

## Texts in English

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[See table of contents](#)

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# TEXTS IN ENGLISH

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## GLASS BEADS

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By Andrée PARADIS

In its annual report, the Canada Arts Council emphasises that matters go better for the world of arts when there are many sources of financing. Cultural organizations have experienced this for twenty years. They exist, or rather they struggle to exist, only at the cost of numerous steps they must repeatedly take, year after year, in applying to different governmental or private sources of financing. In order to assure the cultural services which usually create the image of a civilized country, their spokesmen must go begging and rapidly use up their vitality and enthusiasm. They are replaced, certainly, but often at the expense of a continuity capable of establishing excellent traditions which alone finally form the very essence of a people.

The Canada Council, which has played the rôle of patron of the arts on a grand scale since its creation in 1957, finds itself obliged to put users on their guard: "Unless a considerable increase in gifts from private sources takes place, many artistic activities will definitely not be able to be carried on at their present level. The needs of the arts are growing at a rate that no government seems to match." The forecasts for the eighties speak of financial aid four times as great as the present one.

If we wish to avoid the tremendous effort that has been made in cultural development during the last two decades shattering like glass beads, it is necessary that culture should be the concern of everyone, a major preoccupation on which moral equilibrium and the quality of life depend. It is time to question ourselves on the price of a culture, to become more demanding on all levels, to try to bring it about that the cultural environment should finally be taken seriously. With this aim, the Council has drawn up a working document, *The Arts and the Business World*, with the co-operation of a planning committee on the arts, and of a group composed of businessmen. The document suggests, particularly, interesting the financial milieu in playing a greater part in artistic life. The contribution of the business world, which has been hesitant during the last few years, ought to reach thirty-five million by 1980, and big companies will be invited to devote a fixed percentage of their budget to commissions or purchases in works of art as well as to other exchanges with artistic groups. The best way would be to bring the total of the donations to one per cent of the profits before taxes and to assign a sixth of these gifts to cultural activities.

The financing of the magazine *Vie des Arts* is unthinkable without the aid of governments. The Canada Council and the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs have granted subsidies which assured its existence for several years. Other revenues result from subscriptions, the

sale of copies and advertising. Unfortunately, the deficit accumulated during eighteen years of publication has not yet been completely erased. Recently, the rise in costs has jeopardized the fragile financial balance that the magazine, with great difficulty, had established. We are seeking new sources of financing and we appeal to all those interested in its survival. Help, even modest help, from the business world especially, assuring the magazine of operating and development capital, would permit us to easily overcome the present difficulties.

In spite of everything, we have faith in the future of specialized magazines. In a fragmented, broken-up world, the need of constants is felt. The specialization of functions calls for the specialization of information.

On the other hand, liberal education is bearing fruit. The development of personality and the interest in free creation have shaped a very vast public, open to all the forms of a new culture: pop music, comic strip, video, etc., but also very much interested in traditional art and archeology, and concerned with going back to sources.

Finally, the expanding of leisure time is changing the physiology of society. This is the dawn of a time better organized for new creations, of a civilization turned toward interior work; great experiments in the world of the mind are only beginning. The man of to-morrow will be the explorer-creator, with new, undoubtedly inevitable slaveries, and peace and survival will find themselves somewhere between these two poles. This is what we believe: culture and art are ferments that assure harmony and balance, and constitute the elements needed to build peace and allow man to live in dignity. The specialized magazine, the art magazine, are only means of conveying these elements of culture. Help us to preserve this means for you.

1. The magazine is authorized to issue receipts for income tax purposes.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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## LOUIS JOBIN'S HOLY FAMILY

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By Jean TRUDEL

The name of sculptor Louis Jobin (Saint-Raymond, October 26, 1845 - Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré, March 11, 1928) is familiar to all those who are more or less acquainted with the old art of Quebec. However, in spite of the works of Marius Barbeau, who met this sculptor in 1925, we are to-day far from knowing all the facets of Jobin's work and of his era<sup>1</sup>. In Quebec, Louis Jobin had been apprenticed for three years to François-Xavier Berlinguet (Quebec, 1830-Three Rivers, 1916), the sculptor and architect, before going to work in New York in 1868<sup>2</sup>. Upon his return from the United States in 1870, he established himself in Montreal on Notre-Dame Street until 1875, when he finally settled in Quebec, then at Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré<sup>3</sup>.

During his sojourn in Montreal, Jobin, according to his own words, sculpted signs especially, as he had learned to do in New York<sup>4</sup>. He also produced some religious works, among which, "purely for pleasure", were a polychrome relief representing *The Good Shepherd* (National Gallery of Canada), another dated 1873 representing *The Grotto of Notre-*

*Dame-de-Lourdes* (donated to the Sault-au-Récollet church by M. Fabien Vinet) and, in 1875, the relief of *The Holy Family*<sup>5</sup>.

This last sculpture is without any doubt one of the first major religious works of Jobin. Before being transported on May 1, 1969 to the Carmelite Monastery at Montreal where it can still be seen, it was in the sacristy of the church of Saint-Valentin (formerly Saint-Valentin-de-Stottsville)<sup>6</sup>. It is still not known under exactly what circumstances it was ordered from Jobin, but it must certainly have occupied an important place in the church that burned down on March 17, 1898<sup>7</sup>. Although its frame of gilded wood was removed when it was placed in the Carmelite Monastery, this is a work which resembles a picture more closely than a sculpture. It is a sculpted picture that is hung on a wall.

On an assembly of six wide panels placed vertically, the sculptor fastened, in relief, three figures standing on a rocky mass. The background is painted and depicts a vast, mountainous, arid landscape where, on the extreme right, a palm tree and the vague outline of a city locate the scene without distracting the eye from the group formed by the Infant Jesus framed by Saint Joseph on his right and the Virgin on his left. Perhaps the Infant Jesus was holding something in his right hand, because Saint Joseph, unlike the Virgin, is holding him not by the hand, but by the wrist. The group is almost static. Only the movement shown by the right leg of the Virgin gives a little suppleness to the composition whose figures must fall into a hieratic attitude. With his right hand, Saint Joseph holds a staff, his sign, whose upper end has been broken. With her left hand the Virgin is making a gesture which could be that of presenting her Son to the viewer. The Virgin and Saint Joseph have their eyes lowered and their heads gently inclined toward their Son who alone is looking forward toward the spectator<sup>8</sup>. A kind of inverted triangle is thus formed by the play of these gazes.

"Too often", said Jobin, "they made me produce copies or work from pictures"<sup>9</sup>. Doubtless, some day we shall manage to trace the model from which Jobin took inspiration — or rather the one he was assigned — for *The Holy Family*. In all probability this model could be one of those pious images that were current in Quebec in that era and in front of which people prayed to gain indulgences<sup>10</sup>. Devotion to the Holy Family seemed to experience a renewal of vigour in the second half of the 19th century, as much in Europe as in Quebec. Not very popular before the Renaissance, it flourished, as did its imagery, with the Counter-reformation<sup>11</sup>. The artists picture an earthly trinity where Saint Joseph takes the place of God the Father and the Virgin, that of the Holy Ghost. To better illustrate this concept, they sometimes go so far as to add God the Father and the dove of the Holy Ghost<sup>12</sup> to the same representation.

In New France, where they understood the importance of the family, devotion to the Holy Family appeared in the second half of the 17th century. At the Ursuline Convent in Quebec, under the stimulus of Marie de l'Incarnation (1599-1672), a religious confraternity was founded in 1665<sup>13</sup>. The history of the Ursulines records that in 1690, at the time of Admiral Phips' attack on Quebec, they hung a picture of the Holy Family<sup>14</sup> from the belfry of the cathedral, in order to protect it against cannon-balls. In 1677, Msgr. François de Montmorency-Laval (1623-1708) dedicated the Seminary of Quebec to the Holy Family, and on



this occasion, the "image" of the Holy Family was carried in solemn procession<sup>16</sup>. This image was closely bound to the religious concept of the ideal family in which the father models himself on Saint Joseph and the mother on the Holy Virgin, to bring up the children like the Infant Jesus<sup>17</sup>. The spreading of this concept by the clergy was linked to the dissemination in homes of images of the Holy Family, with which indulgences were connected. In the context of the revival of this devotion, one might believe that a local section of the confraternity of the Holy Family used to meet to pray in front of the relief of Jobin at Saint-Valentin or elsewhere.

Though there were many pictures of the Holy Family in New France from the 17th century on, we do not know of any sculptures on the same theme dated the 17th and 18th centuries. On the other hand, two works of the same era as Jobin's can serve us as points of comparison. The first, in high relief, belongs to the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal and originates from the convent of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame at Pont-Rouge. We do not know its sculptor. The positions of the Virgin and Saint Joseph are the reverse of those in Jobin's sculpture. The treatment of the faces and clothing is very stylized. Curiously, the Infant Jesus has his head and eyes lowered toward the ground. Only from the way in which the hands of the parents join those of the Child can we see the differences in the training of the sculptors. Jobin's concern for realism is obvious.

The second point of comparison is a small polychromatic relief sculpted by Jean-Baptiste Côté (Quebec, 1832-1907) who, like Jobin, must have worked for François-Xavier Berlinguet<sup>18</sup>. Côté's *Holy Family* very probably had the same model as Jobin's: the clothing, the gestures and the positions of the figures are practically the same. The greatest difference arises from the fact that it is the Infant Jesus who is holding Saint Joseph's hand. Here again we perceive Jobin's realism, because the draping of the garments sculpted by Côté is conventionalized. Jobin used to say of Côté that he was "a bit of a poet", and this is what emerges from the treatment given by Côté to the landscape surrounding the three figures<sup>19</sup>. We still see the palm tree on the right, but no further trace of the city. A tree rises in the centre of the picture and fills the whole upper part of the composition with its boughs and leaves. A local touch even appears on the left in the form of a fir. A lily is placed on the left of the Virgin, symbolizing her virginity, while a plant balances it on the right of Saint Joseph. From the same model, the two sculptors produced very different results, which well express the personality and the craft of each without the image they created losing its effectiveness. The polychromy of Jobin's and Côté's reliefs has been preserved and plays in each case a rôle as important as the sculpture itself. It heightens the exuberance of Côté's relief and the austerity of Jobin's.

Louis Jobin, like Jean-Baptiste Côté, was a professional in the sculpture by which he earned his living. Whatever may be our emotional reaction in the face of the religious works he created, the fact remains that they form an important part of our heritage and that they are the reflection of our cultural milieu in a certain era. The relief of the Holy Family reveals to us not only the scope and the limits of the skilful art of Jobin: the interpretation of his iconography and its use help us to better define the civilization that produced Louis

Jobin the sculptor, and which allowed him to live from his art.

For footnotes see French text.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## JEAN-PAUL LEMIEUX THE CYCLE OF LIFE

By Raymond VÉZINA

Jean-Paul Lemieux has remained a figurative painter — not conventional — apart from the controversies that upset the artistic world and create celebrities. Thanks to successive renouncements, since 1956 he has produced works saturated with tender emotions, solitude or agonies. From the beginning, Lemieux has painted the same elements: landscapes, cities, persons, faces. The final style of Jean-Paul Lemieux has, however, nothing more in common with that of the first twenty years of his career. The comparison of certain works dear to the artist will show the process of interiorization which led Jean-Paul Lemieux from the traditional figurative to an original formula that allows him to express the emotions of his whole life and those that make the hearts of men and women throb. This new pictorial language has had, for a few years already, an international audience to which the great exhibition held at Moscow, Leningrad, Prague and Paris has just given a dazzling confirmation.

### Landscapes

For a long time Jean-Paul Lemieux' landscapes were marked by a heavy heredity. Seduced by the richness of nature, the artist wished to picture everything: the least detail of hills, the trees, the fields and even the stones of the fields. These are pleasant works of detailed realism, such as the *Paysage des Cantons de l'Est* (1936). During the thirties Lemieux also drew inspiration from Cézanne for the shape of houses and the clear distinction among geographical accidents. Some canvases resemble those of the Group of Seven. *La Baie des rochers* (about 1940), a little sketch produced upon his return from a trip with Msgr. Félix-Antoine Savard, makes nature poetic without foretelling the strength of present productions. Finally, the naïve canvases show an extraordinary wealth of detail.

Then, all at once, all the trees disappear, the rocks lose their clefts, mountains and valleys dim. Windowless cities arise from undefined spaces. From this time solitude inhabits the pictures of Jean-Paul Lemieux. During the term of this process, his landscapes are no longer anything but horizons. Horizons so vast that everything seems of necessity to become lost in them and to disappear forever. The frame and that horizontal line — often oblique — demarcate two rectangles. The artist creates strong contrasts by placing tiny motifs in the lower rectangle. In this way a train or the evocation of a forest gain a radiance out of proportion with their geometric dimensions.

Winter invades all of the recent production of Jean-Paul Lemieux. He says he is fascinated by the spectacle offered by abundant snow under which picturesque details, visible in other seasons, disappear. The very special white liberally spread on his canvases annuls the accidental. Jean-Paul Lemieux hates the pictures-

que to the point of avoiding the details that have made the popularity of a Clarence Gagnon, for example. However, the fact remains that Quebec is at the heart of his work. Not a description of Quebec but an essential definition. The serene or oppressive calm of our immense solitudes has found a powerful interpreter in Jean-Paul Lemieux. Lately, winter's colour builds his dwellings, clings to the walls, to the houses and sets the gestures. Lemieux' pictures make us think of a "poudrerie", that, upon subsiding, reveals the profile of familiar faces.

### Figures

*La Ville lointaine* (1956) marks the turning point in Lemieux' work. Produced the same year, *Visiteur du soir* attains a fullness of expression that places Jean-Paul Lemieux at the level of the great contemporary artists. This person — and many others after him — becomes gigantic as he is placed near the viewer. The simplifying of the garments adds to the mystery of the figures. Seams, buttons, pockets, motifs and textures have disappeared. The artist cuts out, in homespun, rudimentary garments which wrap the gestures of minor importance in an opaque veil in order to reveal only essential attitudes. The excitement and coolness of card players and some grotesque mimics had shown the skill of Jean-Paul Lemieux in seizing a fugitive expression and making tangible the emotion of a person during a definite activity. Henceforth, Jean-Paul Lemieux' persons would no longer devote themselves to their everyday occupations. They exist. And their being is modified at the will of encounters that are no longer the object of descriptions, but only of evocations.

All through life, man confronts situations that change his being, enrich him or shatter him. Jean-Paul Lemieux paints the emotion that the human being feels in the face of these changes. How should we not conjure up the magnificent discovery of productive power upon looking at this mysterious and serene white girl (*Nu*, 1966), *La Mort par un clair matin* (1963) or *Chacun sa nuit* (1963) are significant in this regard. A frequent method consists of placing the figure on one side of the canvas. Striking effects arise from this "layout". *Julie et l'univers* (1965) as well as *Les Hauteurs d'Abraham* (1963) continue to charm the viewer, because their emotion awakes in him echoes whose repercussions vary according to the state of his own soul.

### Faces

For a long time Jean-Paul Lemieux animated his faces by means of an excess of precise features such as eye-glasses, moustaches, big noses, curly hair, wiry hair and so on. All this has disappeared. There remain only two eyes, the mouth and the nose. Portraitists have always preferred certain angles to represent the face. It was this way that most of our artists of the nineteenth century chose for the three-quarters view that surprises the viewer less than the full-face view or the profile. One would expect that a peaceful man like Jean-Paul Lemieux would continue the tradition of a Théophile Hamel, for example. This is not so. Lemieux paints his persons in full-face, in immediate contact with the spectator. Or else he paints them in profile. One single eye, one single ear, the line of the nose and the mouth create the unusual. This formula arises from his admiration for the works of the Siennese Renaissance. Here we find the delicate complexity of Lemieux' work. In spite of his reputation as a reserved painter, a lover of half-tones,



he prefers to use shock-formulas like the close-up, contrast of proportions, as well as the face in profile or full-face. Nevertheless, the Russian visitors repeatedly observed the lyrical delicacy of his works. Let us remember that the daring of Jean-Paul Lemieux does not tend to catch the viewer unawares. His aim is to create a direct contact between the spectator and the figure.

Jean-Paul Lemieux has painted some portraits. But Jean-Paul Lemieux is not a portraitist. He paints a portrait when the model possesses a psychological density in keeping with his own state of mind. The commission can change nothing in this. This is why the artist paints especially the portraits of persons who attract him, of intimate friends and children. Was André Brouillette pleasing to him on account of the original placing the these slits of eyes almost hidden in his eye sockets? Did the consuming interest of this youth in the organ find an echo in the painter? Produced slowly, hung for a few days at the home of his friends, the Brouillettes, and then retouched, this picture has become one of the finest portraits of our twentieth century.

Contrarily, it happens that Jean-Paul Lemieux suppresses every individual characteristic, as in his famous *Visiteur du soir*. The face is no more than a play of shadows. Usually, the painter of faces who is not a portraitist creates types who represent a social class or a nation. This is the painting of manners, as practised by Cornelius Kriehoff. But with Lemieux, faces are the evocation of an age of life, with its own feelings. Now we have arrived at the fundamental theme of his art.

### The Cycle of Life

For more than twenty years Jean-Paul Lemieux has been building an immense cycle of human life. Death is often shown, although there are never any corpses or skeletons. Childhood, adolescence and maturity are the three stages that occupy the greatest number of canvases. Jean-Paul Lemieux has painted only one baby. In 1960 he pictured himself with his parents. This canvas is now kept somewhere in the United States. (The rapid dispersal of Jean-Paul Lemieux' pictures will soon make the thorough study of his work extremely difficult.) It is useless to seek a logical development in this vast work. At the will of memories, experiences and encounters, the artist adds a new subject or takes up again a theme already treated several times. At present, Jean-Paul Lemieux is working on his first real self-portrait, another voyage to the end of time. Three faces of himself and two of his best-loved works determine successive areas, spaced out in the height as in the Kakemono of which he is an ardent admirer.

Although figurative, Jean-Paul Lemieux' work does not owe its charm to the iconographic complexities belonging to learned western tradition. Nor does his work claim technical prowess. In fact, Jean-Paul Lemieux speaks to the heart rather than to the intelligence. And this language reduced to essentials reaches the universal. The choice made by the USSR shows this well. After the study of an enormous documentation on the Group of Seven, the Russians opened the Lemieux file with amazement. And it was for Jean-Paul Lemieux that they reserved the honour of representing Canada. The children, men and women of the USSR loved Jean-Paul Lemieux' canvases. V. Iakovlev, soloist of the Moscow Philharmonic and writer B.A. Bikov commented on this exhibition as if it was a discovery

beneficial to humanity. We would be wrong to believe that each of Lemieux' figures lives in his solitude, like an island without neighbours. Their isolation is only apparent since they establish complex links with the viewer. And the strength of Jean-Paul Lemieux comes from the fact that his figures vibrate with the profound emotions that are the foundation of our everyday behaviour.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## HUMAN DISFIGURATION AND IDEOLOGY IN IMPRESSIONISM

By Monique BRUNET-WEINMANN

"The public", says Proudhon, "want us to make them beautiful and to believe that they are". The public, that is, for a painter, this restricted part of society that has interest for — or interest in — painting and the financial means to buy canvases. Under the Second Empire, this was a certain middle class, established in power since 1848, an industrial middle class, very confident in the positive and concrete values of applied science and money and which, beholding the ostentatious incarnation of the self-made man on the imperial throne, felt its confidence in man all the more strengthened — and therefore in itself. For the classical education of the old upper class the new wealthy class could not yet substitute a modern education; so Monsieur Prudhomme was the new patron of the arts whose culture found its limits on the Longchamp race-course or in the wings of the Opera, as testified by Degas' top-hatted gentlemen. Spiritually, in its tastes and life style, this society was alienated by the aristocracy that it had replaced politically and that it copied, unable, unlike the Dutch middle class of the 17th century, to create its own style, to recognize its reflection in the image which the impressionist painters gave it of itself. This class liked the pieces of bravura in the historical painting bathed by Raffet and Meissonier in the Napoleonic legend; the licentiousness of the gay entertainments of the 18th century revived by Tassaert; Boucher's nudes adapted to the day by Cabanel, and, especially, the full-length portraits betowed on this class on the most interesting subject: itself as it dreamed of being, therefore as it saw itself and as the artist did not always see it. The whole problem of beauty lies there!

In his report on the Salon of 1868, Zola wrote: "The flood of portraits rises each year and threatens to invade the entire Salon. The explanation is simple: there are hardly any others but persons desiring to have their own portrait who still buy paintings". Manet's work presents a whole gallery of portraits of women, strangely begun in 1862 by the one of Victorine Meurent, which can be seen at the Boston Museum. This was his first canvas from this model, who would regularly pose for him until 1875 and which was for the public and the contemporary critics the epitome of ugliness and the one through which scandal occurred: scandal such as *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* or *Olympia* or even the very chaste *Chemin de fer*. He was also reproached for "her stupid face" and in this there exists, notwithstanding the excessive criticism, some truth. I was charmed by the Boston portrait, but in the end the contemplation of this look became irritating, because it answers nothing. The face is closed, like the mouth that does not smile, the look closed behind the blond light of the eye-

lashes, absent in her serious indifference. This presence-absence questions and annoys. The day after my first visit, I saw the portrait of Victorine Meurent slashed at the exact spot where the fascination took place: under the fringe of the eyelashes... A departure from the laws of the traditional portrait that expresses a little of the soul and the mind: Manet was not interested in psychology, only in painting. A face, like a vase, is a place of reliefs and colours subject to the play of light. Manet painted what he saw: blobs in a lighter tone than that of the motif; whence this flattening that makes his persons resemble the figures in a deck of cards. People were also indignant in 1876 because he hardly sketched the details of his laundress' face in *Le Linge*. Cabanel and Carolus Duran showed a little more consideration for the human face: they favoured the relief of forms, gave a dreamy look for lack of intelligence and an appearance of high life for lack of nobility. After all, the commission was being paid for!

This was what Manet did not know when he painted Mme Brunet's portrait, refused by the model's family. When we compare a photograph and the picture we see clearly this tendency of Manet to widen the face at the cheekbones and flatten it by the sharp contrast of shadow and light, laid on as in the Boston portrait. Aesthetically, the model is not flattered. Nor socially either, and this is undoubtedly another reason, less obvious, for the refusal. This work is to be found in the period of realism in the Spanish style, inclined more to tramps than to middle-class persons, to the degree that Manet's parents themselves (his father was a high official in the Ministry of Justice) are pictured as two caretakers and are almost unrecognizable, as Jacques-Émile Blanche said. *La Femme au gant* has the appearance of a widow in trouble who is going to take her family jewels to the pawn-office. This portrait, which was to take its place in the traditional line of the official portrait through the shock of its values, became a critical portrayal of the model and her world, as we so often find with Goya. What is implied in the rejected portrait appears clearly in the second picture Manet painted in 1862 from his studies of the same model: *La Chanteuse des rues*. In these vulgar subjects and this somewhat coarse technique, there is indeed something of a protest against his environment, a masked ideological revolt that is expressed aesthetically against academic art. The journalists of the time were not entirely wrong in considering him a revolutionary. Indeed, Manet was ardently republican, which, in the terminology of 1850, meant revolutionary or anarchist, like radical or socialist around 1873.

Human figuration is still more ill-treated in some of Manet's pictures in which can be seen, beyond pure representation, a reflection of historical-social conjunctures. On several occasions he painted crowds in movement seen from above, undoubtedly influenced in this by the first aerial photographs: *Le Jardin de l'infante* of 1866, which is one of the first group views; *Boulevard des Capucines* taken from the studio of Nadar, the photographer, where actually the Impressionist Exhibition of 1874 was held, where the painting had its rightful place; this *Vue des Tuileries* that we reproduce here. From this point of view the human silhouette, from far, is no more than a little line of colour similar in every way to the colored strokes that represent the leaves, of trees, higher and therefore closer to the painter. This is the introduction of relativity in paint-



ing. It is no longer a matter of representing what is recognized rationally, but what is seen *naively*, the raw sensation of the crowd in movement among the paths of sun and the spots of blue shadow. Man is no longer even a face-object but only one of "those innumerable little black licks" which cause an exclamation of horror, in *Le Charivari*, the spokesman of ordinary people: "So I look like that when I walk? . . . Are you making fun of me, really?"<sup>14</sup>. It is no more a matter of a moral person or of personality: here appears a set of identical unities, number, crowd, mass, recurrent themes in Zola's writings at the same era and precisely contemporary with the trend from democracy to mass democracy<sup>15</sup>. In front of these pictures and this public indignation we think of Taine's judgement on men emerged from universal suffrage "all cut from the same pattern (. . .) like so many arithmetical unities, all separable, all equivalent, *formed* by intentionally cutting away all the differences that separate one man from another"<sup>16</sup>. In this human disfiguration there is the involuntarily critical reflection of a state of fact.

More thoughtful, more radically committed, Pissarro was aware of the implicit ideological tenor of his work and its repelling effect on the public: "There is something in me that cuts off people's enthusiasm, they are afraid! . . . I firmly believe that our ideas imbued with anarchic philosophy colour our works and from that time (they are) antipathetic to current ideas"<sup>17</sup>. Courbet, like him a disciple of Proudhon, had caused a scandal because he was the first, with Millet, to choose peasant subjects and *common* manners. The public got used to this, but found no beauty in it: these people did not recognize themselves in Pissarro's uncouth and fraternal simplicity and very naturally did not appreciate his scenes of rural life, fields, orchards, kitchen-gardens, instead of the gardens of summer resorts; the crowd in the village markets rather than the one in Baron Haussmann's boulevards. The women in head-dress and white apron, the men in smocks and wooden shoes in *Marché de Gisors* could please only servants; so they are not part of the public. Pissarro knew this and counted more, to raise his prices slowly, on a few unimportant patrons of the arts than on exhibitions in galleries.

"A little more, Pissarro would imitate the Russian, Lavroff, or another revolutionary. The public does not like what smells of politics and, at my age, I do not wish to be a revolutionary"<sup>18</sup>. This was how Renoir expressed himself in the uncopied fragment of a draft of a letter to Durand-Ruel, at the time of the series on country markets. In 1882, Renoir was launched, since his presentation at the official Salon of 1879 of the famous picture representing *Mme Charpentier et ses enfants*. The model's name did more for the success of the painter than the quality of his art. Mme Charpentier had one of the most famous Parisian salons; she was the wife of the recognized publisher of naturalist writers, of Zola in particular. The costumes and the interior bear witness to this: naturalism sold well. The result of this commission was decisive for the future, and Renoir did not fail to satisfy the rules of the society portrait, holding his natural spontaneity in check. This rich tranquillity, this satisfied assurance, inspired respect: the portrait pleased the public very much. Without being put on the same level as Carolus Duran, Renoir received much praise in the newspapers. From then on he was considered apart from the impressionists, as it were *recuperated*.

It is logical that it should be he, the son of a poor tailor of Limoges, and not his friends, all born into the middle class, who became the poet of very limited luxury and of girls of good family playing their scales on the piano. Till this day Renoir is still the most popular of the impressionists . . .

For footnotes see French text.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

Monique Brunet-Weinmann is presently completing her doctorate on Impressionism — Painting and Poetry. Holder of a D.E.S. degree in humanities, she taught at the Rosemount Cegep and at McGill University and conducted a course in comparative art at the University of Quebec in Montreal.

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## TONI ONLEY

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By Alma de CHANTAL

Toni Onley, the painter-engraver of the Pacific coast, was born on the Isle of Man off the coast of Ireland, where he spent his youth. Brought up in a family of artists, his early taste for drawing was encouraged from the beginning by his people, particularly by his grand-mother, herself a designer and creator of patterns for the famous Irish weaving. As long as he remembers, he was convinced, he says, that he would be a painter, and that art would be the major preoccupation of his life. He would never deviate from this path. In spite of the war, he was able to complete his studies at the excellent art school on the Isle of Man. This existence turned inward upon itself, entirely cut off from the exterior world, encouraged prolonged contacts with nature, especially the sea. Solitary years during which his marked taste was developed for a calm, contemplative way of life, a determinant factor in the orientation of his plastic development.

Having immigrated to Canada in 1948 at the age of twenty, Toni Onley would spend the first years on a farm at Brantford, Ontario, where his major work was the designing of agricultural machinery, without, however, abandoning his persistent nostalgia for marine spaces. Later he decided to settle, like a true islander, near the sea, on the Pacific coast. He resided for a year in Victoria, and then followed his permanent installation in Vancouver, his home port and his preferred haven on returning from long wanderings around the world; a mirage city, a fetish city, where all the beloved places of life for the artist, his true life and the no less real one of his imaginary world, were combined.

To the frantic tempo of modern life, to evolution and the sometimes savage changes that the consumer society ceaselessly undergoes, Toni Onley opposes a strange, personal world, a solitary universe where the unchanging, silence, absolute calm and peace prevail. At the centre of this universe is nature, source of major inspiration. The artist would constantly use nature as a source, and this has for almost thirty years supplied the essential material of his pictorial evolution. This theme indeed subtends the whole of his production — painting, drawing or engraving. There he recaptures the subjects that exert a profound fascination on him because they are lasting and infinitely varied: sea, sky, and clouds, mountains and valleys, sometimes trees, and, a frequent motif, sandy shores strewn with stones and rocks.

Among these elements, water predominates and remains one of the chosen signs of the work. To seascapes inspired by the west coast of the country there would be added through the years those of Mexico, where Onley lived from 1957 to 1961, devoting all his time to painting. In his first important solo exhibition, in 1959, at the Vancouver Art Gallery<sup>1</sup>, he presented large collages with abstract motifs. Paintings and drawings would subsequently be exhibited regularly in Canada and the United States until 1963, a date that marks a new orientation of Toni Onley's work. A grant from the Canada Arts Council allowed him to spend a year in London, where he was initiated in different techniques of engraving under a Swedish teacher. With a first exhibition, the Tate Gallery became one of the purchasers; his silk-screens also appear in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Upon his return to Vancouver, Onley devoted himself chiefly to engraving. His graphic work has continued since then to increase in importance and quality, and it is this aspect of his art that we shall examine.

At first sight, his silk-screens astonish, fascinate, and disturb at the same time. Is this due to the cosmic perception he has of the universe, to the very specific point of view that characterizes his work: aerial views of landscapes that rest, serene and unchanging, in the infinity of the sky and the sea? These landscapes are first, literally, captured on the wing; indeed the artist, owner of a small biplane, flies whole days over the coasts of British Columbia, searching for lost horizons and unexplored lands. Here space is sovereign. He makes it his own, he inhabits it completely. A close communion with nature is essential to him, the artist states. In daily life as in work, it remains a prime necessity.

Thus, whether it is from the Pacific or from the Mediterranean — Toni Onley spent the autumn of 1973 in Greece — or else from the Arctic regions he explored during the summer of 1974, we see arise, by what magic spells unceasingly renewed, these enormous, mysterious masses with indefinite outlines, the colour of dawn or twilight, rocks, icebergs or mountains sprung from the depths of the ages, landscapes between the real and the imaginary, whose shifting borders move at the will of the painter-magician. By chance shores, sections of rocks or stones capture the glance, menhirs of elliptical language, erected along a secret and unusual course. Toni Onley speaks lengthily of stones: "One can never tire of gazing at the plays of light and shadow on their surface, which constantly transform them. The stones have a life of their own; my whole life will not be enough time to look at them; they fascinate me unceasingly." And the same of the sky and the sea, always moving, in perpetual change. Now the eye, now the memory, recreates these landscapes which seem to have emerged from time immemorial.

Variety of structures and plans, mastery in the arrangement of forms and colours, all combine to create images of a singular plastic beauty. It is a strange impression to see for the first time these scenes which are, however, familiar to us. Beyond mirages, under the appearances, lives *another world*, an unknown, magic and spellbound world. This artist's reality is of a soothing simplicity. His art, of a profound inwardness, allows the discerning of a world of sensations otherwise neglected. A timeless universe, freed from the everyday, closed upon itself. Here there is no outside interference. No shock, no violence shatters



the balance of this world of pure contemplation and absolute simplicity. It is hardly surprising, as Onley willingly mentions, that the ensemble of his work remains on the margin of present artistic trends. It is diametrically opposed to conceptual, cybernetic art, or to *art for the moment*.

The engraver admits his lack of interest in representing buildings, streets or areas of the city, or again the many facets of everyday life — will the least vestige of this exist some day? And he adds: "If in a far-off future people were to discover my paintings or my engravings, they would still recognize the sky and the sea; these elements are lasting and eternal."

Let us emphasize that the human being is totally absent from the desert scenes shown in the silk-screens of Toni Onley, whose world is represented with a purposely restrained palette. With this engraver, no incandescent fleas of light and colour, but muted, subdued tones, impregnated, one might say, with the rains and fogs of the Pacific. Out in peaceful, open, too calm seas, phantom isles arise, clouds of moving white, subdued whites, whites of absence and refined mellowness of greys and monochromes. Here and there, blocks, rocks, pebbles flecked with ochre or verdigris, these landscapes fixed under slate-blue skies, calling to mind the firmaments peculiar to Vancouver's climate. In contrast, other silk-screens borrow the shades of water-colour. The colour then becomes light, airy; a world of original freshness is restored to us. A poetic universe of a discreet lyricism, where lie, deep-seated, mystery, melancholy, calm and trance.

In this stage we perceive the influence of oriental art, but also that of contemporary artists, such as the Italian painter, Morandi, whose effects of shadow and light on the object are to be found in many echoes in Onley's work. In other respects, the premonitory way of using the different figurative methods, the emotional strength, the restful quality of his compositions, as well as the evident simplicity of this universe that does not escape the power of the tragic, reveal a certain relationship with the work of surrealist artists.

In the fall of 1974, at the end of a sabbatical year, Toni Onley returned to teaching. In April 1974, the Victoria Art Gallery presented a solo exhibition of his paintings and water-colours. In Toronto, Erindale College exhibited engravings and paintings, and in Montreal at the end of autumn we were able to view an important exhibition of the recent works of this artist at Galerie 1640<sup>2</sup>.

An untiring worker, Toni Onley pursues in solitude the work he undertakes. Of the tragedies that twice disturbed his life, no trace is visible in his work, unless that beyond appearances, under serene skies, far from calm seas, what unsuspected depths, what immanent threats... Would real life be elsewhere?

1. Cf. Jacques de Roussan, *Les Peintres de la Colombie britannique et leur environnement in Vie des Arts*, Vol. XI, No. 44, pp. 76-80.

2. In November and December 1973.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## TONY TASCONA'S FULFILMENT

Virgil HAMMOCK

Tony Tascona is an artist who defies easy description. First, he makes his living as an artist in a city like Winnipeg, not that Winnipeg

has not been kind to Tony; it has. Nor is it that easy to make your living as a painter in Montreal or Toronto. It is damned hard to make your living from art anywhere in this country. Facts are facts, however, and the art market is not here in Winnipeg, but in the East and if you are not attached to an established Eastern dealer (and Tony isn't — he, in fact, has few kind words for dealers of any kind) your chances are even slimmer.

Tony was born in 1926 in St. Boniface, Manitoba, the major French-speaking section of Winnipeg, although his parents were Italian immigrants and, but for a period of two years in Montreal in the early sixties, has continued to live here. He was the second youngest child in a family of sixteen children, of whom only ten survived childhood. It was not easy growing up in the Depression in one of the poorest sections of Winnipeg, but, as luck would have it, Tony's father was a fruit peddler and gardener during these troubled times and the family never went hungry. There were other problems, however. He has told me that, because he was Italian, he generally had to fight the French-speaking kids on the way to school and the English-speaking kids on the way home, and, of course, there is always the added problem of the pecking order in a large family like the Tasconas. Tony would nearly always be the last for a long line of hand-me-downs, be it clothes, shoes or the family's lone bicycle. If you wanted to be heard in a family like Tony's you had to shout or fight, and most of the time both. Needless to say, this background has made Tony a fighter. He has told me, as well, that being a small part of a large group during his childhood has made him very aware of his individuality as an adult.

Call it what you may — desire, ambition, or need, something drives people to become artists. In Tony's case it was a combination of all three and some others as well. Before the end of World War Two both of Tony's parents had died, and, with all of his older brothers in the Armed Forces, he found himself in the family business driving a delivery truck before he was old enough to legally obtain a driver's license, but that too was not to last. Before the end of the War he was drafted into the Army. It was here that he found time to draw and decided that he wanted to become an artist. This was not, however, the first time that he had drawn. As a child, a billboard artist who hand-painted advertisements for a movie house in Winnipeg was a regular visitor to the Tascona household and brought young Tony paper, pencils and, most of all, encouragement. While Tony's mother supplied the wine and pasta, the two drew together. These are sessions that Tony still remembers fondly to this day. After the Service, in 1947, he entered the School of Art at the University of Manitoba. It was then called the Winnipeg School of Art and did not officially become part of the University until 1950. He remained in school until 1952.

These were important years for Tony, studying with Joe Plaskett, John Kacere, William McCloy and Richard Bowman. All of these faculty members, with the exception of Plaskett, were American and to Tony's mind this peaceful post-war invasion of American ideas and artists was instrumental to his early development as an artist. The most important influence was to come from Bowman, with whom he still corresponds, but all brought new ideas and theories to a Canadian art scene deadened by thirty years dominance of the Group of Seven or, more correctly, their progeny, the Canadian Group of Painters.

After art school and marriage, Tony found himself in the traditional bind of most young artists — the need to make a living without giving up hope of remaining an artist. The break came with a chance to work for Canadian Aviation Electronics and later Air Canada. He worked for the two firms for over a total of fifteen years, becoming a metal plating technician. These jobs were to give him the solid technical base that one so closely identifies with Tony's work. His materials are the most modern, based for a large part on his industrial experience. Tony's painting for the last few years has been done on aluminium sheet with industrial lacquers and his sculpture in resins and machined metals.

When I first saw Tony Tascona's paintings a few years back I thought them handsome, but in no way unusual as far as materials go. It was only when I got to know the artist and later visited his studio that I understood his grasp of technology. Surely one of the best qualities of Tony's painting is that one is unaware of his use of technology, but, instead, one's attention is drawn to the image, which is as it should be. The latest paintings are rather geometric in nature, while his earlier work was more apt to be organic, but the technique is not very different. Of the newer work, at least, one would think that they were the result of detailed drawings that were then transferred to the painting surface, but such is not the case. Tony works directly on the surface, using tape to draw much the same way that other artists would use a pencil or brush to draw a line or define an area. He then pours and brushes into the surface the lacquer in the areas outlined by the tape. It is interesting to note, as well, that Tony achieves the remarkable variety in his palette with only mixtures of the primaries and white, and this too, like the composition, is more the result of intuition than of formula.

Too often since the end of World War Two technical advances have been made at the price of what I would call artistic quality. One was made aware of how things were made, that is to say one was made aware of the material from which an art object was made rather than any message that the artist might be trying, or perhaps not trying, to communicate. Plastic for the sake of plastic. Flash for the sake of flash. Certainly the nature of painting was changed in the fifteenth century by the introduction of oil paint by Van Eyck and others as a replacement for egg tempera, but it was used as a tool that allowed artists greater freedom rather than a device to replace content, as has been the case with the introduction of some new materials in the last twenty years or so. Of course, new materials do make things that were once impossible possible. Today's world calls on its artists to work in today's materials — a fact that makes an artist like Andrew Wyeth an anachronism. Perhaps McLuhan's "The Medium is the Message" is today's language and I am wrong in my insistence on content.

Tony's paintings have content, no matter how abstract they may appear to the casual viewer. They speak of clarity — the ability to see things clearly. Tony can and does relate his work to the harsh and beautiful environment of the Prairies, but in no way would he call himself a landscape painter. Those of us, like Tony, who live on the Prairies by choice recognize the futility of trying to escape the landscape. Indeed, that is why most of us remain here. Tony believes that art is a continuing process and that today's artists have much in common with those of the past. He recom-



mends that the young artist go to a conventional art school to learn, if nothing else, a vocabulary and then perhaps, like his own example, take technical training. He would agree, I think, with Santayana's oft-quoted dictum that those who aren't aware of the past are doomed to repeat it. Tony was one of the local artists picked to be honored with a one-man exhibition at the Winnipeg Art Gallery during this city's centennial in 1974. The exhibition was received with unbridled enthusiasm by the sophisticated art gallery group and, more surprisingly, by the general public. Tony sold a total of eleven works from the show, the largest number that he has ever sold in a single exhibition. The walls in the Winnipeg Art Gallery's largest exhibition space were painted black especially for the show and the works were beautifully lit, illustrating what can be done when, as in this case, an artist and the staff of a gallery work together to hang an exhibition. The paintings in the show seemed to be back-lit or possess some strange light source all their own.

In his three dimensional, be it murals or sculptures, Tascona seems more obvious in his use of industrial materials, although it could be that I am just more familiar with the language of painting. In either case he employs his materials well, using them to emphasize the character of the piece and the space in which they are placed. Take the case of two works at the University of Manitoba's Fort Garry Campus. One is an aluminium mural in the Fletcher-Argue Building housing the Faculty of Arts and the other a hanging plastic piece at the Freshwater Research Institute. The aluminium mural is essentially a relief that decorates the interior entrance wall of the building. It utilizes a long rectangular and a circular element against a brick wall. Polished and matte metal surfaces are played one against the other and a limited use of colour — in this case red and orange. While I inferred that this piece is decorative, it is certainly more than that. It becomes a permanently mounted painting on the wall that allows an uninterrupted flow of pedestrian traffic in and out of the building, while calling attention to a foyer containing the building's main elevators that are between the mural's two elements. At the same time it does not cause traffic jams of students or other passers-by stopping to look at the work of art, which would be the case if the mural was of a narrative rather than an abstract mode. Mind you, the job of the Sistine ceiling was to do just that — stop people in their tracks — make them look and understand a story, and, of course, it strengthened the power of the Church. But, as I have explained, the job of Tony's mural is to reinforce the function of the Fletcher-Argue Building which is essentially office and classroom space. You don't notice the work, but if it were not there you would miss it, and that is the beauty of the piece.

The work in the Freshwater Research Institute is in some ways more impressive than the Argue mural, and it was meant to be. The space in the Institute building allows for the hanging of the plastic resin discs in a high open area, the building's main staircase, that would otherwise be a void. The spheres, as Tony prefers to call them, shimmer in the light coming through the large windows of this handsome new federal building, providing a brilliant burst of colour in its entrance. All buildings, both public and private, can use the magic of an artist like Tony to make our environment a more livable place. Our environment should be a place where we feel comfortable;

where we don't have to go to special places or areas, such as an art gallery or a park, to get away from the rigors of everyday life to have something that we might call an aesthetic experience. Public art, like the two pieces by Tascona I have just described, should be an integral part of today's artist's work, just as it was in the Renaissance and before. Not that all artists should spend their time decorating the walls of the nation, but there is a certain beauty to the idea of some of our artists coming in out of the cold where most of them have been since the middle of the nineteenth century.

Every morning Tony takes a long walk along the banks of the Red River which runs through St. Boniface and is quite near his home. This, he says, gives him time to think: then he returns to his studio, which is attached to his home, to work. He has an output of thirty to forty paintings a year plus some sculpture. Not all of his work is done at his home studio — some of the larger pieces are done at a downtown studio that he shares with long-time friend and fellow artist Bruce Head. Being a full-time artist, especially with the principles of Tascona, is not without its dangers, and, of course, its rewards. Tony tells me that he and his family live on about a four month financial margin, depending on new sales to keep food on the table and materials in the studio. He and his family live a life of simple means that is not at all like the super elegance that his works suggest. It helps to have, as Tony does, an understanding family. What one feels most about Tony, however, is his peace with himself. This is a quality that few people have, artist or not, and this is where Tony is most successful. He proves that you can be an artist in the best sense of the word, no matter where you live. This success is within the mind of the artist and not on the pages of an art magazine or on the wall of an art gallery.

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## BILL LAING

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By Bradford R. COLLINS

The facts in quick order: Bill Laing is a Scottish-born, Vancouver-raised, British-trained printmaker presently teaching at the Vancouver School of Art. Done. Now to more important matters. Laing plans to leave Vancouver soon and return to London. Two considerations motivate him: 1) His chances of recognition, of course, are infinitely greater there than here in Canada. Vancouver has a number of talented artists like Toni Onley, Jack Shadbolt and Gordon Smith, but they are appreciated by very few beyond our borders. International reputations are almost impossible to make these days except in New York, London and, less easily, Los Angeles. Despite the quality of mass communication systems, the rest of the art world is considered provincial, not only by the critics but by the very men involved. Note how avidly artists and art students read the journals for the latest happening in the major art centers. So if Bill Laing wants fame and fortune he will have to go elsewhere to find them. The significant point is that he will not be on a fool's errand. His recent work demonstrates all too clearly a major talent. 2) He finds it difficult to work here. He claims that the light is wrong and that there are no appropriate subjects to suit his particular needs, but this is rationalization and misses the heart of the matter. Put

simply, the problem is that there is not sufficient energy in Vancouver. Bill is disgusted by the fact that almost none of the teachers at the Vancouver School of Art are practising artists any more. Human nature is essentially lazy (Adam and Eve did not want to go to work!) and unless there are forces, external or internal, pushing and pulling an individual artist, it is all too easy to lapse into relative or absolute inactivity. Those external forces are not present in Vancouver as they are in New York or London. This is not a special indictment of Vancouver. The situation is essentially the same elsewhere. Thus, despite my personal sorrow at the departure of men like Bill Laing and Robert Young (recently shown at the Vancouver Art Gallery), I heartily advise it. I would not venture such advice to Shadbolt or Smith, who need the Pacific Northwest landscape and tradition to sustain their art. For Young, however, who feeds on the mixture of art history and personal remembrance, and Laing, who needs only a human situation, any place could do.

The essence of Laing's work is the poetic transformation of the commonplace. This may sound like descriptions you've read of Alex Colville's work, but it is quite the opposite. Colville's art stands in the realist tradition of Vermeer and Courbet, the tradition that posits beauty to reside in nature and the world as they are. The artist's job is only to find it. He discovers; he transforms nothing. Laing's approach is, on the other hand, generally romantic. What he seeks in his art is something beyond the commonplace, something strange and magical, a suggestion of the extraordinary. The romantic detests the ordinary. Delacroix, for example, sought escape from it in the exotic and the fictional. At the end of the nineteenth century and since artists have sought not to flee from it but to transform it. Redon and Magritte began with ordinary situations which were then imaginatively altered into marvellous and mysterious experiences. Laing's work is in this vein. A passing stranger in *Within the Landscape #2* is slowly twisted out of focus, leaving the spectator to wonder uneasily who he is and what strange powers affect him. Laing's alterations are generally not as dramatic as this. His work is characterized by nuance and a real economy of means. He gets a great deal from apparently little. In *Waiting* a young woman rising from a chair seems anguished and pleading less because of her facial expression than from the subtle but tragic enlargement of her hands and feet. The evocative source in *Observation* is even less easy to identify. The scene has all the subtle intrigue of a meeting of C.I.A. agents or a plot to assassinate the Queen, yet in every respect it is a fairly ordinary Brighton park scene. The incongruity of bowler-hatted men with a lavatory sign plus the unusual placement of the two figures is effective far beyond the means. Equally impressive is Laing's range. Each work strikes a different chord. Unlike so many young artists today, he is not caught in a narrow rut. He has not "decided" on a given course of action. He is sensitive and open to the events around him and allows his mind free rein in dealing with them. From the gentle poetry of the cast shadow in *Walkerburn Series #3* we move abruptly to a scene of terror and compassion in *One Sunday Afternoon* where a young girl seems to plead for release into the room where we stand.

What surprises me with regard to Laing's work is that there are not more artists doing similar themes. Despite various predictions



about a return to romance, to an era of feeling, Laing is one of the few offering evidence of it. Given what I consider to be art's function, I would expect more. The implications of the nihilistic contention of the critic Kosuth that "Art's ability to exist will depend . . . on its not performing a service" seem, to me, less valid than Mondrian's assertion that art has generally been concerned with providing man with a consolation for what life does not offer him, that the basic function of art is the servicing of unfulfilled spiritual needs. After all, as Socrates showed, love is a function of need. Modern life offers little opportunity for the deeper, fuller, more profound feelings and emotions. The world seems intent on getting smaller, more homogenous, in a word, more prosaic. Nature and religion once provided man with ample occasion for grand and exalted feeling. Imagine, Laing told me, the awe primitive man must have felt at the rising of the moon. Now that we know so much about our satellite and have even set foot upon it, its mystery has been pierced and its magical appeal significantly reduced. I suspect so little recent art has addressed itself to filling the gap left by the demythicization of nature and the demise of religion (think of the effect of the vernacular mass!) because the movies have done it so well (*The Exorcist* comes most immediately to mind). Newmann and Rothko felt painting should undertake the heroic task, but despite the quality of their work what they sought was rarely achieved. Much to Laing's credit, however, his work succeeds. And unlike the movies, he does it suggestively; there will always be enough of us who prefer poetry to prose.

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## AN INTERESTING COMMUNITY TELEVISION EXPERIMENT: CTV-4 (SAINT-JÉRÔME)

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By Gilles MARSOLAIS

*Within the framework of this article we are dealing with one action among others which is part of the development of videograph in Quebec, to examine the pilot-experiment of the establishing, fundamentally, of a communal television (CTV) presenting the original idea of using Hertzian waves rather than the cables<sup>1</sup>.*

Due to some film producers interested in seeing the accomplishing, finally, of the dreams of certain producers of documentary films, such as Dziga Vertov and Robert Flaherty, the "adventure of direct cinema" fostered the establishment of new techniques around the sixties (16 mm. synchronous and super-light), involving new methods of shooting, in order to capture the speech and the motion of man in movement and to include as closely as possible (taking into account the unavoidable interventions that occur at the level of the camera, the film producer, the montage, etc.) the manifestations of life. Direct filming will make possible the production of a cinema freer from estranging technical restraints and, to a certain degree, economic restraints, suited to encouraging the exercise of an open censorship or a more harmful self-censorship. By focusing more particularly on the phenomenon of the camera in use, it has progressively commanded attention as a cinema of communication, allowing the rethinking of certain principles concerning the problem of truth at the level of human relations . . . The coming out

of portable video, of the half-inch kind, is to be found in the immediate prolongation of this direct cinema; it is even one of its constituents. The question then arises of knowing what video brings more than that super-light cinema and what are the perspectives it opens.

Historically this has been the road taken: after mastering the techniques and the methods of direct cinema, certain film-makers agreed that using their cinematographic procedures they were not succeeding in establishing true communication, unless in a single direction, and that their films did not allow changing (or so little) in depth the fate of those with whom they were concerned as *film producers*. The fact of being interested in social problems was no longer enough to give them an easy conscience; they felt a certain unease in earning their living (and very well, in some cases) by *exploiting* the suffering of the exploited in some way. It was in this context that the Social Research Group of the NFB (1966-1969) put forth the idea of "giving a voice to those who have none", with a view to social change, by opening the film to participation and animation. The idea was to produce films no longer on people but *with* people, by supplying them with the means of becoming aware of their problems, of defining them, and of finding suitable methods of solving them. It was a matter of acting in such a way that the means of response should no longer remain in the hands of the class with the power to control and direct a dissemination of one-way information, and even to eliminate the distorting prism of the vision of the film producers themselves, the majority of whom being the closest representatives of the bourgeois average. But already the *film* medium seemed inadequate: inaccessibility for the mass of workers on account of its astronomical cost, technical operations still too complex for the non-initiated, slow process that cuts it off from immediate impact and, to some extent, from changeable reality, inevitable elitism combined with the search for success at any price to survive *cinematographically*, even on the fringe of the system, etc.

It was then, in 1967, that producer Robert Forget introduced the first portable half-inch n/b magnetoscope in Quebec, with the purpose of encouraging this kind of approach. The use of it soon revealed that the portable magnetoscope was a better instrument of communication than the movie camera: economical, very simple to manipulate and easy to learn, allowing retakes, it makes possible the immediate exploitation of the feed-back/retroaction phenomenon, etc.

The idea of a radical democratization of the means of communication opened up a path and led to the establishing of communal media a little everywhere across Quebec, within the framework of the Société Nouvelle/Challenge For Change programme particularly which, in 1970, took over the SRG by integrating most of its craftsmen. It was in these circumstances that Robert Forget contributed directly to the establishment of the video medium. He worked so well in this direction that he received the mandate of setting up the pilot project of Videograph, which opened its doors in 1971. Since September 1972, Videograph has been detached from Société Nouvelle to become autonomous. «Far from being a short-lived project, Videograph holds an experimental mandate and a permanent injection rôle.» The idea of Videograph, even if at the beginning the diffusion aspect was not implicit in its mandate, was to succeed in really democratizing the medium, in making it attractive, to act in such

a way that it should have an active distribution and public; in brief, to demystify middle-class television and shatter the rôle of passive spectator of the lonely television-viewing citizen . . . Those persons responsible for Videograph have, among others, brought about some very interesting tests of broadcasting, like the so-called «Selecto-TV», through cablediffusion, in three separate regions in Quebec. This resulted in a fruitful beginning that proved that the citizens wished to take part at the local level. They were also able to verify that these experiments of «Selecto-TV» produced a linking effect: the trial made at Beloeil directly inspired the workmen of the area to produce a remarkably percussive document on the analysis of the situation concerning the threat of the approaching closure of their factory (S.O.S. Soma).

From that time it became obvious that communication was no longer a one-way street and that good participation could be obtained from ordinary persons. The experiment of community television appeared more than ever as the natural prolongation of the adventure begun a short time before. But it was important to proceed further along this road admirably suited to video: it should be an instrument of animation, of reflection, and an agent of the growth of collective awareness, whether by acting directly at the socio-political level or by exploring the areas of collective unawareness.

It does not yet seem that video, operating in this field of action, has succeeded in building up a specific language that distinguishes it radically from direct cinema — at the exact level of its process of autonomous manufacture. Finally, the great originality of video, in this point of view, will not be found so much at the level of a renewal of syntax as at the level of the use which will be made of this medium and of the systematic employment of its infinite possibilities, particularly at the level of feed-back/retroaction.

With the intention of transforming the vast group of passive consumers into an army of vigilant, active citizen television producers, they encouraged the setting up of a certain number of CTV in Quebec since the first pilot experiment that took place at Normandin in Lake St. John in 1970-1971: the flexibility of the new equipment and its relatively modest cost allowing this, as well as the abundance of cable systems and channels unused or under-employed . . .

It is important here to state that what distinguishes local television from community television (CTV) is that the first broadcasts programmes produced by employees (with or without the participation of local individuals or groups) while community television broadcasts programmes produced precisely by local groups and private persons — programmes produced even with the help of employees, provided that the latter exercise no supervision on their preparation and their production as such. The slight difference is important. CTV therefore involves direct and total participation by citizens with powers of decision.

Although these experiments in CTV were encouraging, those responsible for Videograph realized that, by focusing on cablediffusion, they risked locking themselves into a blind alley. Indeed, the central idea of CTV is to radically democratize access to the audiovisual means of communication, to act in such a way that the community should feel concerned in the problems which belong to it. Well, through cablediffusion they reject outright precisely those who most need to be in-



By Claude-Lyse GAGNON

volved: distant populations of crowded centres where the restricted market does not justify the investment required by cable as well as the underprivileged who lack the means to pay for the installation and subscription to cablediffusion services. Further, subscription to cable opens the way for American channels, with all that this possibility includes in the line of ideological pollution. There is great risk of seeing the most vulnerable people forsake programmes of communal interest to allow themselves to be seized by the mirage of American productions and fall back into the anonymity of the traditional, passive television viewer. In short, these experiments therefore risk finding themselves in a position of unacceptable marginality or submitting to the laws of the system and contributing directly to perpetuating already existing models of local television.

With the goal of enlisting the rejected, of avoiding this contamination, and skirting troublesome situations that arise between the owners of cables (sometimes forced to invest against their will in a communal channel project) and the executives of CTV (who do not have the same aims), Videograph has decided to focus on creating a CTV system that would broadcast on Hertzian waves (normal waves, not requiring material support) by means of a low-powered antenna. The first pilot experiment has been going on in Saint-Jérôme since June 1973. If the first results are conclusive, there is every reason to believe that the station thus established in that city will quickly obtain permission to operate permanently and with complete autonomy. Perhaps they will finally succeed at Saint-Jérôme in giving a voice to those who have never really had one. Videograph's management and some local prominent citizens agreed at the outset to provide technical services and help the people in the defining of their real needs. They also foresaw a progressive establishing of the project in order to allow the population to assimilate the phenomenon and to adapt it collectively to itself. In case the people showed the wish to make the experiment permanent, they also foresaw adequate mechanisms allowing the transformation.

Departing from this base, by short-circuiting the heavy intervention of certain organizations, by activating the community around a programme that would belong to it, they will foster the establishing of a genuine CTV that, operating outside of the cablediffusion ghetto, will enjoy an inconceivable autonomy and will allow the free circulation of ideas, without these being distorted by well-known prisms: *good neighbour policy*, deference toward sponsors and interested financiers, etc.

On the technical plan, the installation can be summarized in this way. The CTV at Saint-Jérôme will in fact be a permanent mobile unit, using the half-inch size, capable of producing and broadcasting on open circuit UHF or VHF<sup>2</sup>, on direct or deferred, television programmes for the community concerned, by the use of a weak transmitter. This installation comprises a portable unit that can be plugged in at different places in the city (Polyvalent School, Cegep, City Hall, location of the permanent studio) and that allows the *direct* broadcasting of events of general interest as they happen<sup>3</sup>, as well as a transmitter and an antenna (housed in the belfrey of the Cathedral) within a radius containing a population of more than 36,000 persons. The picture-transmitter has a power of 100 watts; the sound transmitter, 10 watts<sup>4</sup>. This light material costs about \$3,000. In another connection, the minimum cost of the purchase and maintenance of the

production material (shooting equipment and montage modules) and its ease of handling make it a preferred communication system with infinite possibilities and mean that it is henceforth possible to entirely equip a permanent production mobile unit of very good quality and technically accessible to any eventual user, for about \$15,000<sup>5</sup>. Let us point out also that the method of operation on half-inch (of the Sony type, for example) no longer presents a major problem at the broadcasting level: the stability of the broadcasting signal has just been adjusted according to standards of «broadcast» quality, thanks to a synchronization signal corrector<sup>6</sup>. Sooner or later, the public network will have to be opened to the communal approach.

Videograph should therefore succeed in establishing, in the Quebec milieu, a genuine CTV where the medium would be used as an efficient means of communication and creation, and not as a simple instrument of one-way passive consumption, where the message would have come from the milieu and have been modified by this same milieu, and not by the distorting prism of middlemen of all kinds. It certainly seems that we are dealing here with an example of an experiment worthy of being closely followed. Quebec government agencies recognize that CTV in general plays the rôle of «a modern, people's cultural centre, a place of creativity that acts in the milieu as a revealer of resources, an educational environment and a new public place where the interests of the community are discussed, and, finally, a pole of reference and identification in the life of a community».

#### The present state of the project (August 1974)

Devoting themselves to an Ubuesque ping-pong game with responsibilities, governmental authorities send the ball back and forth, from Federal to Provincial, and from Ministry of Education to Ministry of Communications. The fact that this CTV is communal *and* educational, as well as the use of Hertzian waves thanks to a weak-powered transmitter, cause painful headaches for the executives of CRTC who no longer find themselves in their classification! Not to mention that this initiative risks creating an *unfortunate* precedent for the other provinces... In August 1974 they were still in the *production* phase of the project, and those in authority were waiting to be heard in public hearing by the CRTC. When this article appears, the launching of this CTV should finally be an accomplished fact. Logically, it should even be fully operational. Our governmental ping-pong players would do well to speed up the rhythm of their game in order not to be caught unawares!

Let us recall, however, that since September 1973, beginning with the interest inspired in the population assembled in a general meeting, they went ahead with the formation of production groups and work cells and they made sure of the support of different intermediary bodies that will encourage the total autonomy of this CTV incorporated as a non-profit company. Even if, on account of the accumulated delays, the *animation-demonstration* phase is found modified in relationship to the project as it was initially foreseen, it is felt that in January 1975 CTV-4 will have attained a maturity sufficient to allow it to fly under its own power.

For footnotes see French text.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

They will perhaps be called strange, these Canadians who build temples for their birds. For the Great White Goose of Tourmente Cape at Saint-Joachim, thirty miles below Quebec. For the Northern Bassan Gannet, the Cormorant, the Button-quail Gull of Bonaventure Island at Percé in Gaspé. And to design these temples, they chose young, up-to-date architects who are very close to nature.

In actual fact, this is not a matter of architectural poems dedicated only to winged migrants, but of a new concept in this urbanized world to inspire people to return to sources, to find their way to the fields and the paths through undergrowth, to leave the cities and go to learn again the name of plants, mammals, birds, tides and trees. These new Centres of Natural History, for those are their names, aim at making known the charms of this planet. As we go to museums to learn Art, we shall go to the centres to study Nature.

It is the responsibility of the Canadian Wildlife Service, Ministry of the Environment, to protect the migratory birds and, as it is this service that creates these centres, it builds them in the places where the most beautiful migratory birds stop or settle. A few years from now there will be ten of them across Canada, rightly in the most typical regions.

#### At Tourmente Cape

"When I saw the site where the first Natural History Centre of Quebec was to be built, I felt an enchantment, you know this kind of spell that the old sailors spoke of... The Great White Geese had not returned, but I imagined them. I waited for them. Then I designed the centre almost while hoping for them," says architect Pierre Marquis of the firm Lavigne et Marquis at Thetford Mines.

At the foot of Tourmente Cape, beside the La Friponne stream, he sketched an A-form building. Then he added wings to it. That is, observation decks and foot-bridges so that visitors might see mountain and river, marshland and prairies and especially the lovely birds when they spread out like clouds of wind above the shores. Choosing stone of Châteaumarquis, cedar from British Columbia and the forests of the east, mixing his concrete with the sands of the Beupré coast, he did not want his concrete, spatial ensemble to be like a castle in Spain in Canada. He outlined a framework whose arrangement is first of all functional, its appearance close to décor, its basic form recalling Indian tents. Briefly, he pictured a building appropriate for its country.

"I was disappointed, however", architect Marquis confides. "I would have wanted the stone to be worked as it was in the past, as was done at Place Royale in Quebec, as it is seen on old houses. But time was flying and this was impossible."

Made up chiefly of an exhibition hall where specimens of flora and fauna are to be viewed, and a living room presenting landscapes, the Centre also comprises a cinema, a laboratory and, of course, offices.

Wood and stone. Outside like inside. They seem to be of a velvety gold, especially the interior walls, when the brightness of the day sends rays through the glass bay window of the upper storey and gently transforms the stone as it makes planks and beams sing.



At Saint-Joachim, where they have a fertile imagination and a taste for the picturesque word, they have given the Centre the name of The Cathedral of the Great White Goose. For fun. Very happy, at heart, that finally the Great Geese should have their poem. For what a long time they have been filling the whole region with wonder! There, at Tourmente Cape, it is not the swallows that herald the spring and embellish the autumn, it is the beautiful white birds with black wing tips . . .

According to the point of view, this Centre is a bridge leading to a rocky, carved cavern. It can also be a sail-boat with outriggers and several hulls. Or a house of cards with fragile ramparts, sloping walls and strange corbelled arches. Or again, a play of shifting of volumes against gaps carved in space. According to the point of view . . .

#### At Percé

Conceived by architects Rodrigue Guité, Denis Lamarre and Jacques Marchand of the Montreal firm of Jodoin, Lamarre, Pratte and Associates, the Percé Natural History Centre, situated on the hillside at the west of the village, near Ireland Road, is formed by four pavilions of almost identical structure, all of natural cedar.

"We insisted above all on a vernacular construction", explains architect Denis Lamarre. "On resemblance to the houses on the edge of the sea. Look at the little villages of the Gaspé Peninsula, look at the houses on Bonaventure Island. They are small rather than large, often modest but, most of the time, with fine lines. It was while we were photographing them that the idea of pavilions occurred to us. We did not want to compete with Percé Rock. We

wished to be a part of the décor, like the fauna. To animate it, in short . . ."

The four pavilions of cedar planks, undressed timber not planed, with roofs of the same wood, rise like a rare four-leaf clover, at different levels. Linked together by tiers and ramps, each was placed to show the landscape to the visitor, so that he might discover it gradually and in all its fullness, because from the Centre there is a view, all around, on Mont Sainte-Anne, the famous rock, Bonaventure Island and the splendid but not weeping bay of Percé. If Percé were a Greek amphitheatre looking over Bassan Goose Island, the Centre would be set on the upper tiers, right on the axis of view.

The forms are whimsical. If the volume is in proportion to the houses of the fishermen of that area, the forms are in no way conventional. They play with space, cutting the sky, capering on the mountain, paying no great attention to symmetry, pirouetting for fun, loving the dizzy departure of the unexpected.

This is integrated contemporary architecture. And sophisticated in its creativity, its research into the authentic, in its natural finish which, as the years pass, will take on this whitened and so-soft gray of the log fences in the fields and near the sea, because they have been salted and freed of salt.

Three pavilions will be open to visitors, while the fourth will be reserved for the laboratory of biologists and students who will carry out research there. Approaching along Ireland Road, the visitors will find a route that will delight them but which, at the beginning, was considered, calculated. From the parking lot they will be able to go only to the first pavilion, the one for information and exhibitions. The

first surprise on going out: the rock which appears as in a frame, a frame formed by the second and third pavilions. The view is breathtaking. Upon then entering the second pavilion, the Salon, one has all Percé before one's eyes.

The third pavilion will be used as a cinema or a lecture hall.

"However, since the aim of these Natural History Centres is not to keep visitors inside," continues M. Lamarre, "but rather to have them take advantage of nature, a landscape architect, M. Georges Daudelin, has planned the surrounding landscape, made up of trees and indigenous plants, lawns (very few) and pebbles of the shores. The trees serve to separate the volumes, to mask the extraordinary panorama at first, in order to put all the emphasis on the pavilions, to lead the people toward them and make them discover there the beauty of the environment."

As at Tourmente Cape, the visit does not end with the centre; if one wishes, it can be continued in the company of naturalists on the nearby paths, on the Percé shore and on Bonaventure Island, as far as the colonies of gannets. Every day of the summer the naturalists in the employ of the Canadian Wild Life Service guide groups in this way up hill and down dale.

Each different from the other but nevertheless very well fitted to their respective décors, the two new natural history centres of Cape Tourmente and Percé open the door to the return to nature, with the invitation to come and see them take off and spread their wings, those big birds that bear the names Great White Goose, Cormorant, Northern Gannet, Button-quail, Sea Gull with the black coat . . .

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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