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**Borduas, Paul-Émile**

Paul Émile Borduas was a Canadian abstract painter and member of the Automatiste group. His appointment as a teacher at the École du meuble in 1937 represents a turning point in his life. There, among peers and colleagues his own generation, Borduas found the intellectual stimulation needed to develop his painting practice. His 1942 exhibition in the lobby of the Théâtre de l’Ermitage in Montreal is regarded as the beginning of the Automatiste movement. Around that time Borduas discovered the Surrealist ideas of automatic writing and spontaneity, which played out in his painting during the 1940s. Borduas published the Automatiste manifesto *Refus global* in 1948 to criticise the Church’s close relationship to the State in Quebec. As a result of the backlash against the text he was fired by the École du meuble. In 1953 he moved to Greenwich Village where he was influenced by the Abstract Expressionists. After leaving for Paris in 1955 his colour palette turned predominantly white and paint was heavily applied in grid-like structures reminiscent of Piet Mondrian. He died of a heart attack in Paris in 1960.

**References and further reading**

Gagnon, François-Marc, trans. Peter Feldstein (2003) *Paul-Émile Borduas: A Critical Biography*, Montreal / Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press.

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