

Jean-Guy Desrosiers

A soulful adventure

"Would a bird build its nest if it did not have its instinct for confidence in the world?" – Gaston Bachelard

With his exemplary determination and successful artistic path, 86 years old painter, Jean-Guy Desrosiers, deserves our full admiration. The artist is convinced that a good painting must first and foremost convey an emotion. A task he undertakes daily, even at his age. The artist fully embraces his expertise where painting is concerned. Thus, thanks to grace-filled moments in studio, he is able to move us and make us daydream at will.

Initiated to the art of painting at 21, when he enrolled in the École technique of Ottawa, and later in the Québec School of Fine-Arts, Jean-Guy Desrosiers has always defined himself as a self-taught artist. "Teachers did not speak to me, he recalls. I wasn't given one piece of advice nor critique. Not even the beginning of an explanation regarding techniques. But I knew how to draw. Thankfully! Which wasn't the case with most of my fellow students, nor with some teachers. So, I left. I knew I could learn better by myself."

As he experimented extensively all of the creative techniques, books on great masters such as Matisse, Cézanne, Gauguin and Van Gogh, constituted true sources of learning for him. As were the nurturing exchanges with the prestigious companions who painted on site with him. Born in Sorel in 1934, Jean-Guy Desrosiers instinctively knew to head for and establish himself in Québec City to be able to paint beside the likes of Francesco Iacurto, Albert Rousseau, Alain Lacaze, and depict on canvas the historical treasures of the old port, the steep cliffs of Cap Diamant, and the ramparts of the fortified city. Further away, the omnipresent river, rolling towards the banks of the enchanting Île d'Orléans.



Février à ma porte, oil on canvas, 30 x 36 in



Toujours le fleuve, oil on Masonite, 24 x 30 in

The landscape painter

Should you be the proud owner of one of Desrosiers' paintings, it necessarily falls into one of the following five categories: bucolic back country-sides, scenes of historic Québec City, still lifes, marines or abstracts. Desrosiers is in fact renowned for his incomparable depictions of the National Capital and of other regions of the province, notably Charlevoix.

Jean-Guy Desrosiers is an extremely gracious, amiable and fraternal man. We can surmise that his canvases, filled with soft and filtered lights, are meant to illustrate enchanting encounters of soul and heart. Painting is as essential to him as breathing. Like movements of tides, allowing him to see and express himself. He will keep-on working on a painting as long as the whole refuses to dispense his particular painter's "truth".

His truth

Without a doubt, he is able to paint the splendor of all seasons. I confess my preference for his winter scenes, where he is able to make us feel the weight of the snow heaped-up on those humble country houses. His brush invites us to furtively glance inside the homes and witness how these country people calmly face the torments of winter. I like his early morning marines painted in moonlight. It is also impossible to remain indifferent to the rays of the sun piercing the clouds to caress the harvests in rolling fields filled with earthy energy. Jean-Guy Desrosiers sees and lives the world as a poet. When he is totally engaged in painting, he becomes one with nature, with its effervescence, its shapes. Jean-Guy Desrosiers is a free man. When he enters his studio in the morning, he is not thinking of a particular genre or style of painting, what is important to him is technique and basic rules of drawing and composition. All the rest, for him, is a question of individual taste and appreciation.

I leave the artist's Charlesbourg studio with my head and soul filled with all these beautiful paintings. Each as heartfelt as the other, thanks to the good graces of a knowledgeable painter. This "hockey game" on a skating rink in Old Québec will remain with me, as will the fishermen about to set off on the high seas under the nostalgic whiteness of the full moon. But mostly, I will know that too many landscape painters have been discounted from the political parameters of our young art history... Thankfully, a few rare artists of Jean-Guy Desrosiers' caliber will keep on reminding us of Québec's societal values.

Michel Bois

Jean-Guy Desrosiers is represented by:
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Galerie Archambault, 1303 Rue Notre-Dame, Lavaltrie, QC
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Le chêne, été, Charlevoix, oil on Masonite, 24 x 30 in