

What he does for artists, TIME does for the arts.

Carmen Lamanna makes his living as a master carver of ornate, \$25-a-foot picture frames that look great on old Dutch cowscapes.

But what he does for contemporary artists goes far beyond framing, as a TIME/Canada story recently made clear. Lamanna owns the most uncompromisingly innovative art gallery in Canada. (And the only one ever invited to the prestigious International Pioneer Galleries Exhibition in Switzerland.)

And he continually encourages young avant garde artists and gives them a chance to be seen.

Every week TIME does for the arts in Canada

what Lamanna does for Canadian artists. TIME keeps an eye out for significant developments and gives them national exposure. Lamanna's own story, for example, might not have been so widely known across Canada had it not been told in TIME.

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THE ARTS

In Search of Innovation

For the art buyer in search of something to go with the new wallpaper or to brighten up the inglenook, Toronto's Carmen Lamanna Gallery is not the place to look. In the past four years, the gallery has exhibited a half-scale model of a Sabre jet by Murray Favro; a hydro pole, a roll of sod and a pile of hay rearranged over a period of three weeks by Robin MacKenzie; and a room-sized wooden structure built to specifications telephoned from Vancouver by Iain Baxter. None of these was exactly a sellout, and fellow dealers often wonder how the 43-year-old, Italian-born Lamanna manages to survive. The answer is that he is also a master carver of the kind of ornate, \$25-a-foot wooden frames that look perfect on Dutch cowscapes. By working on his framing five nights a week until 2 a.m., Lamanna supports what is the most uncompromisingly innovative gallery in Canada. Recognition of his extraordinary dedication came earlier this year when his became the first Canadian gallery to be invited to take part in the third International Pioneer Galleries Exhibition in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The show, which is made up of the contributions of 16 galleries from 13 countries, is currently at Paris' Museum of Modern Art. Ranged against the international avant-garde, Lamanna's stable of twelve artists conveys a feeling of great vigor and excitement. Their average age of around 28 is by far the lowest in the exhibition. Montreal Painter Guido Molinari (TIME, March 21, 1969), who is, at 37, the oldest and the best known of the artists in the Lamanna show, says: "What struck me in Lausanne was how much people there—from all different countries—felt immediately that it was different. Even if they knew American painting and sculpture, they felt they were in front of something different." It is some indication of the impact of Lamanna's se-

lection that with the closing of the exhibition in Paris this week, Lamanna has been asked to send his portion to London, Berlin and the Netherlands.

Surprising Forms. With the notable exception of Molinari, the real strength of the Lamanna show lies in the sculpture. As is fitting from a lumber exporting country, wood takes on some surprising forms in the exhibition. Robin MacKenzie, Lamanna's haymaker, achieves a strong, simple log-art statement by slicing up a huge oak trunk into ten equal sections, then reassembling them. The most successful of the wooden sculptures is David Rabinowitch's handsome laminated *Basswood Tube*, a finely conceived piece that hints of resonant interior volumes. Equally sophisticated is twin brother Royden Rabinowitch's floor sculpture called *Joan's Apple Turnover*, which is pink, shiny, sly and faintly forbidding. Ed Zelenak, the 30-year-old London, Ont., sculptor, is strongly represented by his fetal *Shield*, in which writhing organic forms are seen darkly through a semi-opaque fiber-glass skin.

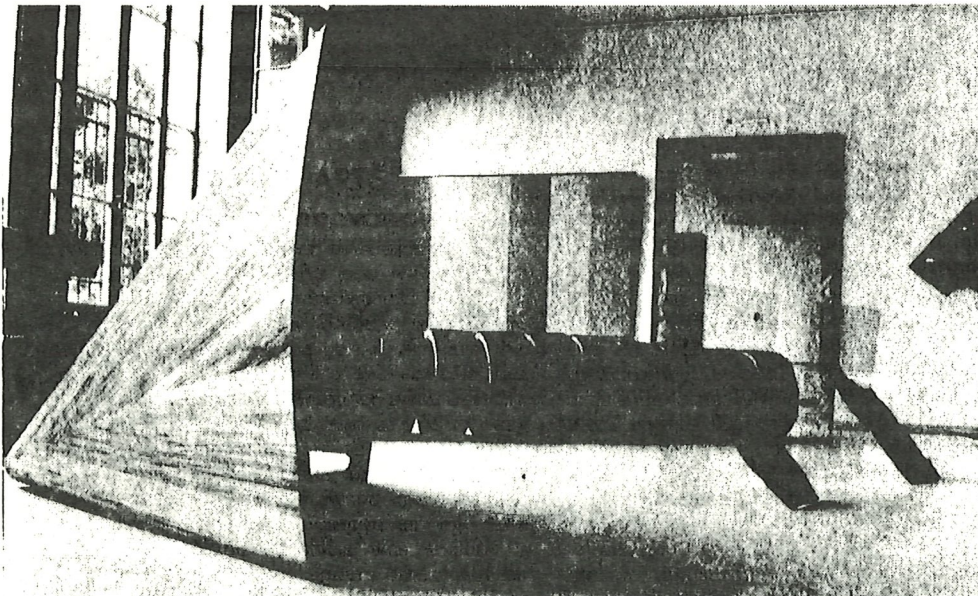
What is so remarkable about the Lamanna show is that it was assembled by a man steeped in the gilded classical tradition of Renaissance and Baroque Italy. Born in Monteleone, near Naples, Lamanna was the grandson of a gallery owner who specialized in 18th and 19th century painters. At age eight, Carmen stood on a specially made step at the gallery workbench; in his teens he was skilled enough to make a full-sized bicycle entirely out of wood—"all except for the chain." Lamanna tried to study fine arts at the University of Naples but bridled at the routine. "History I knew already," he says. "I wanted freedom and experiment." But as an immigrant to Toronto in 1951, that was a long time coming. He job hunted for five months before being taken on as a picture framer at \$27.50 a week. A decade later, he had saved enough to open his own framing and restoration shop on Yonge Street—but it was not

until 1966 that he was able to open his own art gallery. Recalls Art Critic Dorothy Cameron: "No one took Carmen seriously at all when he started the gallery. We knew him as a fine carver of antique frames and as a restorer."

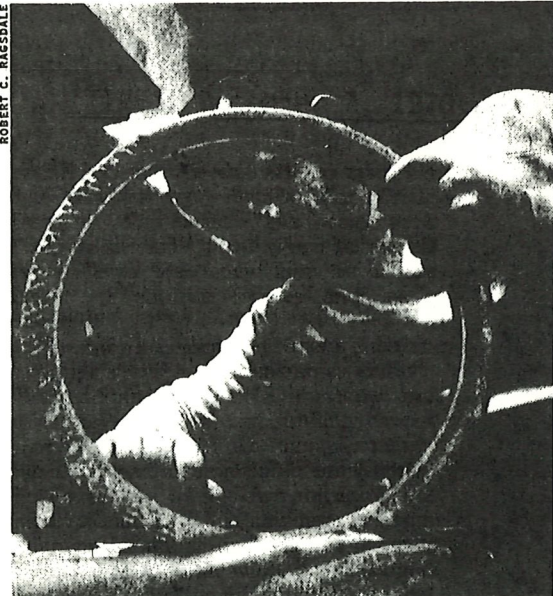
Tempered Judgment. From Lamanna's first show, only two names endure: Quebec Painter Albert Dumouchel and a young unknown art student named Gary Lee-Nova. Since then, Lamanna has developed a remarkable consistency, partly because of his own intuition and partly because of his slowness to reach a judgment about an artist, "I have to spend a lot of time with the artist and find out about the personality, the beliefs," says Lamanna, who usually devotes his Sundays to studio visiting. "I like to find things out accidentally rather than to ask. If I like the work alone, it's not enough. If they're not really clear about what they're doing or for what reason they're doing it, I don't think they have any future."

If nothing else, Lamanna's devotion has brought him critical esteem within art circles. Says Art Gallery of Ontario Curator of Contemporary Art Dennis Young: "What he has done is staggering—the whole operation, his personal commitment, his choices of artists, his own discernment of what is worthwhile in young artists' work has been very positive and very courageous." The praise has not made Lamanna wealthy. Says he: "Even if my artists sell, they don't make money. I don't make money. But really success is creation. Long lasting quality, that's what counts." Certainly there is little indication that Lamanna is about to change direction in favor of the easily salable. Next January, for instance, Sculptor Royden Rabinowitch has planned a show that seems calculated to ward off the better-dressed art lover. It will consist of huge steel cones coated with the heaviest industrial grease available—a prospect, reports Rabinowitch, which makes Lamanna "insanely delighted."

GALLERY INSTALLATION AT LAUSANNE WITH "BASSWOOD TUBE" AND "OAK"



DEALER LAMANNA AT WORK

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