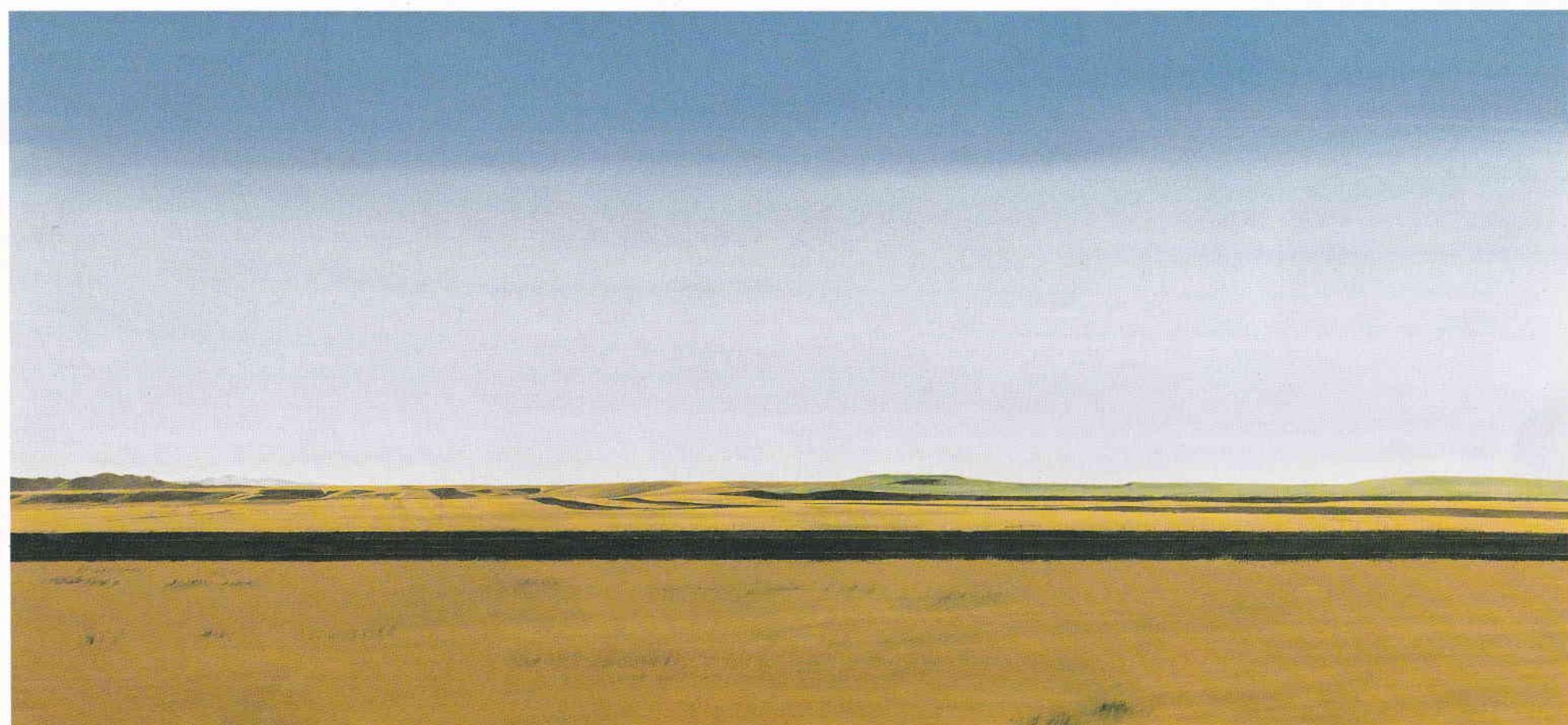
On the Road to Banff 3/82, 1982, 47" x 74", acrylic on canvas



To Medicine River Valley, 1984, 48" x 120", acrylic on canvas

Selected exhibitions and biography

1926	Born in Prince Rupert, B.C.	1968	To Philadelphia
1946-49	Winnipeg School of Art, Winnipeg	1969	Philadelphia Print Club, Philadelphia; Prints Moved to New York City, Canada Council Senior Fellowship
1951	Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, Spring Show To New York, study with Hans Hofmann and Brooklyn Museum School	1971	Philadelphia Art Museum; Multiples Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; R.C.A. Annual Exhibition
1953	Sao Paolo Biennial, Sao Paolo, Brazil National Gallery of Canada, Canadian Survey Show To England and Europe on Emily Carr Foundation Scholarship	1973	Marlborough Godard Gallery, Toronto Canada Council Art Bank, Paris Moved to Banff, Alberta, as Artist-in-Residence and Head of Art Department, Banff Centre School of Fine Arts
1954	Central School of Arts & Crafts, London, England	1974	Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo, New York; Aspects of Canadian Art Marlborough Gallery, New York; 13 Canadians Equinox Gallery, Vancouver
1955	London Art Gallery, London, Ontario, "Canadian Painters Abroad" Return to Canada	1975	Marlborough, Rome, Italy "The Land": 1972-76, a six gallery touring exhibition Changing Visions — The Canadian Landscape Contemporary Canadian Prints, Galeria D'Arte, Pescara, Italy
1956	Guggenheim International Exhibition, Paris and New York Smithsonian Institute, Washington, Canadian Abstract Painters Moved to Vancouver, B.C.	1977	Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto Alberta Art Foundation Selection; Glenbow Alberta Institute Equinox Gallery, Vancouver
1957	Gallery of Contemporary Art, Toronto National Gallery of Canada; Canadian Biennial II (and III, V, VI, VII) Sao Paolo Biennial, Brazil	1979	Resigned Royal Canadian Academy Member Marquis of Lorne Memorial Society Glenbow Museum, Calgary
1958	Brussels' World's Fair, Belgium 1st Inter-American Biennial of Arts and Crafts, Mexico Art Gallery of Toronto; 4 Canadians	1980	Resigned as Head of Art Department, Banff Centre School of Fine Arts and moved to Vancouver Island
1959	Brooklyn Museum, New York; 20th International Biennial of Watercolours To Japan on Canada Council Scholarship, study with Ikuo Hirayama, Tokyo University of Fine Arts	1981	Mira Godard Gallery, Calgary 5 Hanging Banners, Canadian Embassy, Mexico City
1960	Nihonbashi Gallery, Tokyo	1982	Equinox Gallery, Vancouver
1961	Art Gallery of Toronto; 15th Annual Canadian Paintings, Sculpture and Graphics Return to Vancouver, B.C.	1983	Mira Godard Gallery, Calgary and Toronto Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver: Art and Artists 1931-83
1962	Agnes Lefort Gallery, Montreal Commonwealth Centre, London, England; Commonwealth Art Today	1984	Equinox Gallery, Vancouver
1963	Rochester Memorial Art Gallery; Contemporary Canadian Painting and Sculpture	1985	Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, New York Paul Kuhn Fine Arts, Calgary
1964	National Gallery of Canada; Canadian Watercolours, Drawings and Prints	1986	Equinox Gallery, Vancouver
1965	Art Gallery of Toronto; Focus on Drawings		
1966	Paper Collage Mural 13' x 80', Sir John Carling Building, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa		
1967	Atlantic Provinces Art Circuit, 6 City Tour of 4 Eastern Provinces National Gallery of Canada; 300 years of Canadian Art Winnipeg Centennial Concert Hall; 6 Silk Hangings 34' x 7' Elected Associate, Royal Canadian Academy		



North of Maria's River, 1984, 45" x 96", acrylic on canvas

January 17 - March 2, 2019

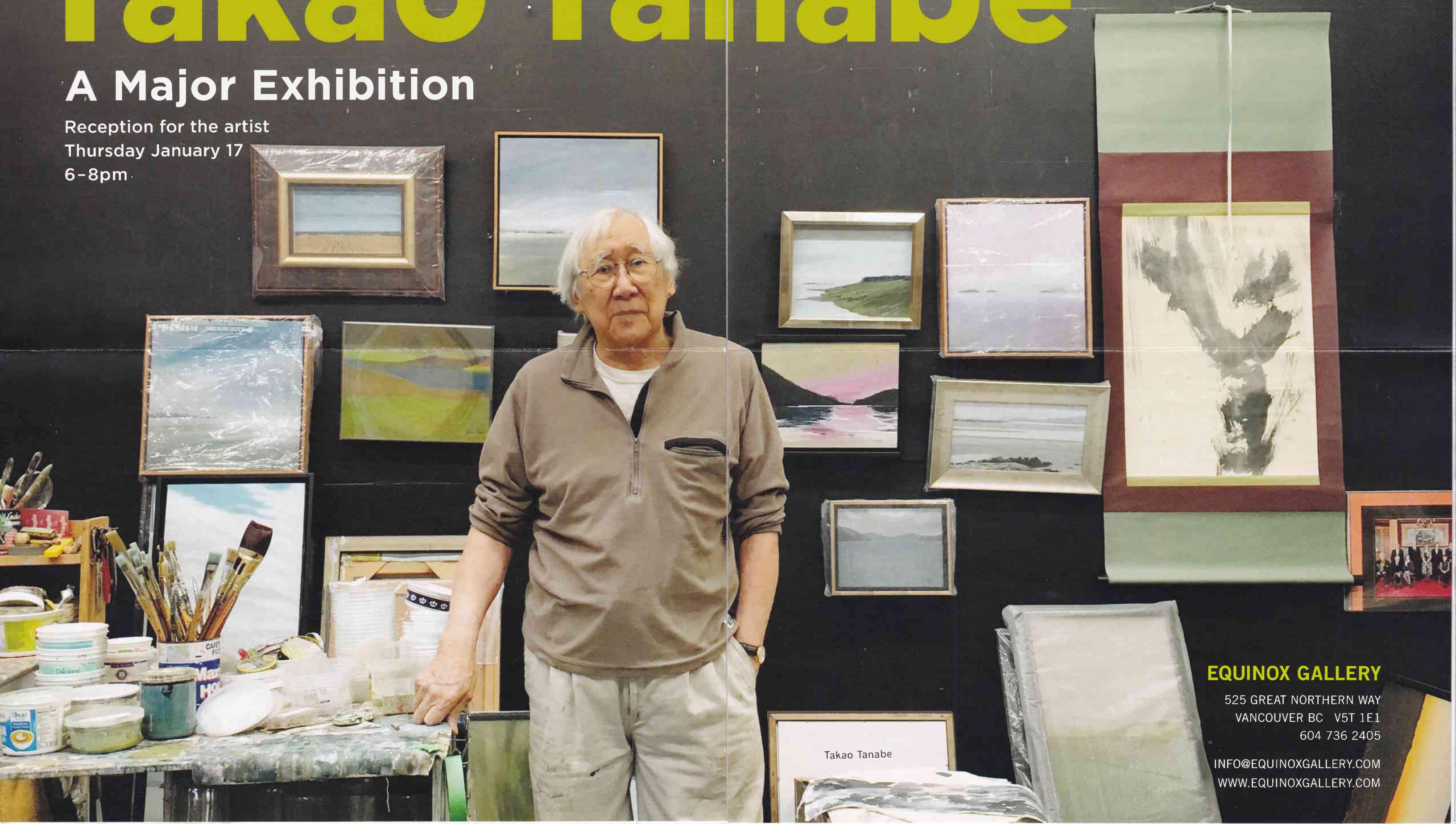
Takao Tanabe

A Major Exhibition

Reception for the artist

Thursday January 17

6-8pm



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VIEWS OF THE COAST

EMILY CARR, E.J. HUGHES, GREG MURDOCK,
JACK SHADBOLT, GORDON SMITH, W.J. PHILLIPS,
RICHARD PRINCE, TAKAO TANABE, DARREN WATERSTON

FEBRUARY 16-MARCH 18, 2006

Opening Reception: Wednesday, February 15th

From 6:00-8:00 p.m.

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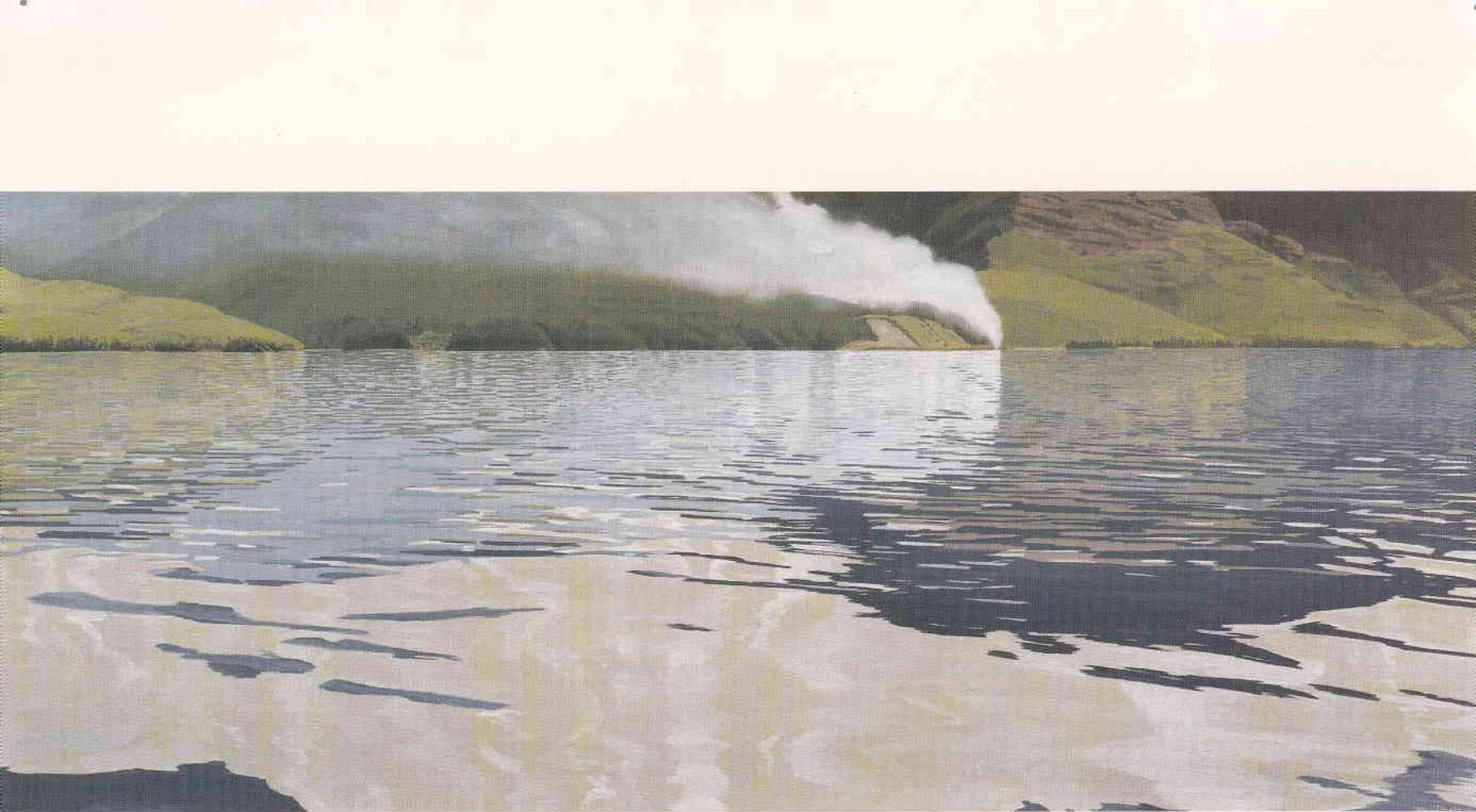
2321 Granville Street, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada V6H 3G4
Tel 604.736.2405 Fax 604.736.0464 Email info@equinoxgallery.com

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Front: Takao Tanabe: West Coast 1/05: The Pacific, 2005, 48"x84"



Tak @ Cap September 22, 2004



*You are cordially invited to attend the
opening of an exhibition of*

new paintings

by

TAKAO TANABE

*on Saturday, May 1st, 1993
from 2-5 p.m.*

The exhibition continues through May 25th.

MG

Mira Godard
Gallery



TAKAO TANABE

NEW WORKS 1994 - 1995

OPENING
SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 1995
2 - 5 P.M.

WESTCOAST
POINTS
OF
VIEW

-
-
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**ONLEY
SMITH
TANABE**

The "Artists for Kids" Trust is indeed fortunate to have secured the participation of three preeminent British Columbian artists - Toni Onley, Gordon Smith, and Takao Tanabe - to produce this stimulating and attractive suite of Westcoast images.

These senior artists have all had fertile and originative careers, both on canvas and on paper, that have earned them a respected place in the leading public and private collections across this country.

This talented trio each have their own distinctive style, technique and vision but they share two longtime, common traits: an enchantment with the diverse beauty of the Canadian landscape and a generosity of spirit to encourage the artistic gifts and appreciation in our youth.

When I first saw this suite, I found it awakened my spirits, stirred my imagination and generally left me challenged and charmed. The Tanabe broods and portends, the Onley intrigues, and the Smith shimmers and radiates. Each viewing provokes new insights and enjoyment.

These graphics are excellent examples of each artist's work and I am confident they will provide many pleasurable rewards for their owners.

Ron Longstaffe
Collector

Limited individual prints and portfolio suites available. For a price list, or to make an appointment to view the Westcoast suite, please contact: Bill MacDonald, Director, Artists for Kids Trust. Telephone: 604-987-6667 Fax: 604-987-8967

TAKAO TANABE

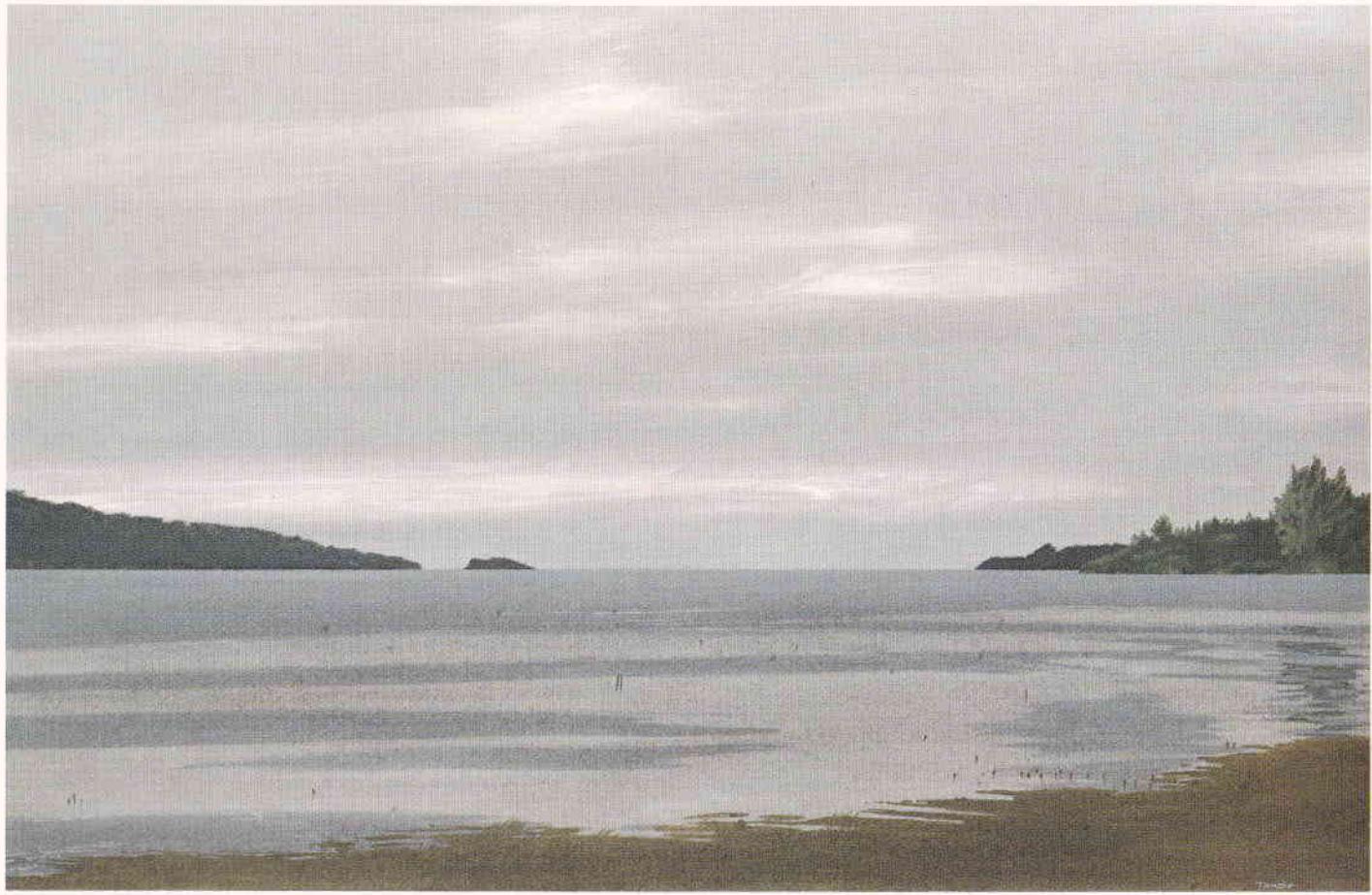
70th Birthday Exhibition

Saturday, September 7, 1996
2 - 5 p.m.



Mira Godard
Gallery

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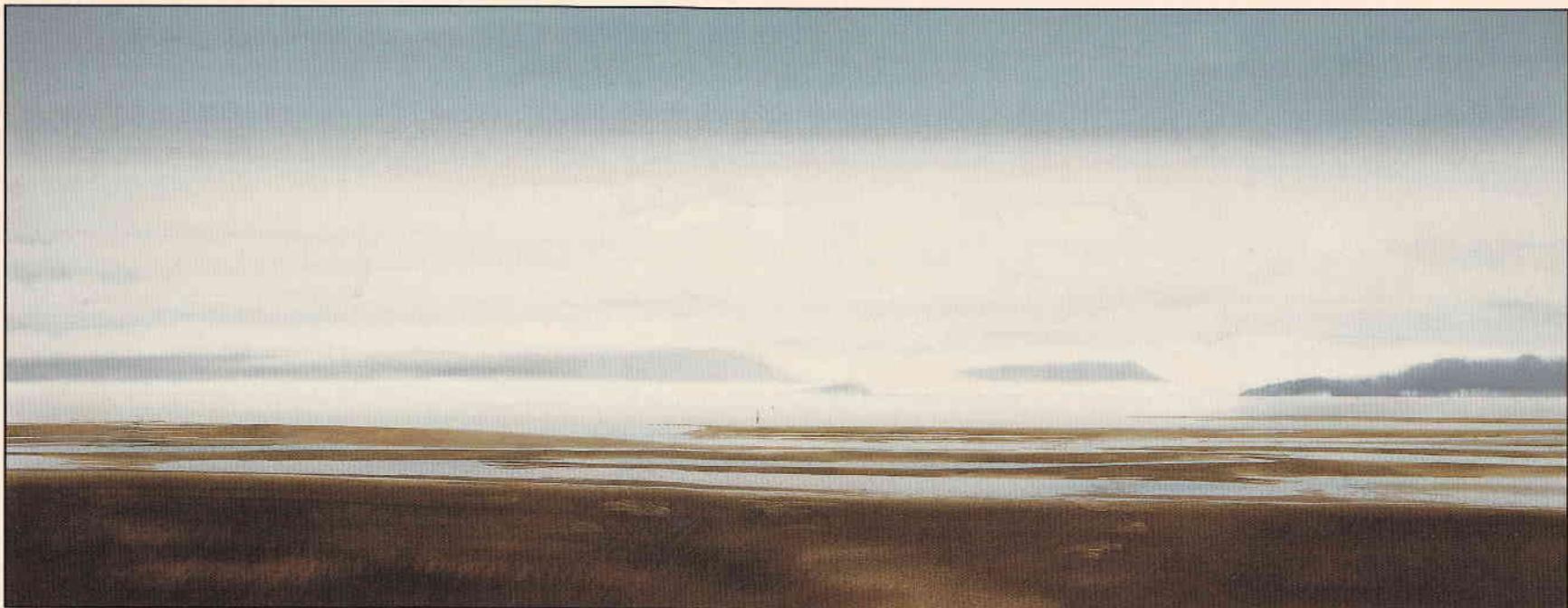


"Nanoose 1/93", Acrylic on Canvas, 36" x 56", 1993

TAKAO TANABE
PAINTINGS, DRAWINGS, and PRINTS
SEPTEMBER, 1994
OPENING - WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14TH
FROM 6:00 - 8:00 P.M.

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"ENGLISH BAY 1/87 SPANISH BANKS," 1987, ACRYLIC ON CANVAS, 37" x 96"

T A K A O T A N A B E

"THE INSIDE PASSAGE"

M A R C H 1 0 - A P R I L 2 , 1 9 8 8

R E C E N T P A I N T I N G S

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Takao Tanabe NEW PRINTS

PERIWINKLE PRESS 1994

Takao Tanabe NEW PRINTS

ESSAY: IAN THOM, Vancouver

THE PRINTS

Low Tide/Rathetrevor 1991
Woodblock, image 38 x 63 cm
Sawai Atelier, Masato Arikushi, printer

Shuttleworth Sunset 1993
Woodblock, image 34 x 53 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer

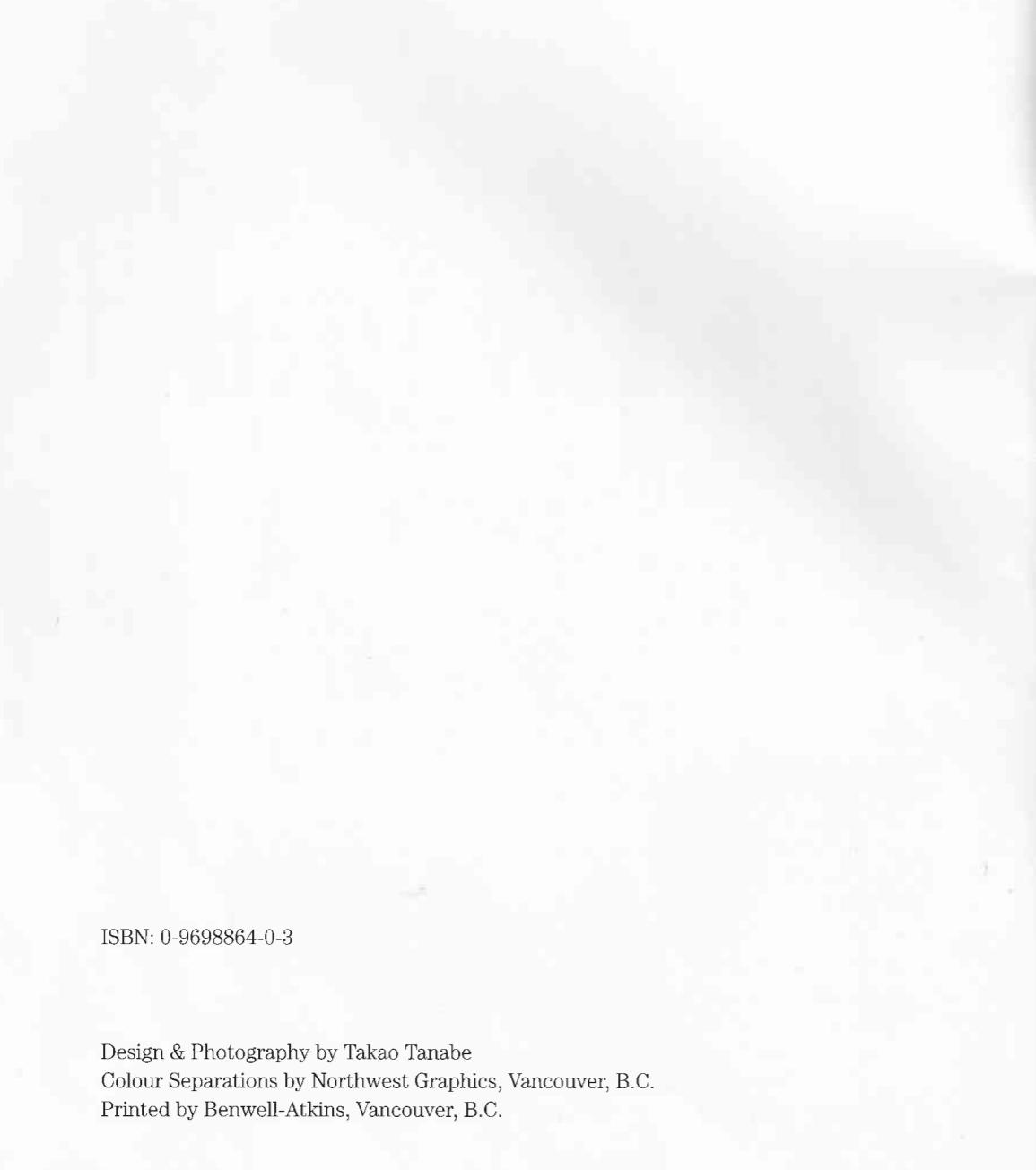
Nootka Afternoon 1993
Woodblock, image 47 x 75.5 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer

Morning, Raza Pass 1994
Woodblock, image 53 x 86 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer

Raza, Early Evening 1994
Woodblock, image 53 x 86 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer

Inside Passage 1994
Photogravure, image 19 x 20 cm
New Leaf Press, Peter Braune, printer

Skincuttle Channel 1994
Photogravure, image 20.5 x 30 cm
New Leaf Press, Peter Braune, printer



Takao Tanabe: Reflections on his Recent Prints

Takao Tanabe is best known for his landscape paintings of the prairies and west coast. Less well-known is Tanabe's equally long and distinguished career as a printmaker which began in 1951. If fewer in number than his paintings, Tanabe's sixty-eight prints are, nevertheless, remarkable for their spirit of adventure which speaks of Tanabe's willingness to expand the boundaries of his art, to embrace new forms, and to deepen his and our understanding of his chosen subject matter, the landscape. Landscape has provided the basis for Tanabe's work from the beginning. At times it has been landscape of the mind, but even in the mid-sixties, when he was among our most distinguished hard-edge painters, Tanabe referred back to the natural world. Within the realm of his printmaking there are a few images which touch on other subjects, including a fine Self-Portrait of 1957 and some purely abstract images, but the majority of his prints are landscapes. These prints display his particular sensibility which distills the complexity of nature into images which have, on the surface, a beguiling simplicity.

Tanabe has used a wide variety of print processes—etching, lithography, linocut, screenprinting, relief print, engraving, and woodblock. The media of lithography and woodblock have, to date, provided Tanabe with the greatest challenge and proved the most flexible in allowing him to express his visual ideas. Invited to do a woodblock by Noboru Sawai in 1981 (Prairie Autumn was the first block print), Tanabe has, since that time, worked with the master block cutter and printer Masato Arikushi to create a series of images which are remarkable in their subtlety, richness of colour, and technical accomplishment.

Traditional Japanese printmaking is characterized by a rather complex division of labour: the original artist who creates the composition, a technician who "breaks down" the design for printing, another who transfers it to the blocks, and others who print the blocks. The prints which Tanabe and Arikushi have produced represent a considerable variation on this process. Tanabe himself is more directly involved and Arikushi performs the functions of blockcutter and printer which traditionally would have been carried out by many technicians.

All of Tanabe's woodblock prints have been based on paintings and it is worth considering how the shift from painting to print is accomplished. The process is one of simplification. There is no question of duplicating a painting; what is to be recaptured is the spirit of the work rather than the physical detail. Considerations

ISBN: 0-9698864-0-3

Design & Photography by Takao Tanabe

Colour Separations by Northwest Graphics, Vancouver, B.C.

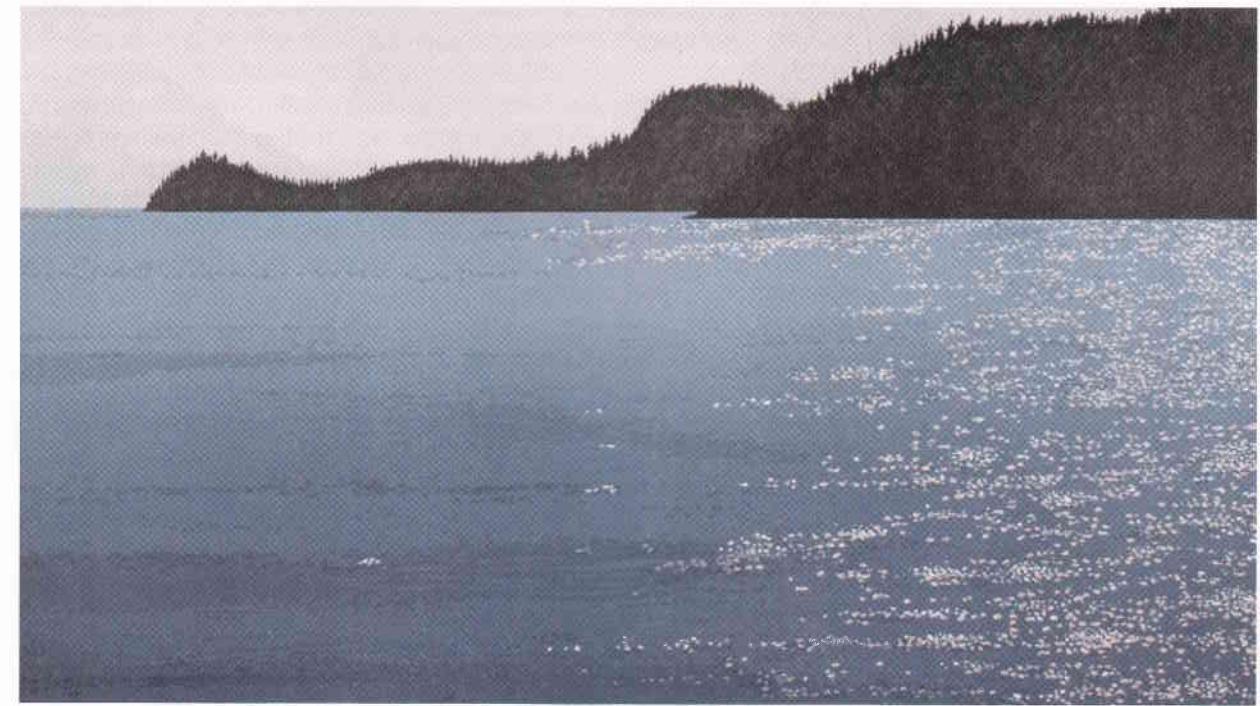
Printed by Benwell-Atkins, Vancouver, B.C.

of scale, the technical possibilities of the printmaking medium, and the nature of the paper and ink all inform the definition of the new image.

There is a delicate balance between keeping the essence of the subject and at the same time adapting the original composition—defined more by colour than by line—to the linear requirements of the printmaker. One of the startling facts about Tanabe's prints is that they do not have key blocks (which carry the overall design). This presents the blockcutter and printer with a considerable challenge, for the composition is only readable when all the blocks have been printed. Arikushi takes a line drawing which Tanabe provides and, using this in relation to the painting, works out the number of blocks required and estimates the number of impressions which will be needed to obtain the density of colour which is required for the composition. Repeated impressions require a paper which is consistent in its ability to take ink and strong enough to survive the repeated wettings. Tanabe has generally used handmade *hosho* paper for his woodblock prints.

The prints reproduced here have been created over the last four years and share a number of common elements. All are about the landscape and our relation to it, but more particularly the landscape as revealed and, occasionally, concealed by light. The two earlier prints—*Low Tide/Rathtrevor*, 1991 and *Shuttleworth Sunset*, 1993—set themselves apart from the remainder of the group in the fact of our location. We are on shore; the space of the prints is defined by a secure place for us to stand. *Low Tide/Rathtrevor* is also distinguished from the other images through the concern for texture, most notably in the ground cover of the foreground. The print is intriguing for its tension in the development of space and its use of colour. The assertiveness of the orange in the foreground challenges the spatial progression by “popping” forward out of the context of the surrounding brown areas. Here, and in all of these prints, there is a quietude but never a stasis. The viewpoint, the relationship of colours, and the progression of space, or sometimes several of these elements, are always in tension. This tension gives the images an excitement which is, perhaps, not immediately evident in the subjects.

At first glance Tanabe's prints appear simple. They present their subject directly and apparently without artifice. This is as it should be; a print which speaks first of technique is an aesthetic failure. Closer examination reveals that this simplicity is predicated on a precisely conceived interplay of up to seven blocks, twenty-seven impressions, and perhaps thirty colours. The variety of printings and differential inkings is startlingly complex. *Shuttleworth Sunset* is an excellent example of graduated printing. The diminishing intensity of the orange sunset is achieved by attenuating the ink from bottom to top so that the ink fades just as



Nootka Afternoon 1993
Woodblock, image 47 x 75.5 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer

light does in nature. A similar effect is achieved in the gradation of the reflection in the water. The placement of highlights is also quite telling. Note for example the pattern of dots on the shore and imagine the composition without them.

Nootka Afternoon is a print of considerably greater ambition and complexity. As with the remainder of the prints shown here, it adopts a different viewpoint. We are on the water or, perhaps, above the water, and our relation to the image has a slight edge to it. The complex effects of light glinting on the water and the control of the pinks and blues make this print a delicate balance of forces. The background is simplified into blocks of what might be described as brindled colour. Light permeates the ink and thus, by implication, the landscape. The blues of the water have a range and depth which act as a foil to the flashes of colour (white and pink) in the reflections. The other factor which gives the print a visual kick is the adumbration of the trees in the background by pink elements on the right and gray elements on the left. This "shading" of the shapes is visually arresting and, as noted above, gives the image energy.

Morning, Raza Pass and Raza, Early Evening, both from 1994, are based on one painting and use the same blocks, but are radically different in their atmosphere and development of space. In the first print, the recession into space is very pronounced. We move steadily towards the light strip in the distant narrows. There is a sense of interpenetration—of sea, sky, cloud, and land, all defined by subtle shifts in the inking of the blocks. When Tanabe produced the second print, the inking was altered substantially in the water area. The closer range of colour gives the print a quieter, more elegiac quality. Our passage through the space is slowed and our perception of that space altered. Note how the upper section of the image, so clearly distant in the earlier print, seems to move forward. Although the inking of the upper sections of both prints is very similar, our reading of the images is quite different due to the shift in the tonality used in the water. Here we see an example of the latitude within which the print develops. Decisions of colour, form, and emphasis are worked out, not in slavish imitation of the painted composition, but in terms of how the print will work.

While he has gained considerable technical knowledge over the years, Tanabe's printmaking has been informed by his collaboration with a number of master printers. What interests him is getting the desired result; he has always been willing to explore with printers how the image might be best realized. In short, the problem dictates the solution. When Tanabe wanted to make a print which had a particularly rich range of blacks, he was led to photogravure with the technical advice of Peter Braune of New Leaf Press and Joseph Montague.

Photogravure, as the term implies, begins with a positive transparency, in this case one of Tanabe's drawings. The positive is placed on a sheet of photo-sensitive gelatin. The positive and gelatin are exposed to light and the gelatin hardens in response to the amount of light which the positive allows through. The sheet of gelatin is transferred to a copper plate which has previously been dusted with resin particles (as in an aquatint). The plate is washed and the areas which were not exposed to light dissolve leaving only the hardened gelatin. The plate is then put into an acid bath and the acid etches the plate at different rates depending on the amount of gelatin in any given area. The resin ground provides a rich overall tone for the image. Final touch-up work may be done by hand and then the plate is inked and printed.

Inside Passage, 1994, is a dramatic image which is defined by the variations of dark and light within the composition. The acentric placement of the "incident" increases the drama of the image, but it is a quiet drama, held in check by the horizontal marking the division between land and water. The richness of the blacks and the brilliance of the whites cause the image to shimmer much as the atmosphere does. The whole has a mysterious, somewhat unsettling, undercurrent.

The balance needed between image, format, inking, and paper is clearly seen by contrasting *Inside Passage* with *Skincuttle Channel*. *Skincuttle Channel* is on a creamy paper which gives the image a gentler, more restrained quality. The composition is more insistently horizontal and because of this we do not enter the space to the same degree. The composition contains visual resting points in the form of the two islands, which also function to slow the strong movement from left to right. If less dramatic than *Inside Passage*, the image is more contemplative.

These seven prints, while only a small portion of Tanabe's print production, give us a clear idea of his concerns—light, colour, and form—which, in concert, reveal the landscape to us. The images revel in that light and form; the compositions are conceived to allow these elements to speak clearly. These landscapes are timeless and of the present. We respond on many levels, both emotionally and intellectually, and inevitably, we provide each landscape with our own narrative. Tanabe's images guide that imaginative journey in a way that is insistent but open-ended. Finally, and most importantly, they make us a gift of the landscape and encourage us to re-examine nature for ourselves.

Ian M. Thom
July 1994



TAKAO TANABE
Paintings and Watercolours
September 7-30, 1996

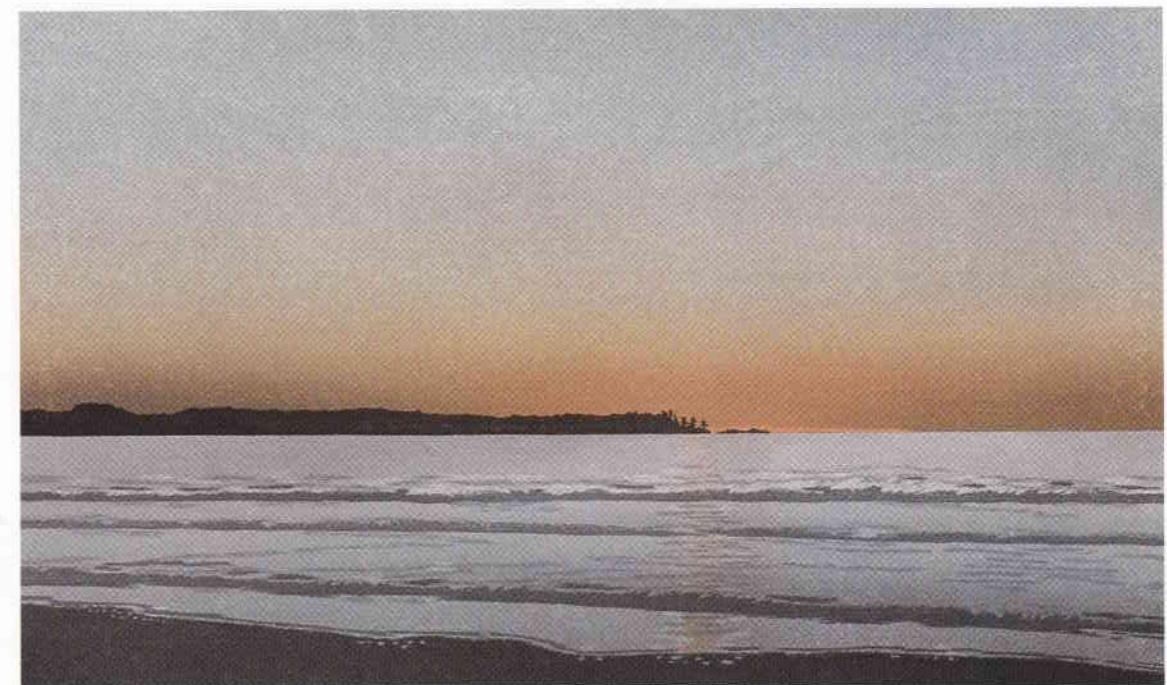
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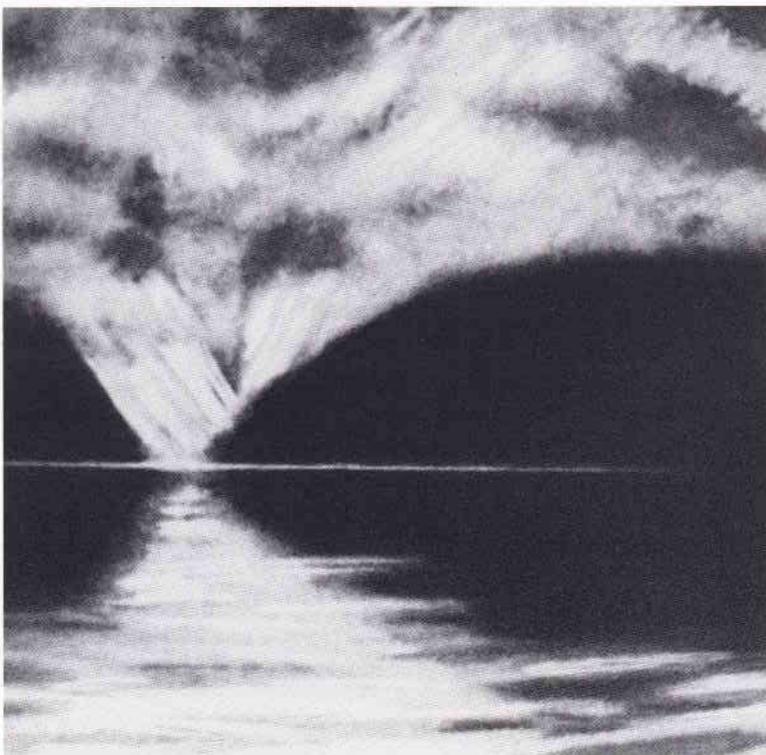
Low Tide/Rathtrrevor 1991

Woodblock, image 38 x 63 cm
Sawai Atelier, Masato Arikushi, printer

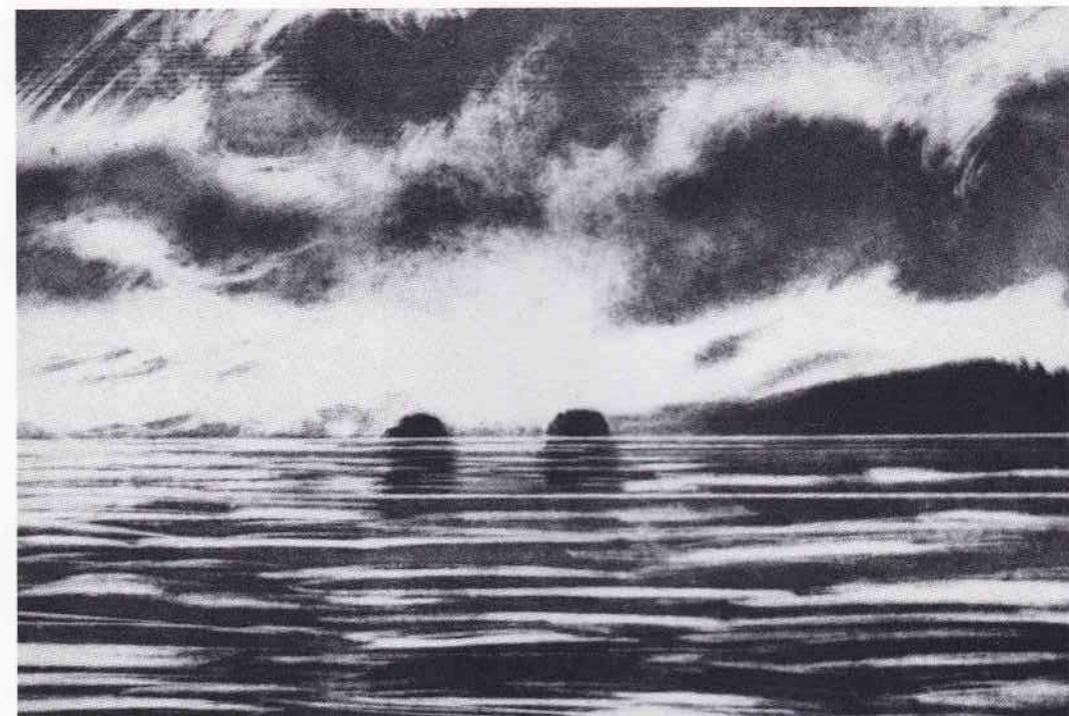


Shuttleworth Sunset 1993

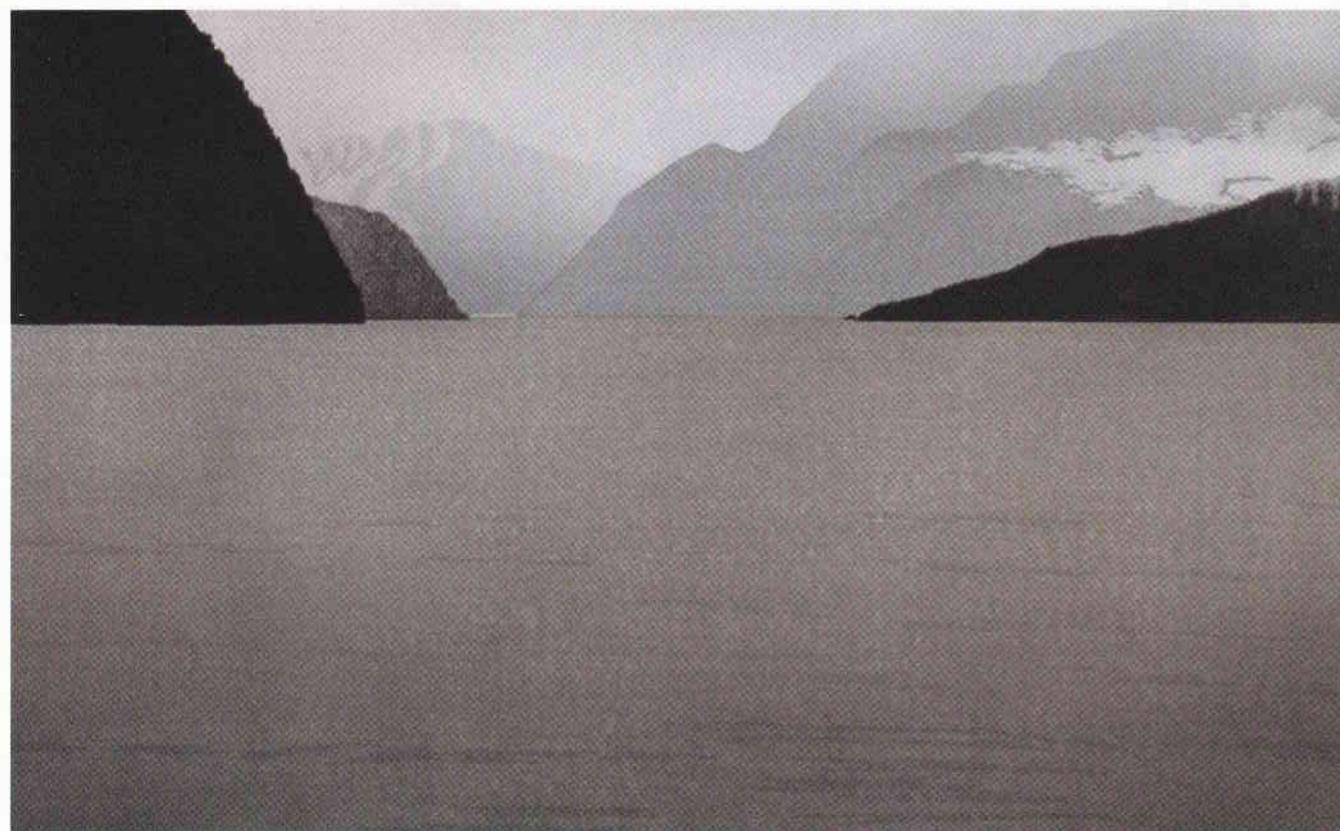
Woodblock, image 34 x 53 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer



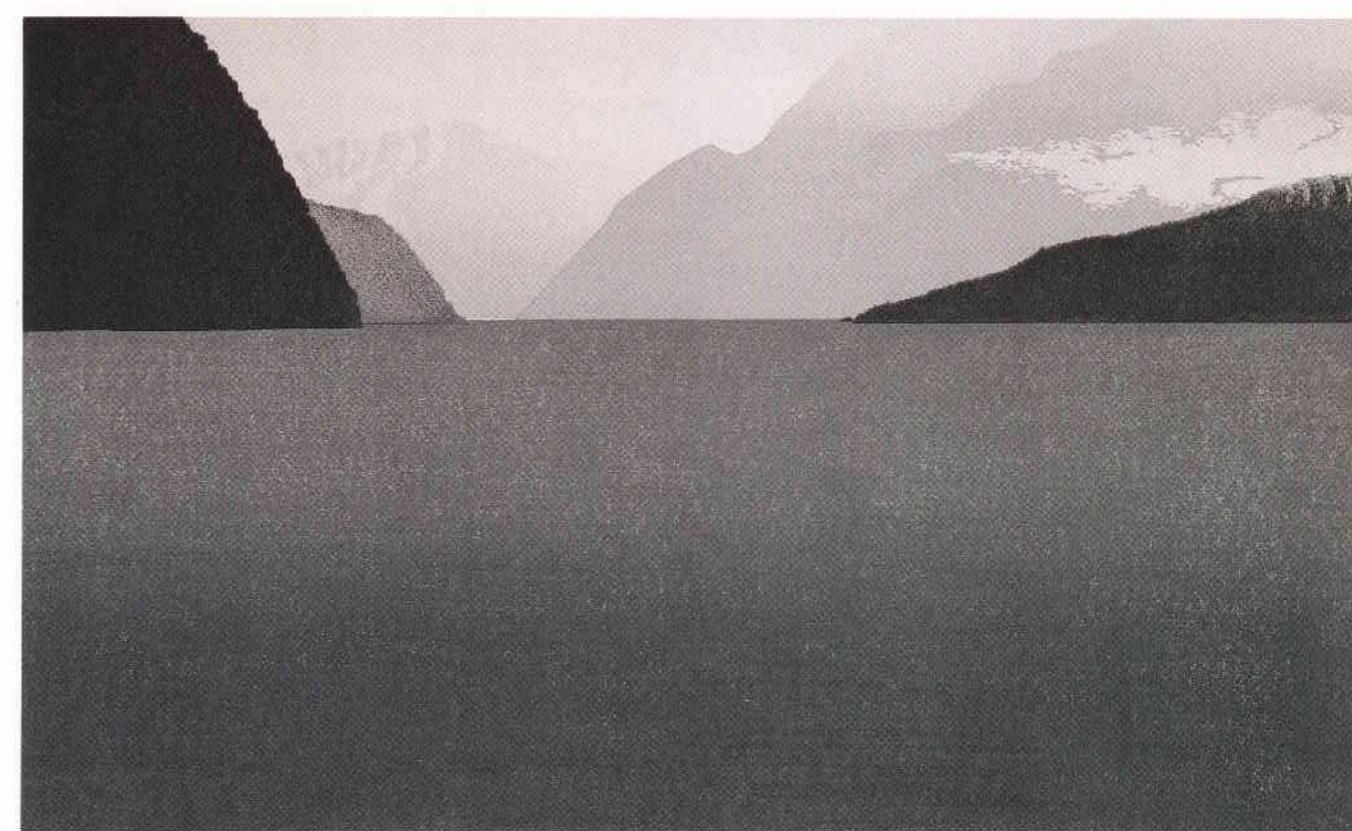
Inside Passage 1994
Photogravure, image 19 x 20 cm
New Leaf Press, Peter Braune, printer



Skincuttle Channel 1994
Photogravure, image 20.5 x 30 cm
New Leaf Press, Peter Braune, printer



Morning, Raza Pass 1994
Woodblock, image 53 x 86 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer



Raza, Early Evening 1994
Woodblock, image 53 x 86 cm
Masato Arikushi, printer

TAKAO TANABE

Born in Prince Rupert, B.C., 16 September 1926

1951 Montreal Museum of Fine Arts: Spring Show
1952 Winnipeg Art Gallery
1953 Sao Paolo Bienal, Brazil
 National Gallery of Canada: Canadian Survey Show
1955 A.I.A. Gallery, London, England: Summer Show
1956 Guggenheim International Exhibition, Paris & New York
1957 Gallery of Contemporary Art, Toronto
 National Gallery of Canada: Canadian Biennial
 Sao Paolo Bienal, Brazil
1958 Brussels World's Fair, Belgium
1959 Brooklyn Museum: 20th International Biennial of Watercolors
1960 Nihonbashi Gallery, Tokyo
1962 Agnes Lefort Gallery, Montreal
1963 Rochester Memorial Art Gallery:
 Contemporary Canadian Painting & Sculpture
1966 Agnes Lefort Gallery, Montreal
1970 McCleaf Gallery, Philadelphia
1971 Philadelphia Art Museum: Multiples
1974 Equinox Gallery, Vancouver
 Albright-Knox Gallery, Buffalo: Aspects of Canadian Art
1975 Marlborough Roma, Rome, Italy
1976 Norman McKenzie Gallery, Regina: 1972-76: The Land
1977 Mira Godard Gallery, Toronto
1979 Glenbow Museum, Calgary: A Drawing Exhibition
1984 National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa: Reflections
1985 Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, New York
 Paul Kuhn Fine Arts, Calgary
1987 Canada House, London, England
1989 Dominion Galleries, Montreal
1992 Winnipeg Art Gallery: Achieving the Modern, 1950's
 National Gallery of Canada:
 The Crisis of Abstraction in Canada: The 1950's

Represented in many public and private collections

TAKAO TANABE

October 4–31, 2001

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that he was more culturally aligned with the West than the East. It would be another decade before the rapid and spontaneous “one-stroke” practice of *sumi-e* fully manifested itself in his painting. In the meantime, back in Vancouver, he experimented with broader and bolder markings (he applied paint with a brush, palette knife or piece of card, and often scraped it off again) and more simplified abstract forms (*Tennis*, 1961); shaped canvases intended to fit into corners (*Butterflies*, 1962); and partitioned canvases that balanced abstraction, representation and a variety of paint applications (*Window Flag II*, 1962). *The Emperor*, 1963, was one of a series of semi-abstract and suggestively totemic paintings based on bollards at the old dockyards on Burrard Inlet; their phallicism caused a brief sensation when he exhibited them at the New Design Gallery.

Although Tanabe fleetingly applied his Japanese ink-brush training within some lyrical and monochromatic acrylic wash paintings on canvas (for instance, *Sweeping Storm*, 1965), he put these works aside and became caught up in the hard-edge movement in the latter half of the 1960s. In some of his hard-edge works, such as *Box 2*, 1965, he challenged the shallow space of abstraction by using the three-dimensional conceit of an open or unfolding box as the basis for his imagery. He also tempered the flatness with unexpected passages of organic form and loose brushwork.

Takao Tanabe

A Modern Landscape



May 26–July 17, 2021
Takao Tanabe A Modern Landscape



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Image: Takao Tanabe, *Arctic 1/89: Barren Lands* (detail), 1989, acrylic on canvas, 30" x 48". Collection of the West Vancouver Art Museum. Gift of the artist.

Hours Wednesday–Saturday, 12–4 p.m. **Closed** Sundays–Tuesdays and holidays

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