

CHARD CHÉNIER – RETROSPECTIVE 1963-2023

GALERIE ESPACE - 4844 St Laurent Blvd, Montreal

June 21st to 27th – Hours: noon to 6 pm - Vernissage : Saturday, June 24th 1-5 pm



The Code of Handsome Lake – Acrylic on canvas (52 in x 52 in)



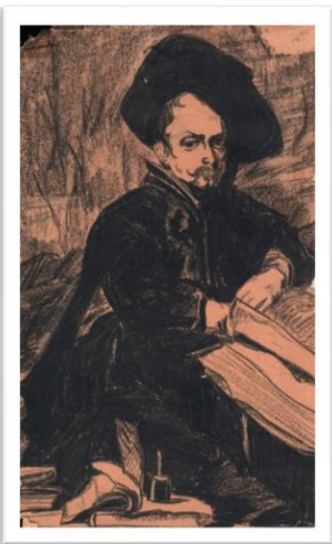
Resolute - Gouache on canvas (8 in x 10 in) mid-70s



Photo by Sharon Cheema

Born in 1947 in Saint-Boniface, Manitoba, I decided to be a painter upon having been inspired by Van Gogh's '*Souvenir de Mauve*'. At that time, I was in my mid-teens, attending Saturday morning watercolour classes. I taught myself by copying the Masters, then moved on to relying more on what I saw and wherever my imagined lead me.

This study of a Velasquez jester, sketched in 1963, is the only drawing I have from my early years.



1963 - Early sketch from my teens (The Jester Don Diego de Acedo) 5 in x 6 in

The following is my first oil painting at the age of 17. You can detect the interplay of line and colour even then.



1965 - Nude - My first oil painting at age of 17 (32 in x 22 in)



Celebration - Paperwork - mixed media (10" x 8") 2023

The early years were monastic labour focused on learning how to draw before turning to colour. Specific colours provoked intense emotional feelings but the line, such a powerful life force, was the hub of my imagination at the beginning. I intuitively sought the essence of a balanced heart and mind. I gravitated naturally towards cosmological abstraction. From 1963 to 2023 I juxtaposed organic themes against geometric symmetry, both for contrast and for dramatic effect. Enmeshed, they eventually fused to express a holistic visual perspective. My influences were not only the Masters and contemporary artists but equally personal experiences and world travel. Interconnectedness and the urgent need for harmony with Nature is a central recurring theme in my work. Deliberately, I infuse canvases with joy, my internal essence – each image a map of a stage of life.

I never lose sight of the joy and fun essential to the process. Without that *rapture* there is no wind in my sails.



Imagine - Take 2 - Acrylic on canvas (3 feet x 4 feet)

Unconditional support from my mother enabled me to follow my dream. At 19 I first moved to Ottawa then on to Montreal where I committed myself to being a full-time artist. A spiritual *essence* is due to early years exposed to French-Canadian Roman Catholic religious art; wonderfully pure Native and Inuit drawings; stunning prairie sunsets; and awe-inspiring Northern Lights. A lifetime studying different philosophies and religions contributes a sense of the sacred which resonates within the canvas – ordinary life's luminosity underlined by the enigma of being.

For my health and to concentrate on my visual arts career, I moved to Vancouver where I exhibited annually as of 1971. A Canada Council grant to paint and the publication of my drawings, *FACES*, were encouraging developments. In the 70s I performed plays/happenings against nuclear proliferation, pollution, racism, antisemitism and war believing in collaboration with nature, not domination of. In the early 80s I returned to Montreal where I exhibit annually (Awards, Publications, Grants, Private collections, and a list of exhibits are available at www.chardart.com). Finally, I am serene in my studio – connected to Life: a conduit for the astonishing.



Hommage aux voiles – Acrylic on canvas (40 in x 48 in)



Cuban Sailboat - Watercolour mixed media (10" x 8")



1988-Just the Two of Us - Watercolour, ink, and mixed media (14 in x 17 in) begun in 1988 -completed Sept 9, 2022

Picasso fearlessly changing to uncover new aesthetics inspired me with the courage to change and experiment. His line expressed a conviction I related to. Van Gogh's passionate humanism motivated especially when rereading his letters to his brother Theo. Kathe Kollwitz's social conscience and artistry shaped my world view and my understanding of my social responsibilities as an artist. Japanese and Chinese artists' graded colours and startling compositions helped rethink design and composition. The list of creators on whose shoulders I stand is long: Matisse, Soutine, Goya, Rembrandt, Velasquez, Da Vinci, and innumerable contemporaries.

However many the derivative resources I remained authentic to what is unique to my experience of Life. Being self-taught demanded being true to myself. Real and free when painting, what is unique is my human spirit exhaled exuberant out into the world, a gratitude for Joy and Wonder and Serenity.

In the 90s, marriage and fatherhood added the most important dimension in my life being fulfilled as a human being is the foundation from which any truly meaningful creativity emerges.

About Chard

"There's something he's seen that we haven't, that we unconsciously long for, that he unleashes in us, and that he shows us how to see. His is a remarkable nobleness of vision that informs our mind's eye with longing for more."

Tom Harmer

Author of "Going Native" & "What I've Always Known"



J'arrive - Acrylic on canvas - 30 in x 50 in

I exhibit from San Francisco to Tel Aviv. It is important to promote humanitarian values through my artistic expressions. In 1993, I was awarded First Prize at the Grand-Prix International de Montréal exhibition (Galerie Sodarco). The Washington DC Arts Club invited me to exhibit in 1996.

The last 23 years, especially, have seen a prolific period, partly the result of travel in France, England, Italy, Israel, and Holland. I was inspired by Renaissance, contemporary European art, and global trends but also experienced directly the profundity of antiquity, classic to modern masterpieces, in California, Cuba, Florida, New York and Washington.



Perfect Mind - Acrylic on canvas (22 in x 28 in)



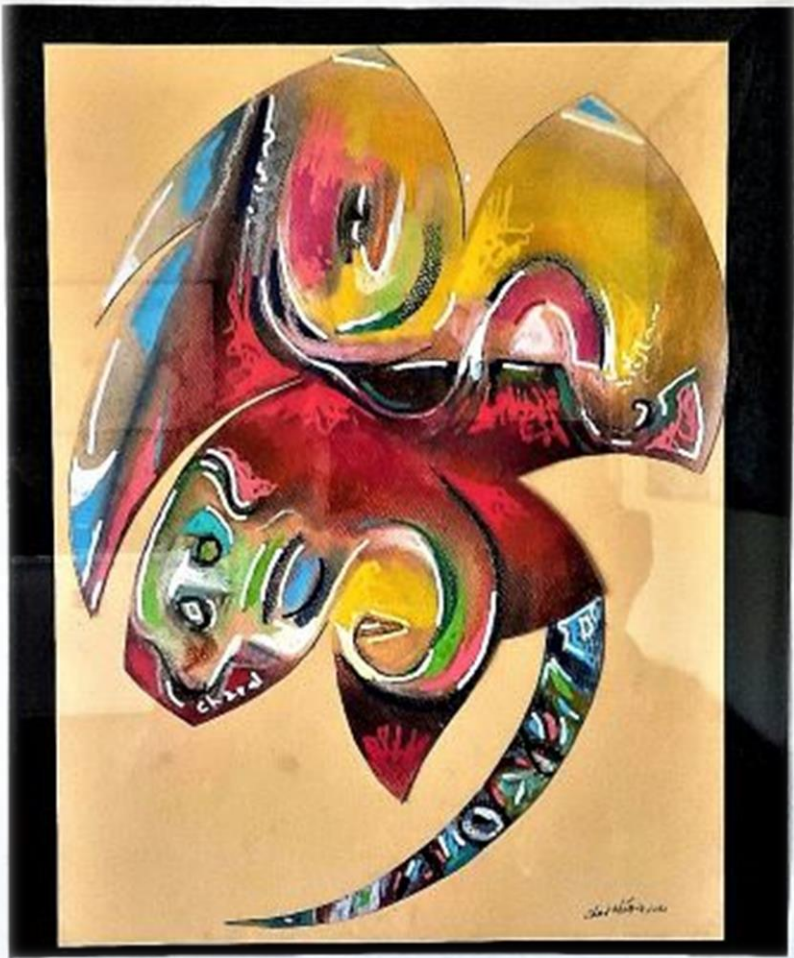
Waiting for the Bus – Ink on paper (8 in x 10 in)



Return to Earth - Acrylic & oil on canvas 24 in x 30 in



Awake - Oil on canvas – (36"x 30")



A Given- Pastel paperwork (mixed media) 12 in x16 in

A Given is a fusion that generates a new mythology: Native Art, modern art, blended with my personal style.



Mindfulness 1988 - Paperwork - ink (8" x 10")



APEIRON– Acrylic on canvas (48 in x 40 in)

Until 1990 I struggled with chronic fatigue due to a genetic blood disorder. Fortunately, a treatment was finally discovered. My health issues solved: a prolific period of high creative energy was released. Blessed with a loving marriage, I became a father. Imagine how my artistic nature blossomed as I embraced Life – finally healthy... full of energy and optimistic about the future. During this time, I exhibited annually with success and further refine my Callidroptiks (dropped ink on papier arches) towards a universal language.



Callidroptik - Ink on board (8 x 10 in) 1988



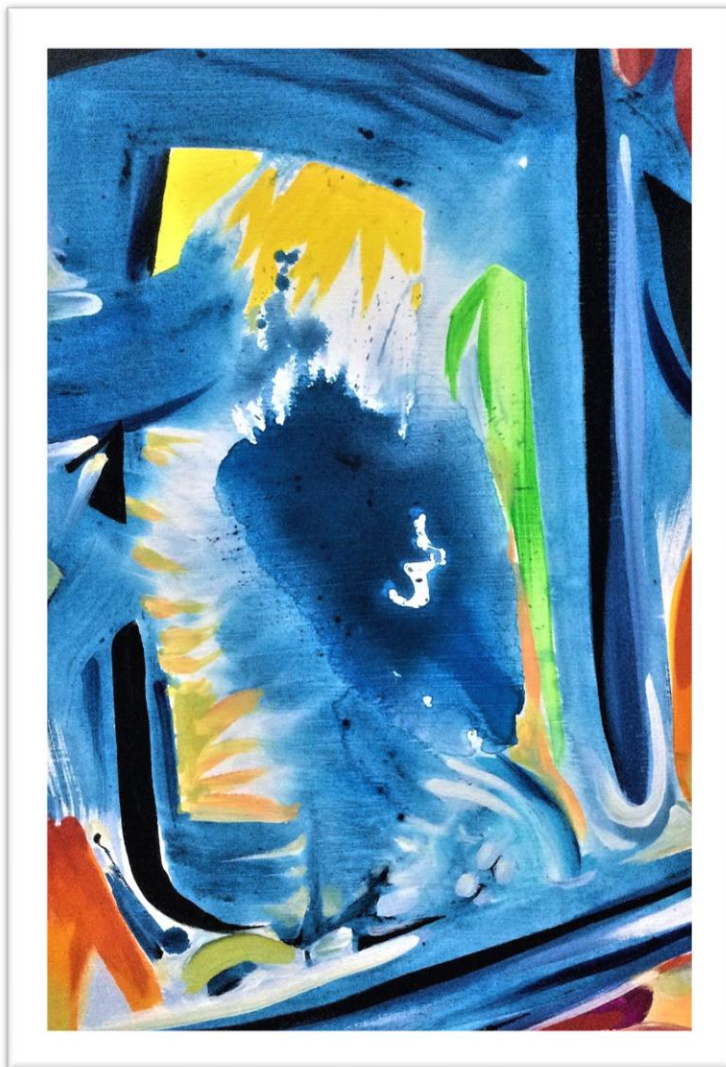
Laisse-moi ma tendresse - Papier d'arches - Mixed media callidroptik - 27 in x 39 in 8 May2023

In 2017 I devote all my time to painting, this period has unleashed a backlog of ideas and unexpected discoveries – a tsunami of productivity.

Today I seek a more radiant luminosity - a profound richness of emotional colour where line vibrates, communicates. What I do is dedicated to the goodness in people.



Prayer for Cuba – Acrylic on canvas (9 in x 12 in)



Surrender - Acrylic on canvas 16 in x 20 in (March 2023)

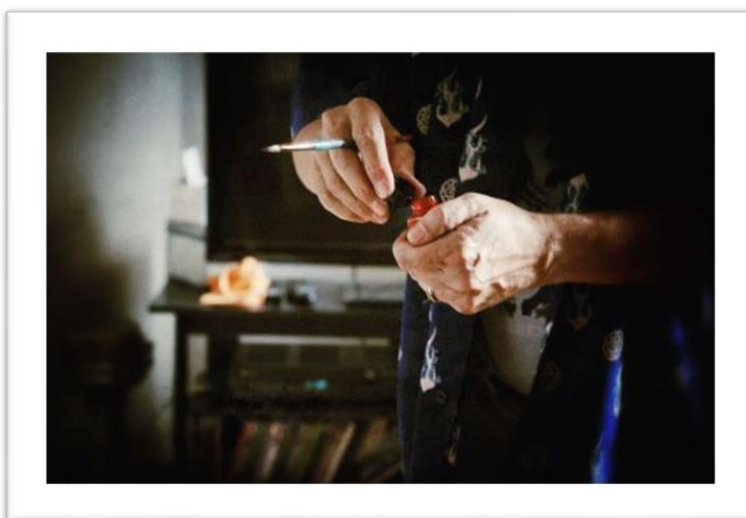


Photo by Sharon Cheema

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Chronology

- 1947 - Born to French-Canadian Roman Catholic family - St Boniface, Manitoba
(town on banks of Red River across from Winnipeg, the capital of Manitoba)
- 1960 - 3 years of Saturday morning group watercolour classes with painter, Pauline Boutal, in Saint Boniface, Manitoba
- 1966 –Departure to Ottawa –Federal Civil Service - National Defence Medical Center
- 1967 –Move to Montreal –Harmonicist-accompanist for Beverly Glenn Copeland (New York, Toronto, Montreal - radio, tv, clubs)
- 1969 - Frail health –Career change to Visual Arts - Move to Vancouver from Toronto, Ontario
- 1971 –Exhibitions beginning at the University of BC - showing annually until end of 70s
- 1973 - Publication of drawings by Intermedia Press: Book of Faces
- 1976 - Canada Council painting grant & One-Man Show at The Helen Pitt Gallery - Vancouver, B.C.
- 1975 - Vancouver Art Gallery, Performance Art (Eco-Gestalt) - Vancouver, B.C.
- 1973 - SUB Gallery, University of B.C. - Creation of first of his Callidroptiks - dropped ink studies for a universal language
- 1972- Ecological Theater performance at the Vancouver Art Gallery, re: protecting the planet
- 1980 - Montreal –Beginning of a series Exhibitions
- 1989 - Creative Group Gallery - San Francisco - Exhibition of air spray and brush, and Callidroptiks
- 1990 - Shadma Art Gallery - Tel Aviv, Israel and cure for genetic blood disorder and return to health
- 1992 - Marriage and fatherhood
- 1993 –Awarded First Prize - Grand-Prix International de Montréal exhibition at Galerie Sodarco
- 1996 - Arts Club of Washington - One Man Show, Washington, D.C.
- 1997-Creation of ChardArt,com Web Gallery
- 2005- Galerie de l'Alliance Française du Manitoba - one man show - Winnipeg, Manitoba & show: Galerie Arts Contemporains
- 2007- Galerie Chénier - Thunder Bay, Ontario
- 2008 - Galerie d'arts contemporains de Montréal - one-man show- Montreal, Quebec
- 2010 - Galerie d'arts contemporains de Montréal - one-man show- Montreal, Quebec
- 2012 - Galerie d'arts contemporains de Montréal - one-man show- and Galerie C. Racine - Étoiles Binaires
- 2013 - Galerie C. Racine - Cosmos
- 2014 - Galerie d'arts contemporains de Montréal
- 2016 - Galerie Pink
- 2017 - Galerie d'Arts Contemporains - Rites of Spring
- 2021 - Galerie Espace (Montreal) - Entitled: REImagine - A Diary of Colours – gallery shared with Brian Campbell photographer.
- 2022 - Galerie Espace (Montreal) – Exhibit space shared with Christine Lalonde, Printmaker
- 2023 -Galerie Espace (Montreal) - Retrospective 1963-2023 – Solo Exhibition

Drawings



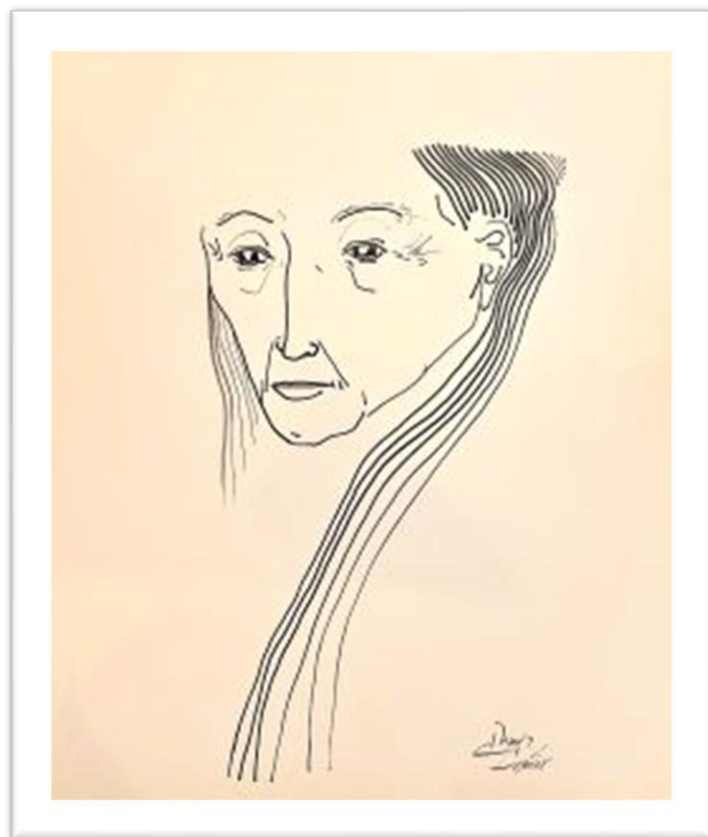
Critic - Paperwork -Ink (10" x 8")



Delirium - "Ink drawing (8 x 11 ") 2022



Embrace - Paperwork -ink (8" x 10") 2023



Grace - Paperwork - ink (8" x 10")

While working on my retrospective I came to understand that, in my early years, I was focused on a love of wisdom. Finally, now, my focus is the wisdom of love: a responsibility to others and an unconditional acceptance of myself.