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JOHN NUGENT

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### Biographical Sketch

John Nugent was born in Montreal on January 5, 1921 and studied at St. John's University (Collegeville, Minnesota). Nugent taught at the University of Regina from 1970 to 1985.

In 1948, he moved to Lumsden, Saskatchewan and in the 1960's he began doing liturgical commissions. While expressive, his simple forms were being met with some resistance from parishioners as well as church officials.

After a trip to New York in 1961, where Nugent visited the studio of an American sculptor named David Smith, Nugent's work was influenced toward welded steel abstractions.

One more sculpture met with controversy, by then Premier Ross Thatcher. Nugent's proposed abstract monument of Louis Riel, Thatcher wanted a more representational figure instead of the heroic nude and so Nugent was forced to add clothing. This figure was unveiled in 1968 and was removed from the Saskatchewan Legislature grounds in 1991. Nugent's #1 Northern (1976) was also removed in 1978 from its site in front of Winnipeg's Canadian Grain Commission building, but was restored in 1997. The Banff Centre, the National Capital Commission in Ottawa, and the CBC Broadcast Centre in Regina, all have commissions by Nugent and in 1983 a major retrospective, "John Nugent: Modernism in Isolation" was organized by the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

In the 1990s this artist refocused his attention from sculpture to photography and his photography is also found in collections of the MacKenzie Art Gallery, the Robert McLaughlin Gallery (Oshawa), Saskatchewan Arts Board, the University of Regina, Winnipeg Art Gallery and many others.

## Box 1

## Material Regarding Sculptures:

1. #1 Northern 1975-76  
(includes 3 photographs)
2. #1 Northern 1977
3. #1 Northern 1978-79  
(includes 7 photographs)
4. #1 Northern 1997
5. Riel 1967 - 1996