

# Bronka Michalowska

(b. 1917)

Artist



POLISH SPIRIT



Bronka Michalowska specializes in painting and enamelling ceramic surfaces, mainly tiles and pottery. Her other artistic interests include graphics, drawing, watercolours and gouaches.

Michalowska spent her childhood in Wilno, Poland (today Vilnius, Lithuania). Her fine-arts education began at the Stefan Batory University in Wilno. In 1939, after World War Two broke out, she managed to escape invaded Poland and continue her education in Paris, Glasgow and finally London, where she earned her B.A. degree in art history from the Courtauld Institute of Art.

Visiting her sister in Montreal in 1955, Michalowska decided to stay in Canada, but settled in Toronto, where she taught drawing and painting classes for adults, as well as interior design at the Ryerson Polytechnic Institute.

Her first one-woman show, of enamel paintings, was presented at Toronto's Upstairs Gallery in 1962. Three years later, reviewing her work exhibited at Toronto's Tyngsen Galleries, the *Globe & Mail* critic Kay Kreuzweiser wrote: "Miss Michalowska has steeped herself in an art that goes back to the thirteenth century. As surely as the ancient enamellists who applied their shining glazes to the ceramics of China or the porcelains of France, Miss Michalowska has explored the possibilities of this technique. (...) Although the craft requires extraordinary patience, its rewards are obvious: in the case of Miss Michalowska's work, pieces have come out of the final firing with luminous colours that time can never change."

Michalowska's enamel art has brought her international acclaim. It has been exhibited at The Royal Arcade Gallery in London, the Bristol Exhibition Hall in Warsaw, EXPO '67 in Montreal, the National Museum in Warsaw, the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, the Ontario Association of Architects, Holy Blossom Temple and the Heliconian Club in Toronto. Her ceramic murals are installed in various locations in Canada, including Women's College Hospital in Toronto, New Toronto Town Hall in Etobicoke, as well as the offices of Abitibi Paper Co., Gordon Jewellers, Olivetti and General Tours in Montreal



Photos from top left clockwise:  
• Bronka Michalowska / Photo –private archive • Ceramic tiles: *Colorful Market*, 1987 • Ceramic tiles: *Night at Zamosc Railway Station*, 1992 • Ceramic tiles: *Lunch Break in Factory*, 1984  
All photos – Pierre Bacler