

PRESS RELEASE

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Montreal Premiere Exhibition: Galerie Samuel Lallouz Pays Tribute To
Canadian Artist **Oscar Cahén** (1916-1956), Killed Tragically Fifty Years Ago

Montreal, November 17, 2006 – Galerie Samuel Lallouz presents the premiere Montreal solo exhibition featuring the art of Oscar Cahén, founding member of Painters Eleven and one of the pioneers of Canadian abstraction. The exhibition opens November 22, 2006 and remains on view until January 27, 2007.

On the afternoon of November 26, 1956, Oscar Cahén was tragically killed in an automobile accident in Oakville, Ontario. Noted art historian Paul Duval wrote, "His early death may well have robbed Canada of its potentially greatest painter."

This exhibition is something of a homecoming, given that Cahén's career as a mature artist commenced in Montreal. Cahén was born to German parents in Copenhagen, Denmark, February 8, 1916. He studied art in Paris, Stockholm and Prague, earning a Master's of Fine Art degree, from Kunstakademie, Dresden, and thereafter taught as a Professor of design, illustration and painting at the Rotter School of Art in Prague in 1938.

Due to his family's anti-Nazi activism, however, the Cahéns fled mainland Europe. In England, Oscar was imprisoned as an enemy alien, and was later sent to a detention camp in Sherbrooke, Quebec.

His drawing talents won him release under the protection of a sponsor in 1943. In Montreal, Oscar established himself as a freelance illustrator, commissioned by *The Montreal Standard* and the National Film Board, and then as Art Director of *Magazine Digest*. He moved to Toronto in 1943 and became a Canadian citizen in 1946. Cahén's dashing, witty graphic style was featured in *Maclean's* magazine, among many others. His design work won him many awards.

Cahén's earliest known surviving painting is dated 1947 – the same year one of his pictures was displayed at the annual spring show of the Ontario Society of Artists. The contribution of Cahén to Canadian art history was cemented in association with the exhibiting group Painters Eleven, Toronto's vanguard counterpart to Montreal's Les Automatistes.

Cahén's work can be found in significant public collections including the National Gallery of Canada, the Art Gallery of Ontario and the Vancouver Art Gallery. His work is the subject of a new publication written by Jeffrey Spalding, Director and Chief Curator of the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, which will be available at Galerie Samuel Lallouz.

Opening: November 22, 2006, 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
1434 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal.
The exhibition will continue until January 27, 2007.

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SOURCE

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