

'Blazes Along the Trail' ***Exploring David Milne's Imaginative Vision***

All that is needed to appreciate any art is a capacity for aesthetic feeling; most people lack this entirely and are driven to get into contact with painters through their understanding. Even the artists fall into the way of trying to make their pictures understandable instead of felt. ...

David B. Milne

Over the course of his career, David Milne (1882-1953) recorded his beliefs about artmaking and his artistic practice. In identifying what was at the core of an individual's creativity, the term he deemed most appropriate for describing artistic impetus was "feeling".

Feeling is the power that drives art. There doesn't seem to be a more understandable word for it, though there are others that give something of the idea: aesthetic emotion, quickening, bringing to life. ...As the work progresses, feeling increases.... Each painter develops feeling in his own way, follows his own path.

In summarizing his approach to his artmaking, Milne states,

...The plan of the picture takes vague shape. You explore some points in your mind, ...Then you take pencil and paper, 'placing' what is to go on it. The drawing is not so much a guide to be followed closely in painting as a shorthand reminder, ... what you put on paper isn't so important as what goes on in your mind. By the time you are through scratching on the paper, most of the picture's problems are solved: problems of shape, texture, colour, arrangement. You will even know how you are going to apply the paint.

Viewing the land on his walks from his cabin in the wilderness, observing reflections in water or flowers in bloom, as well as responding to the experience of urban and rural environments would stimulate an "aesthetic emotion" in Milne. It was this "feeling" of "aesthetic emotion" which the artist would undertake to capture in its intensity through his art. Milne's intention was not to simply record a representational interpretation of the land or a detailed rendering of a specific object. The challenge for Milne was to formally express through his image-making a "feeling" for the elements of line, shape, colour, texture and compositional arrangements.

This exhibition presents a selection of David Milne's oil paintings, watercolours and another significant medium for his art - dry-point prints. The artist stated that by exploring this medium he produced "blazes along the trail" which enabled him to "follow his own path" in creating unique aesthetic expressions.

All works on display have been drawn from the collection of the Art Gallery of Windsor.