

Career

Born in 1931 in Valleyfield, Quebec, Lemieux began experimenting with sculpture, painting and other mediums in his teens. In school, he chose to follow technical courses, and he became an excellent draughtsman and designer, fluent in interpreting and creating architectural blueprints, a skill he was to benefit from greatly later in his career.

His first works on record date from early 50's and he soon became a participant in exhibitions, most notably at the Madrid Biennale of 1957.

A self-taught artist, Lemieux evolved into a great experimenter. Whenever he could, he chose to seek out and select his materials he himself found in nature. In the process, he became an amateur geologist, a botanist, and a metallurgist, consciously taking advantage of the textures, colors and designs nature offered to incorporate into his creations. His curiosity and experimentation taught him to use a multitude of materials, tools and machinery, sometimes inventing his own tools specially adapted to his needs.

During the 60's Lemieux started receiving commissions from real estate developers and architectural firms to create large scale murals and sculptures. For his facility in architectural design, his attention to detail, he soon earned the respect of his patrons.

In 1965 he moved to southern California where he held his first one man show in Los Angeles in 1969. It was here that he developed what he christened "aluminum foam", a light weight aluminum composite infused with air bubbles, that soon found its way into his work.

The early 70's find him moving back with his family to Montreal, where he continued to receive commissions, public and private. But despite the successes, life was always a struggle. Although many of his works were large scale, some even monumental, expectedly posing enormous technical and logistical complexities, he chose to carry out his projects himself from beginning to end, down to the last detail.

As an example, "Enterspace", an 18-foot high stainless steel composition was unveiled by Mayor Jean Drapeau 1980. It stands at the intersecion of Peel Street and DeMaisonneuve boulevard in the heart of downtown Montreal. "Calcite", another monumental work in stainless steel and 35 feet in diameter, towers over the passengers descending to the tracks at the De La Savane metro station. These two works are the most visible of Lemieux's oeuvres in Montreal today.

As a self representing artist who spent most of his energies in the creative process, he often found himself side-lined and sometimes even neglected. In his last years until his death in 1994, Lemieux created jewelry and a series of compositions in California marble.