

Lise Labbé



During the time of COVID-19 a lot of people have looked at finding things to improve their mood and help with depression. But even before COVID there were still art collectors looking for art that was happy, colourful and full of enthusiasm and life. French Canadian Art as a rule has usually been very colourful and full of life and there have always been quite a number of Quebec artists painting in just that style. These paintings included bright houses, fanciful scenes of everyday life from a time gone past and families and children going about their daily activities.

Of course this is not everybody's type of art, but no matter who you are and where you live the paintings of these artists are sure to bring a smile to your face. When COVID hit people began spending more time indoors in their personal surroundings and sometimes they found the rooms lacking in joy and expression. For this reason art sales have picked up. Whether art was beautiful, colourful, lively or just plain fun when you have to be in a place day and night it needs to inspire you and if it brings a smile to your face even better.

Previous Page, The Ride, oil on canvas, 24" x 20"

Following Page 1, The Course, oil on canvas, 30" x 24"

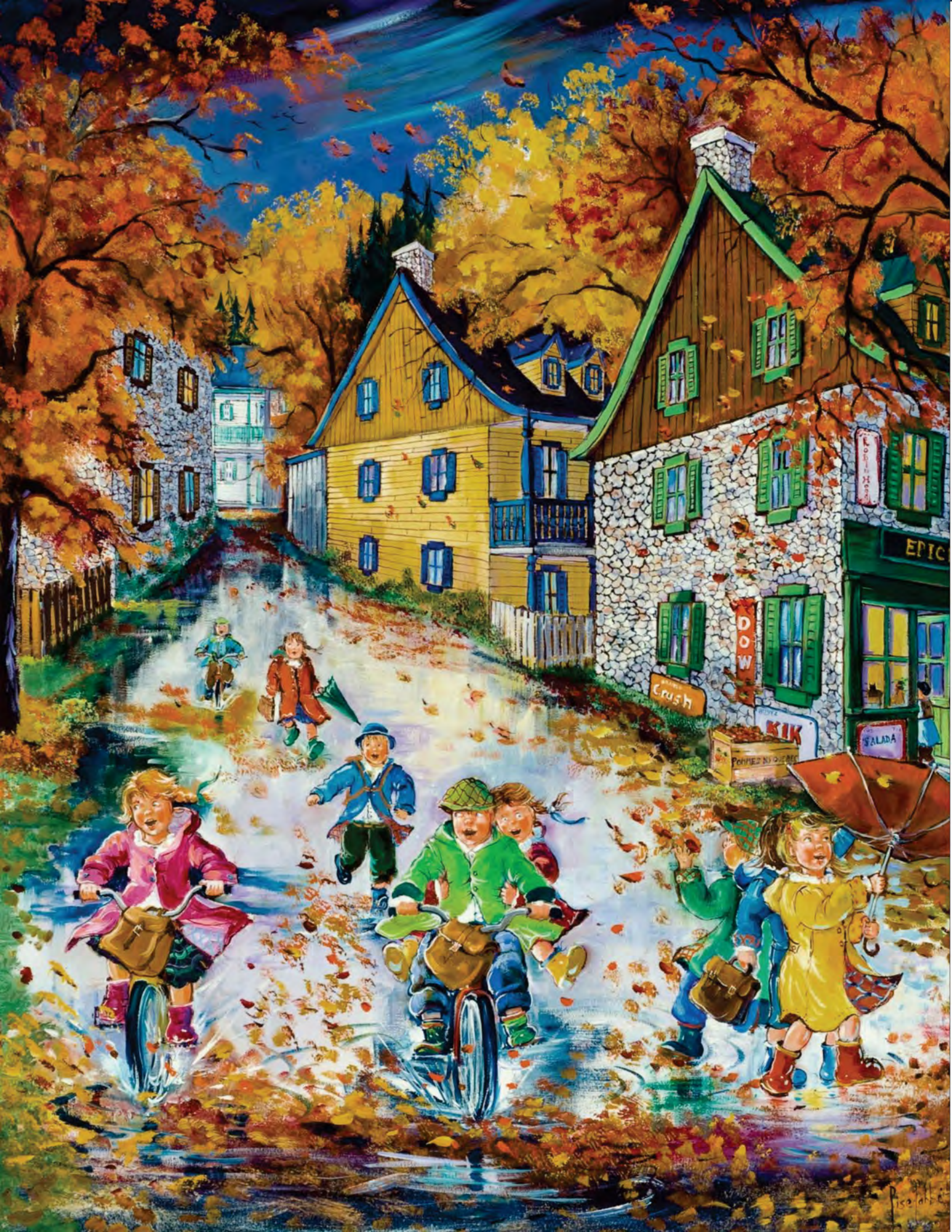
Following Page 2, To Fly, oil on canvas, 30" x 24"

Happy Memories of Another Time

Lise Labbé has brought back to life the days when children loved to play outside and could play carefree in the city; a time that has become much too far away from present reality. She creates nostalgic images with deep perspective of both the city and country lives of children, reminding past generations of their childhood while showing today's youth what the past was really like.

Lise uses colour and energy to make her paintings come alive, and the youthful portrayal of the images catches your imagination. The magic these paintings create is universal. These are happy paintings – full of life, love and laughter.

For some of us these paintings bring back memories of times spent in our childhood playing with friends. For others these painting might seem a mystery – a time never experienced. Today's children are supervised and highly scheduled and many of them have never played all together without some form of timetable or adult supervision. The world now is not like it was in the 1950s when hanging out and playing with your friends was the most fun of all. You didn't have an iPhone or an iPad and television was just starting to be available. Back then you had to depend on your imagination and energy to make playtime enjoyable and Lise has managed with colour and movement to capture the heart of this time. Her images are happy and beautiful and it is like time stood still.



Born in Montreal, Lise Labbé has always loved to draw even when she was a little girl. She put her passion aside for 15 years, but when her son turned 5 and started school, she picked up where she had left off and started drawing again 'just for fun.' One day she painted his window blinds and before she knew it, instead of buying lipstick, she was buying paints. Lise Labbé was amazed that she had at last discovered her true passion. Over time Lise has made a name for herself all over Canada as one of the foremost Art Naïf painters.

Lise has her studio at home and the atmosphere there is magical. She lives near a river with several waterfalls and, when she is not working and creating, you can find her outside at the river's edge. "I love being outside with my dog and just enjoying life and nature," says Lise.

Her inspiration comes from watching and observing children and when you see her work, it becomes apparent that Lise Labbé only paints the world of children.

below, They Scored, oil on canvas, 24" x 30"



"Whether it is on TV, or in a park or even in books, everything about children inspires me," Lise states. "The fact is I just love kids." In her paintings, children play in an almost idyllic world, laughing and playing outside, no matter the season.

Lise keeps the whole environment of her studio inspirational, with many books, children's clothing, an old pair of children's skates and other unique and different children's accessories that help inspire her paintings.

The characterization of people is something Lise loves to see in paintings. "Characters by Paul Tex Lecor and others inspire me," she says. "I love his scenes with people and all their details – he is one artist that still impresses me, even after all these years."

Lise advises artists starting out to make sure they take some lessons from a professional to help develop self-confidence. Even after all these years of being a successful artist, Lise admits she is still very self-conscious.

below, Le Grande Course, oil on canvas, 24" x 30"





The one thing that differentiates her from a lot of other artists is that she only enjoys painting children – they are having fun in her paintings and she in turn has fun with the creation.

Lise states, “I always start with a sketch in charcoal, followed by pencil, and once I'm satisfied, I start applying the oil paints. I imagine the drawing in my head and fill it in until the painting is complete.” She truly enjoys working with oils because they take longer to dry, acrylics just dry too fast for her to fully develop the painting.

To successfully paint a particular scene, Lise Labbé not only requires technical dexterity to realize her inspiration but must also adopt the right mental posture. Her main subjects of inspiration, the children in Lise Labbé's paintings are carefree, joyful and absorbed in play.

*Previous page, Changing Games, oil on canvas, 36" x 24"
below, La Balle Perdue, oil on canvas, 20" x 24"*



The beautiful simplicity of childhood is a constant source of emotion for the artist. "Although I have only one son of my own, I have always been surrounded by children with whom I have been able to bond. There could easily be as many as eight children in our house at any time of day."

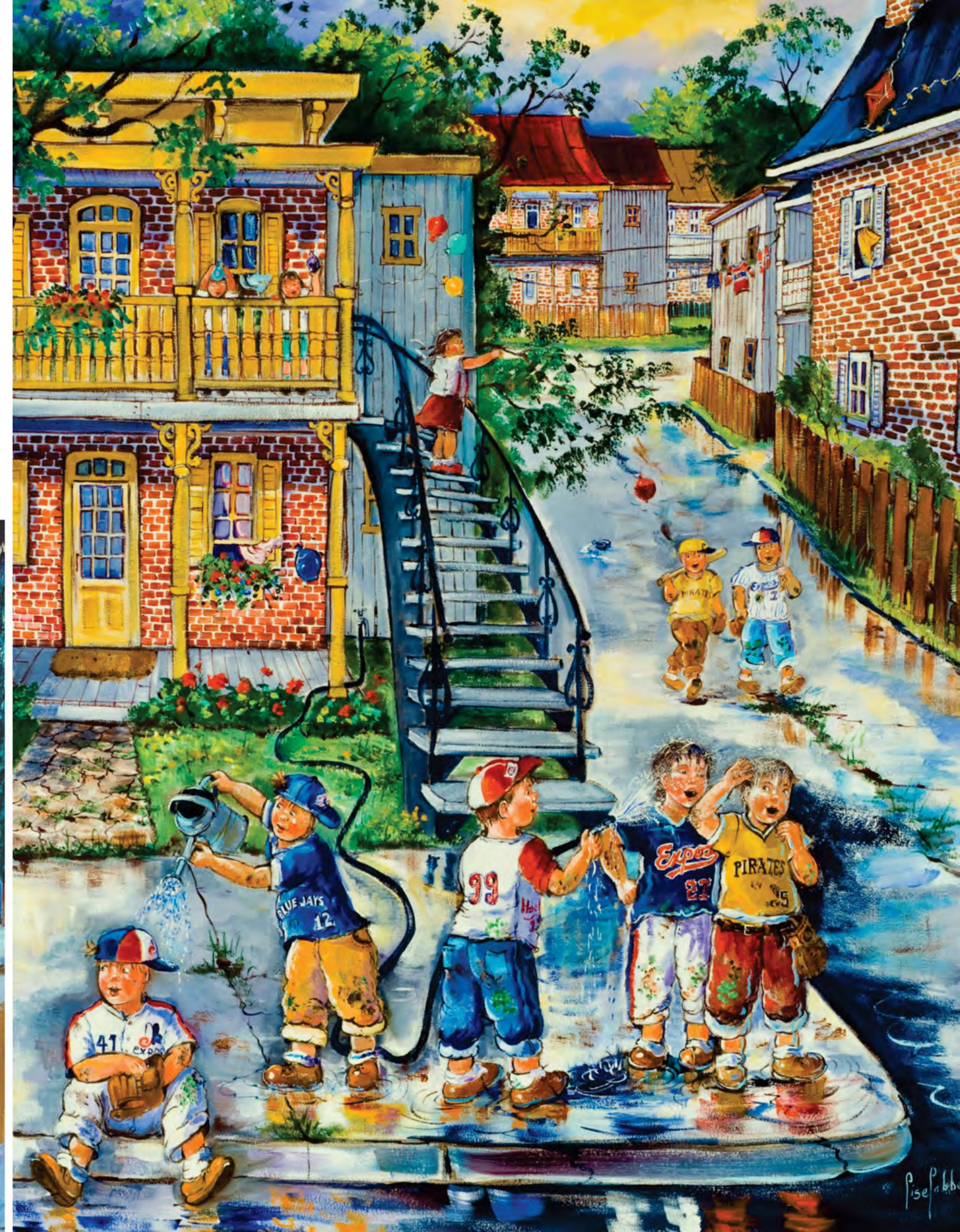
Springing from her imagination, her souvenirs and observations the 1950s scene of daily life she depicts come spontaneously to her. Inspiration may come as she has observed children playing in the park or simply while watching television. Many images will form in her head.

Thus the process begins. "It all takes form in my head, not only the image itself but the attitude that I need to adopt as I paint. The more I force myself, the more difficult it becomes, I now know that."

"I have to be there with the children, in spirit, to be able to adequately depict the scene." It is primordial for her to overlook her immediate surroundings and imagine herself in the middle of the action.

below, *Sans Titre*, oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

Following page, *Le Nettoyage*, oil on canvas, 30" x 24"





above, *I think we have it*, oil on canvas, 24" x 30"

Highly sensitive, the artist admits that her figures were smaller in stature within the frame whenever she doubted herself.

But today, proud and confident in her artistic approach, she is doing what she truly likes to do, which has not always been the case.

"For a long time I felt ashamed for the simplicity of my subject. Contemporary art was in full bloom when I first started painting and I didn't feel I was fashionable enough." Upon exhibiting her work in Paris, in 2011, she still felt her images of children went against major trends, which put a damper on what should have been a great experience for any artist.

Emotionally, she often loses sleep over the arduous execution of a particular scene. "When I am not entirely happy with what I have done, I erase everything. This is why it is better for me to not paint when my head is not fully in it."



above, *The Girls against the Boys*, oil on canvas, 34" x 40"

In her Laurentian peaceful haven, by the banks of a laughing river, she declares being happy with the path she has travelled. She is well aware of being lucky to be free and wishes to pursue the path she's on with the same enthusiasm she's had during the past 40 years. "When you think old, you become old," says the painter with a big smile. Her great sense of wonder, no doubt is at the heart of her success.

Lise always worries about running out of imagination or ideas and not being able to paint anymore. Her work gives her such joy and she couldn't imagine not being able to paint the happiness of children at play.

Lise Labbé is represented by many galleries and to see the paintings and get a list of places to obtain her work please contact Le Balcon d'Art. Information on the following pages.



Previous Page 1, Les cerf volantes, oil on canvas, 24" x 20"
above, Les enfants du village, oil on canvas, 36" x 36"

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