

Le nouveau mécénat: La collection de peinture canadienne de la CIL

New Patrons of Art the CIL Collection of Canadian Painting

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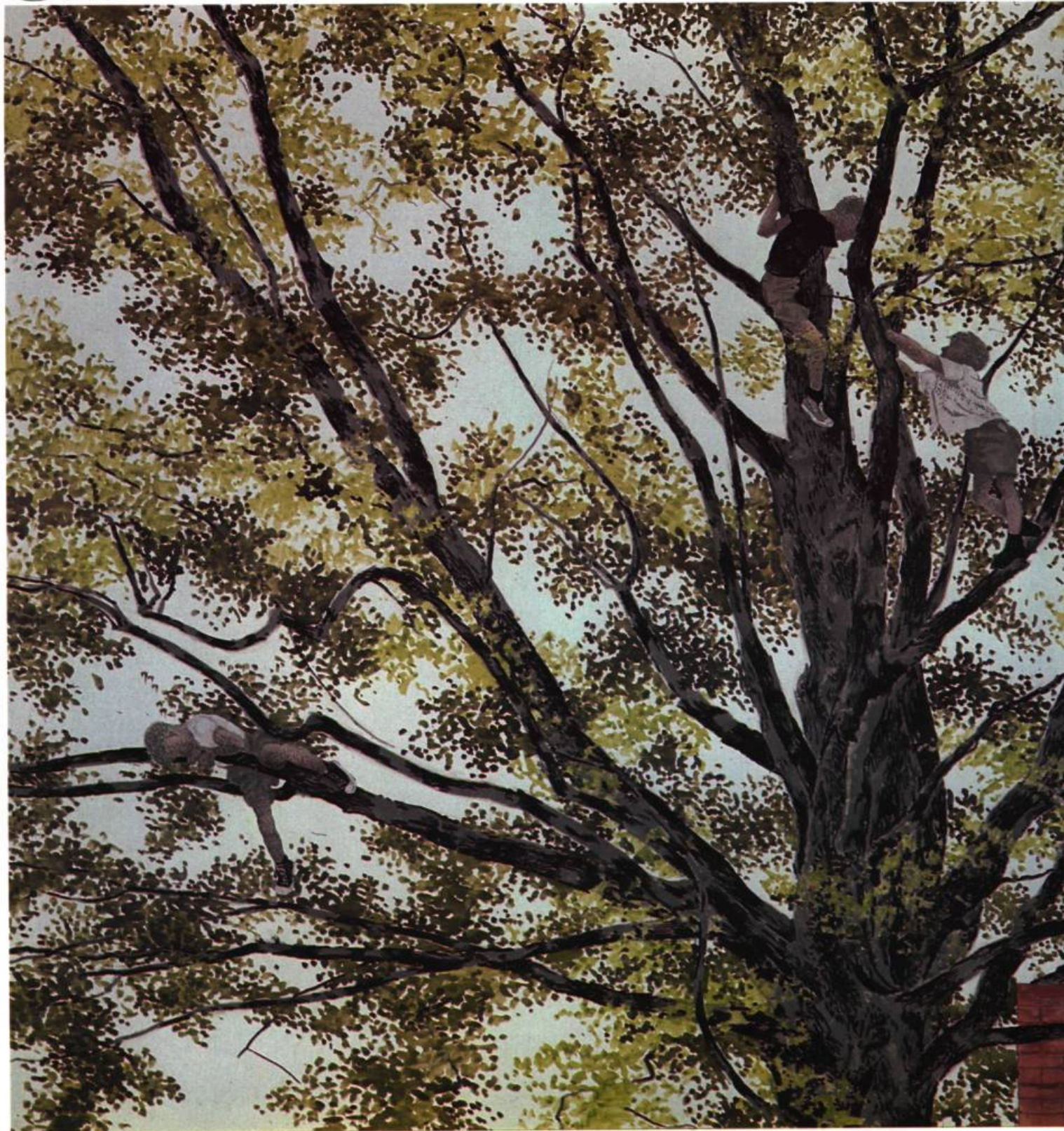
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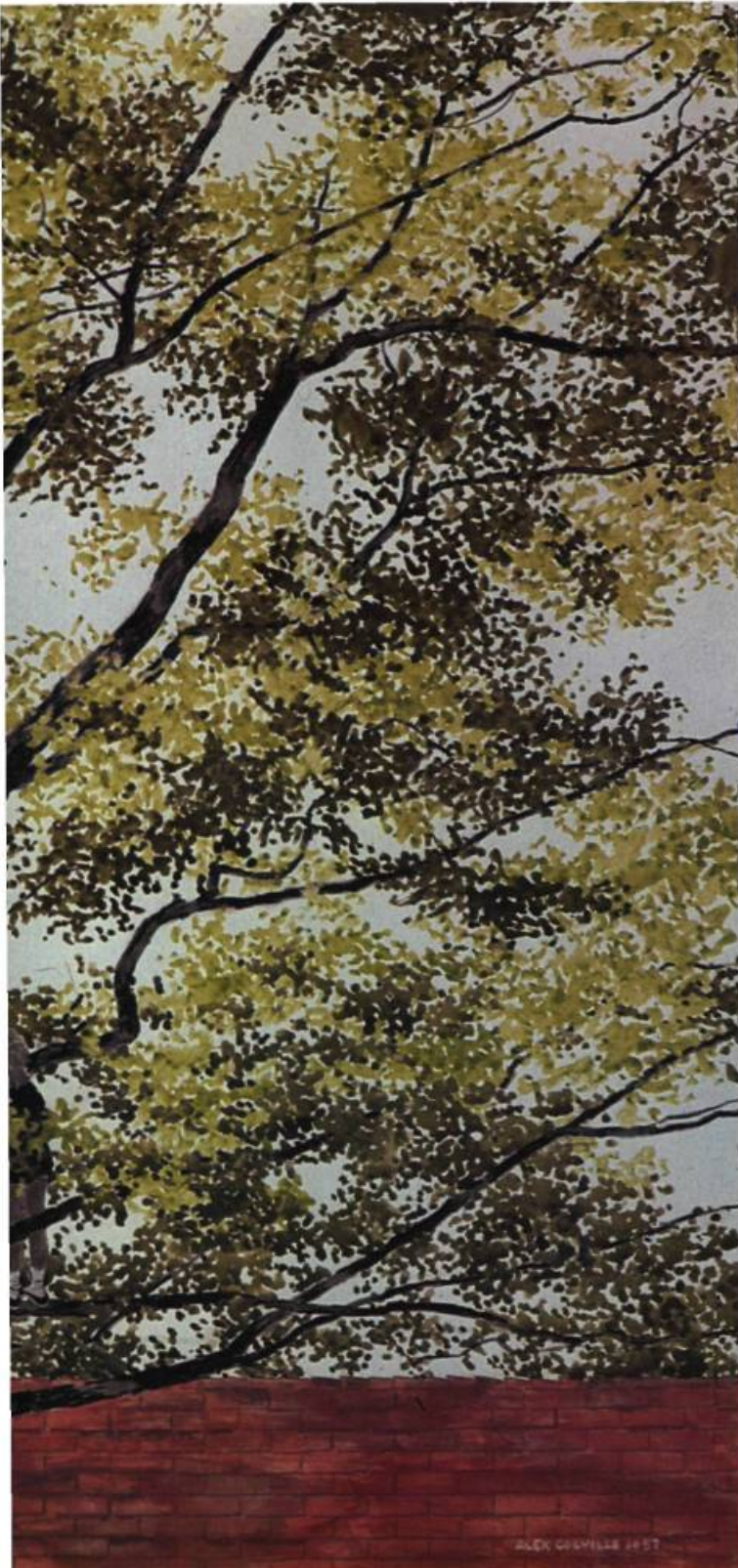
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Le nouveau mécénat: La collection de peinture canadienne de la CIL





Les éléments les plus dynamiques du monde des affaires sont conscients des besoins sociaux et culturels — c'est-à-dire de la qualité de la vie — des populations qui les entourent, et cela constitue, pour notre pays, un potentiel énorme.

(Charles Lussier, Conférence prononcée à Toronto, le 7 mai 1976, devant l'Institut de Recherche en Dons et en Affaires Publiques.)

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1. Alex COLVILLE
Children in a Tree, 1957.
Caséine et peinture à l'œuf; 49 cm x 71.

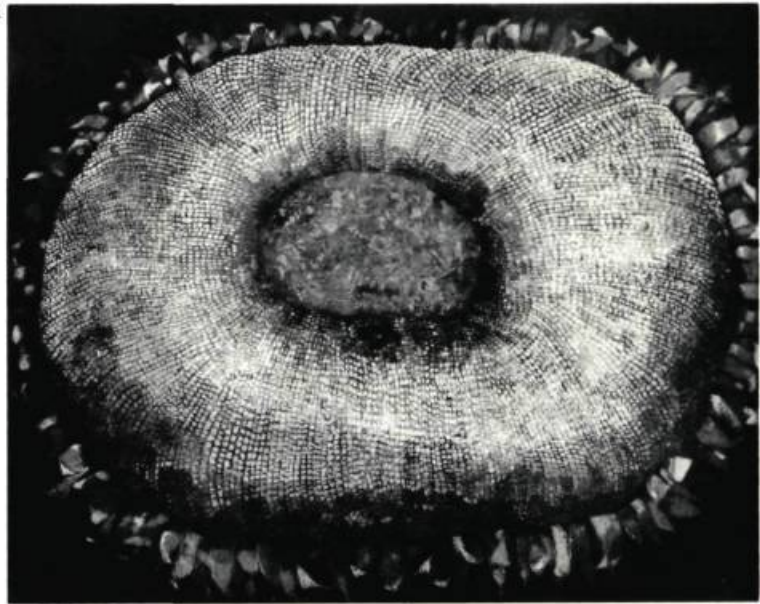
2. Harold TOWN
Sky Panel, 1960.
Huile sur toile; 1 m 73 x 1,98.

3. Kazuo NAKAMURA
Three Plants, 1961-1962.
Huile sur toile; 61 cm x 76.

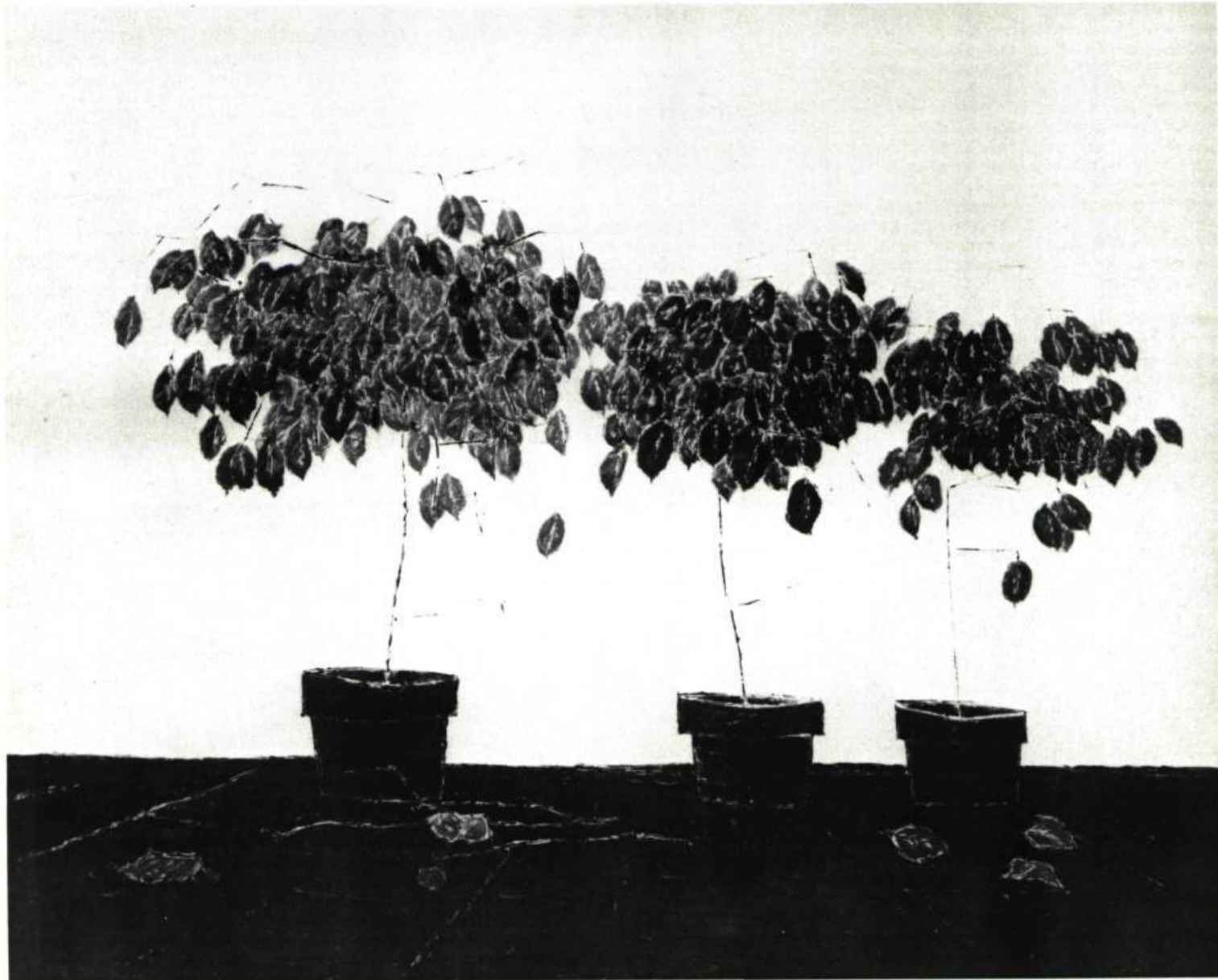
4. Ghitta CAISERMAN-ROTH
Sunflower No. 5, 1965.
Huile sur carton; 1 m 27 x 1,83.

5. Louise SCOTT
Les Jeux N° 1, 1968-1969.
Huile sur carton; 1 m 23 x 1,53.

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Les grandes collections d'art du monde sont nées de la passion d'un ou de quelques amateurs enthousiastes, disposant par ailleurs de puissants moyens d'acquisition: conquérants victorieux, empereurs et monarques, pontifes et prélats, podestats et banquiers, magnats de la finance ou de l'industrie — parmi lesquels on reconnaît plus d'un nom fameux dans l'histoire, Léon de Médicis, Éléonore d'Este, Jules II, Léon X, François I^{er}, Mazarin, Charles I^{er}, Catherine II, Frédéric II, Napoléon Bonaparte, J. P. Morgan, Albert C. Barnes et Paul Getty. Tôt ou tard, ces collections vont devenir la propriété de l'État, par legs, par achat, par appropriation ou par simple faveur. Il était arrivé plus d'une fois d'ailleurs que la prise de possession de tel chef-d'œuvre, par exemple, les marbres du Parthénon, la Néfertété polychrome de Berlin-Dalheim et certains grands Vénitiens du Louvre ait été fortement entachée d'irrégularité.

De nos jours, plus d'un parvenu collectionne des œuvres d'art pour s'auroleer de prestige et aussi parce que ce serait, dit-on, «un bon placement»: mais, avec la disparition des aristocraties, avec la hausse des impôts et l'orientation des nations vers un socialisme plus ou moins mitigé, on peut se demander si l'ère des grandes collections n'est pas à la veille de se terminer. En revanche, dans les pays véritablement démocratiques où la libre entreprise a encore droit de cité, la montée des sociétés anonymes, que l'État convie en termes non équivoques à encourager les arts, a fait apparaître de nouveaux mécènes, de nouveaux collectionneurs, sans nom cette fois. Tels sont, dans notre milieu, la Compagnie Rothmans de Pall Mall Canada Limitée, la Power Corporation of Canada et la Canadian Industries Limited, plus connue sous son nom abrégé, la C.I.L.

La collection de peinture canadienne de la C.I.L. est d'institution récente et groupe un nombre restreint de tableaux. Pour célébrer, en 1962, le centenaire de l'entreprise, les dirigeants décidèrent d'acquérir une certaine quantité de toiles de peintres canadiens dans le but de les exposer à travers le Canada et d'inciter le public à connaître et à admirer les ouvrages de nos meilleurs artistes; par ricochet, c'était là une façon élégante de servir le prestige de la compagnie. A leur invitation, le Dr Evan Turner, alors directeur du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal et maintenant conservateur en chef du Musée de Philadelphie, assembla plusieurs œuvres picturales canadiennes dont un jury d'experts retint une quarantaine: celles-ci allaient constituer le noyau initial de la collection. Quand, par la suite, M. Russell Harper, historien de la peinture canadienne, succéda au Dr Turner en qualité de conseiller artistique, d'autres tableaux vinrent s'ajouter aux premiers, et aujourd'hui la collection en compte un peu plus de soixante-quinze.

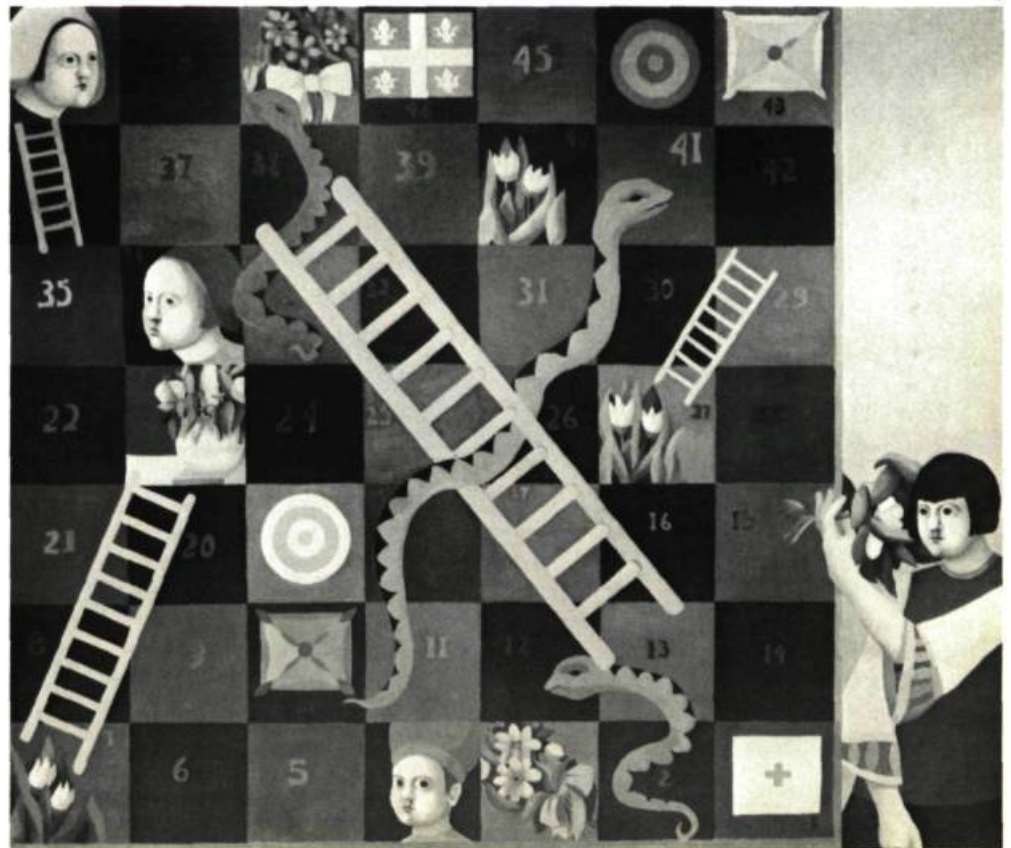
Les directeurs de la C.I.L. ne tiennent pas à ce que la collection soit trop considérable, non pas faute de fonds, tant s'en faut, mais afin de lui garder une plus grande mobilité et de faciliter son transport d'un bout à l'autre du Canada. A cet effet, des techniciens de la C.I.L. ont mis au point une caisse spéciale qui assure à chaque tableau une protection parfaite à tous points de vue. Depuis 1962, la Collection a beaucoup voyagé et a été exposée dans plus de quatre-vingt-cinq villes et municipalités canadiennes, souvent plus d'une fois dans un même lieu.

La Collection se propose d'être toujours à la page, de refléter les tendances dominantes de la peinture canadienne la plus actuelle et de grouper des œuvres de premier ordre de nos artistes les plus marquants. C'est pourquoi elle est constamment remise à jour, et les responsables en écartent périodiquement quelques toiles, soit parce qu'elles sont déjà un peu anciennes — tel sort fut réservé, par exemple, à Marc-Aurèle Fortin, à Robert Pilot, à Jack Humphrey et à E. J. Hughes — soit pour les remplacer par des œuvres plus caractéristiques d'un même peintre, soit par suite d'une réaction plus ou moins favorable du public visiteur.

La Canadian Industries Limited exerçant son rayonnement d'une extrémité à l'autre du territoire canadien, l'on comprend que dans le choix des œuvres de sa collection la compagnie ait dû, jusqu'à un certain point, tenir compte des particularismes régionaux et peut-être se plier à certains compromis. Une telle réunion de tableaux ne résulte donc pas de l'enthousiasme fervent d'un seul collectionneur, un duc d'Aumale ou un Chester Dale par exemple, mais s'avère la manifestation pondérée d'un éclectisme concerté, d'une politique d'acquisition sage d'où la diplomatie n'a sans doute pas été exclue. Si l'on dresse un inventaire de la collection de peintures de la C.I.L., l'on s'aperçoit que toutes les provinces du Canada, sauf l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard et les Territoires du Yukon et du Nord-Ouest, y sont représentées, que la liste des artistes comprend environ soixante-cinq noms, la part du lion étant accordée à la province de Québec avec vingt-cinq élus, l'Ontario venant au second rang avec dix-huit. Il importe de préciser toutefois qu'on n'a admis aucun artiste pour

des critères strictement géographiques mais bien en raison des mérites esthétiques réels de ses travaux. De même, les promoteurs de la Collection désirent y faire entrer des œuvres représentatives des courants dominants de la peinture canadienne actuelle devaient forcément se limiter et s'en tenir aux peintres et aux mouvements les plus importants. Ils risquaient par là de mécontenter plus d'un artiste, et Dieu sait combien d'entre eux ont l'épiderme sensible. Les responsables de la Collection ont donc fait montre de beaucoup de circonspection et ont été très prudents dans leurs choix, s'en tenant surtout aux peintres reconnus ou arrivés, aux écoles et aux groupements accrédités en milieu officiel, et l'on pourrait leur reprocher de manquer de hardiesse pour avoir laissé de côté les hérauts les plus agressifs de l'avant-garde aussi bien que les peintres conservateurs d'hier. Ainsi donc, s'ils ont fait une large place aux plasticiens, aux tachistes et aux hyperréalistes, ils ont à peu près ignoré les surréalistes et les défenseurs de l'art conceptuel et minimal (exception faite de Ronald Bloore). Fait singulier, la collection de peintures de cette grande société anonyme ne contient aucun portrait, aucun visage humain identifiable.

La Collection de la C.I.L. comprend un peu plus de quatre-vingts tableaux exécutés par près de soixante-dix artistes différents. Parmi ceux-ci, une soixantaine sont représentés par une seule toile, sept autres — dont Jean-Paul Lemieux, Jean McEwen, Alex Colville, Harold Town, D. P. Brown, Ronald Bloore et Jack Shadbolt par deux, et un seul, Esther Warkow, par trois, mais il s'agit, dans ce dernier cas, d'une œuvre en forme de triptyque. Le choix d'un seul tableau par artiste peut prêter à critique et n'être pas toujours juste, le talent de



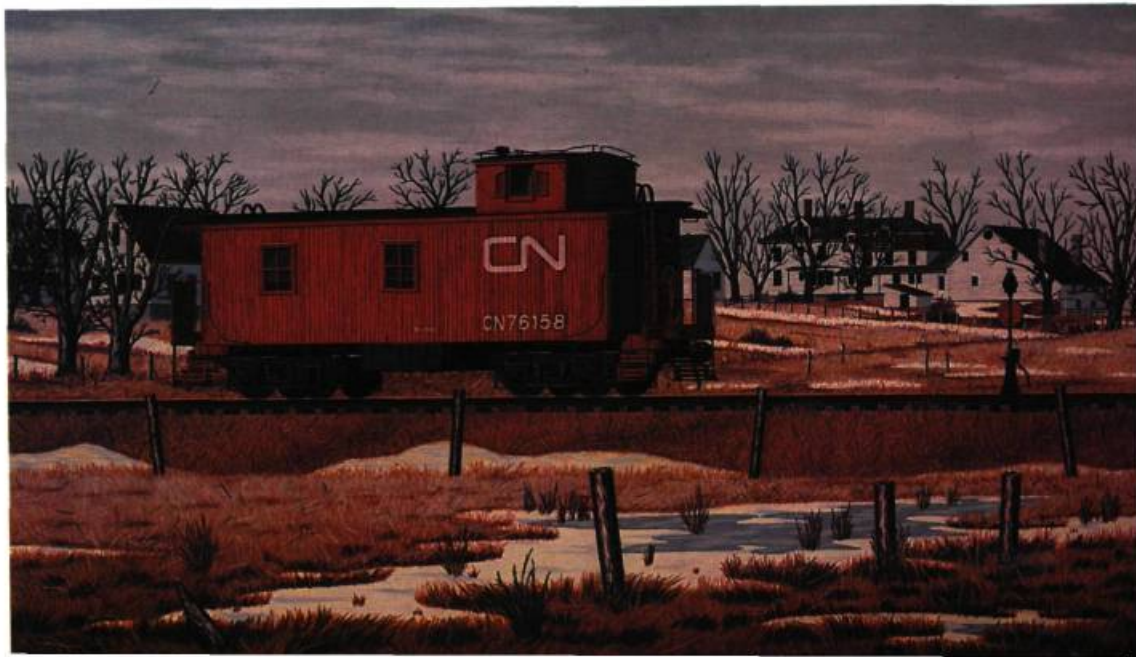


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6. Ronald BLOORE
Homage to Matisse, 1962.
Acrylique sur carton; 2 m x 1,25.

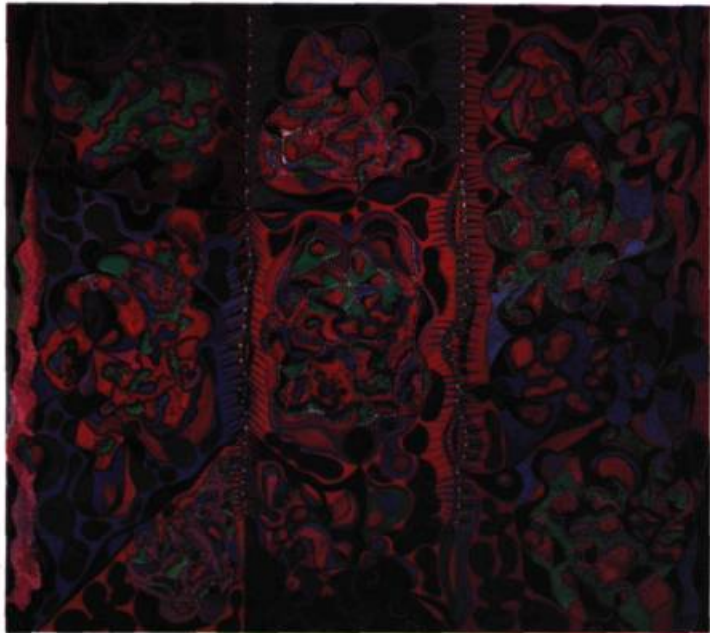
7. Glenn ADAMS
76158, 1964.
Acrylique sur carton; 53 cm x 91,4

8. Jack SHADBOLT
Islamic Memory, 1964-1965.
Huile et lucite sur toile; 1 m 24 x 1,50.

9. Reynald CONNOLLY
La Pendule, 1965-1966.
Acrylique sur toile; 61 cm x 91,4.

10. Alfred PELLAN
Phosphorescence, 1961.
Huile sur carton; 1 m 17 x 1,29.

11. Jori SMITH
Possessions, 1976.
Huile sur toile; 61 cm x 91,4.



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Voici la liste complète des toiles de peintres du Québec faisant partie de la collection de peinture de la C.I.L.:

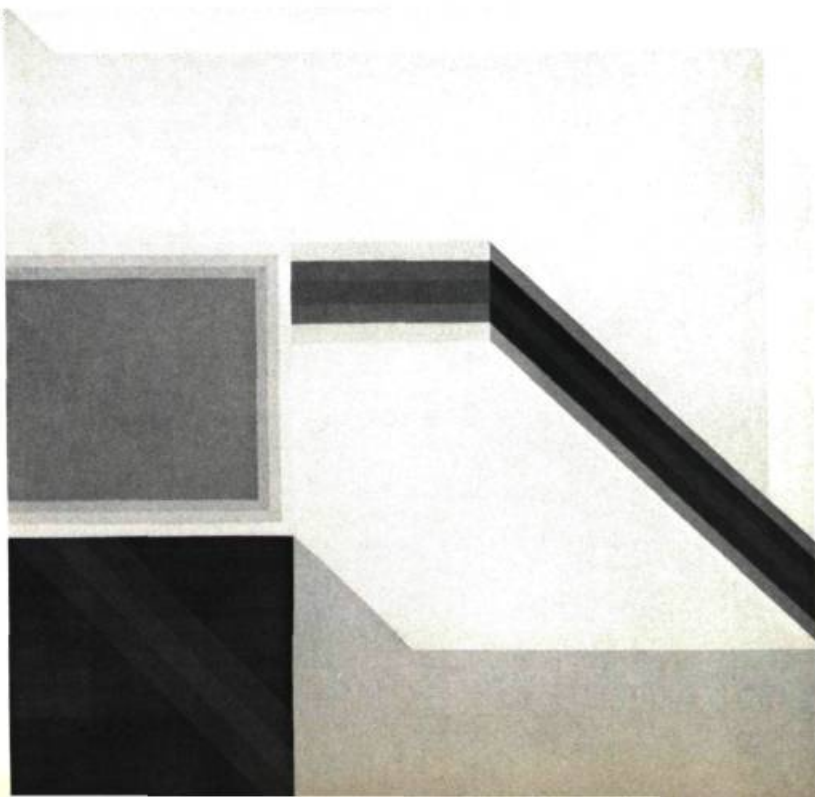
Glen Adams, *76158* (1964)
Léon Bellefleur, *Angles perlés* (1961)
Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, *Sunflower No. 5* (1965)
Yehudi Chaki, *The Winner* (1967)
Reynald Connolly, *La Pendule* (1965-1966)
Marcelle Ferron, *Peinture* (1960)
John Fox, *Composition with Two Forms* (1970)
Claude Girard, *Champs* (1970)
Chris Hayward, *Bridge End* (1969)
Jacques Hurtubise, *Rosa Rose* (1974)
Denis Juneau, *Fond rouge* (1975)
Patrick Landsley, *Winter Light No. 1* (1973)
Jean-Paul Lemieux, *La Sœur blanche* (1961) et *Solstice d'hiver* (1961)
Rita Letendre, *Sonar* (1973)
Jean McEwen, *Midi, temps rouge* (1960) et *Fil à plomb traversant le rouge* (1961)
Guido Molinari, *Mutation asymétrique rouge foncé* (1964-1965)
Alfred Pellan, *Phosphorescence* (1961)
Jean-Paul Riopelle, *Composition* (1957)
Goodridge Roberts, *Port-au-Persil, Québec* (1961-1962)
Louise Scott, *Série des Jeux N° 1* (1968-1969)
Jori Smith, *Possessions* (1975)
Philip Surrey, *Brown Van* (1968-1969)
Miyuki Tanobe, *Samedi matin, rue Saint-Laurent* (1974)
Claude Tousignant, *Stochastique en vert* (1965)
Arthur Villeneuve, *La Danse du carnaval* (1972)



12. Philip SURREY
Brown Van, 1968-1969.
Huile sur toile; 78 cm 7 x 1 m 4.

13. Gordon SMITH
Rhoda, 1969-1970.
Acrylique sur toile; 61 cm x 91,4.

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nombre d'entre eux comportant plusieurs faces toutes aussi séduisantes les unes que les autres.

Enfin, si l'on examine la liste des artistes acceptés dans la collection, l'on y déplore maintes omissions: pour les Maritimes, Jack Humphrey et Tom Forrestal; pour le Québec, Lise Gervais, Paul André, Stanley Cosgrove, Jacques de Tonnancour, Albert Dumouchel (disparu depuis peu, mais toujours actuel), Benoît East, Roland Giguère, Claude Goulet, Alan Glass, Allan Harrison, Louis Jaque, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Louis Muhlstock, René Richard et Fernand Toupin, tous aussi importants à notre sens que certains des artistes québécois qu'on y a acceptés comme Yehudi Chaki, Miyuki Tanabe ou Arthur Villeneuve; pour l'Ontario, William Ronald et Robert Hedrick (qui en firent partie, mais dont on n'a pas retenu les toiles), Jack Bush, Dennis Burton, Greg Curnoe, Albert J. Franck, Gershon Ishkowitz, John Meredith, Gordon Rayner et Joyce Wieland; pour l'Ouest et la Colombie britannique, Takao Tanabe, B. C. Binning, Claude Breeze et Iain Baxter. Au surplus, l'on pourrait, ce me semble, accentuer le caractère canadien de la collection en y accueillant des artistes autochtones comme Norval Morrisseau, Norman Laliberté et les dessinateurs inuit de Baker Lake.

Ces réserves faites et en tenant compte des limites que les responsables de la collection se sont assignées, il nous reste à en admirer les œuvres maîtresses et à en signaler les points forts.

En guise de commentaire, l'on peut considérer *Les Angles perlés* de Léon Bellefleur, *Le Solstice d'hiver* et *La Sœur blanche* de Jean-Paul Lemieux, la *Composition 1957* de Jean-Paul Riopelle, *Port-au-Persil* de Goodridge Roberts et *Brown Van* de Philip Surrey comme des exemples très valables du talent de ces artistes majeurs. De même, *Sonar* de Rita Letendre est une de ses plus heureuses réussites dans sa nouvelle manière (perspectives grandioses de trajectoires se joignant dans l'infini spatial) et une œuvre très soigneusement exécutée dans une belle harmonie de verts, de noirs, de jaunes et de bleus. Chez les cadets, *Fond rouge* de Denis Juneau, *Champs* de Claude Girard, *La Pendule* de Reynald Connolly, *Série les jeux N° 1* de Louise Scott et *Bridge End* de Chris Hayward sont des œuvres originales qui dénotent de véritables tempéraments d'artistes. Parmi les toiles les plus saisissantes, le caboose 76158 de l'hyperréaliste Glenn Adams et l'énorme *Sunflower No. 5* de Ghitta Caiserman-Roth nous font vivement

éprouver, par delà un métier très appliqué, la hantise poétique qui s'exhale de ces ouvrages. *La Danse du carnaval* d'Arthur Villeneuve et *Samedi matin, rue Saint-Laurent* de Miyuki Tanobe sont parmi les meilleurs tableaux de deux peintres que nous n'apprécions guère et sont tout imprégnés d'une forte saveur populaire et folklorique dont les promoteurs de la collection semblent être particulièrement friands. Mais l'œuvre maîtresse chez les peintres du Québec, c'est le splendide *Midi, temps rouge* de Jean McEwen, vaste composition au coloris éclatant, toute rayonnante de majesté et de joie, et qui représente à notre avis un sommet dans l'art de McEwen et même dans toute la peinture canadienne. Ce grand tableau décore la salle du conseil de la compagnie et, à cause de ses dimensions imposantes, ne fait jamais partie des expositions itinérantes de la collection.

Parmi les envois des Maritimes, il faut retenir *Saint John Harbour* de Bruno Bobak, artiste en résidence au Nouveau-Brunswick et renommé pour ses panoramas de villes à la Kokoschka dans lesquels se délecte sa verve de coloriste. Quant à la *English Beach* de sa femme Molly Lamb Bobak, l'on y observe un grouillement illégitime comparable à celui des Tobey de début mais l'on n'y retrouve pas son exubérance colorée habituelle.

Woman at a Dresser de Christopher Pratt, le réaliste magique de Terre-Neuve, est une de ses toiles les plus populaires et les plus charmées, où l'on goûte la délicatesse du dessin et la douceur des teintes.

Milk Truck et *Children in a Tree* sont deux tableaux typiques, mais de qualité moyenne, d'Alexander Colville, le leader néo-écossais de l'école hyperréaliste canadienne.

L'Ontario est représentée par près de vingt peintres, dont plusieurs hyperréalistes, Ken Danby, D. P. Brown, Willis Romanow, Wim Blom et David Mayrs. Les têtes d'affiche, Kazuo Nakamura (*Three Plants*), Graham Coughtry (*Dark Room*), Tony Urquhart (*Near Wickham, Side Road No. 1*), Michæl Snow (*Black and White*), Kenneth Lochhead (*Root Pile*), et John Chambers (*Three Sisters, Waiting*), nous montrent des échantillons caractéristiques, sinon exceptionnels, de leur talent. Le *Hauling Sheaves* de William Kurelek, tout pénétré de la candeur particulière à cet artiste visionnaire, nous fait bien sentir, par l'audace de sa composition excentrique, l'immensité et la monotonie de la Prairie. Parmi les peintres ontariens, nous accordons notre préférence à Harold Town, le peintre talentueux et versatile de To-

ronto, qui se manifeste à son meilleur dans *Homage to Cubism*, d'une grande finesse de texture, et surtout dans son superbe *Sky Panel* où triomphent ses dons de coloriste et son sens du tableau, à la belle harmonie bleue de Jock Macdonald et aux réseaux précieux et délicats de Ralph et de Brian Taylor.

Les œuvres les plus remarquables des peintres de l'Ouest sont, à notre sens, *Interior at Night* de Christiane Pflug, avec son échappée mystérieuse sur la nuit, la *Prairie Farm* de Marion Nicoll, dont l'extrême simplicité géométrique rappelle certaines études de granges de Georgia O'Keefe et les deux Ronald Bloore, *Homage to Matisse* et surtout *Triple Sun Panel*, d'une infinie délicatesse d'écriture.

Si l'on remarque dans la participation de la Colombie britannique la présence de quelques «hard edge painters» tels que Gordon Smith et Bodo Pfeiffer, la palme revient, selon nous, à Toni Onley (*Winter Landscape*), à Brian Fisher avec son exquis *Window*, création raffinée et véritable chef-d'œuvre de symétrie, à la flamboyante *Winter Figure* de Donald Jarvis et à *Islamic Memory* de Jack Shadbolt où semblent se prélasser allègrement des hiéroglyphes dans l'atmosphère chatoyante d'une miniature orientale.

Pour clore ce bilan sommaire, il est intéressant de constater les réactions du public canadien en présence de cette collection. Sa prédilection va aux hyperréalistes et aux noms connus comme Jean-Paul Lemieux, Alfred Pelan, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Harold Town et Jack Shadbolt et, parmi les toiles les plus populaires, dix sont l'œuvre d'hyperréalistes, Alex Colville en tête, et l'on retrouve les deux Lemieux, les deux naïfs Arthur Villeneuve et Miyuki Tanobe et deux tableaux qui illustrent l'un des jeux, *Série des Jeux, N° 1* de Louise Scott et l'autre, le climat de la fête, *Adam & Eve & Pinch Me* par Myfanwy Phillips. S'il fallait accorder créance au vieil adage «Vox populi, vox Dei», pareil verdict serait pénible pour tels critiques qui n'admettent en art que l'insolite ou le subliminal.

Dans son cadre délibérément limité, la Collection de peinture canadienne gracieusement mise à la disposition du public du Canada par la C.I.L. a bien servi la cause de l'art dans notre milieu, d'une part en encourageant nos peintres, d'autre part en les faisant mieux connaître, non seulement des amateurs mais aussi des profanes. C'est là une initiative heureuse qu'on ne saurait trop louer et à laquelle nous souhaitons des imitateurs nombreux.

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differing in its very principles of Automatism, a group of young painters had just led art in a new direction. This action was sound and thus avoided the pitfalls of another academism. That such a spontaneous and lyrical gesture would so lead toward pictorial organization taken back to more severity through sharp line and pure colour was neither a regression nor a condemnation of Automatism, but rather the proof of its success. This is what the first plasticians, Belzile, Toupin, Jérôme and Jauran (Rodolphe de Repentigny) had understood, who, in their *Manifesto* of 1955, rendered direct homage to Bouduas.

From the time of his return to Montreal in 1956, Denis Juneau joined the plastician aesthetic, not in a combative fashion militant in the extreme, but with the calm perseverance of one who has found the means of giving his artistic intentions a coherent direction and who recognizes no other demand than to continue, without having to justify himself or explain himself other than by his words and his efforts.

Art founded on economy of gesture and means of visual expression brought back to elementary geometrical forms could only attract an artist forced by personal circumstances to live in a world of *talkers*, himself deprived of hearing and having only the minimum of spoken language necessary for verbal communication. Only relentless control of his body and his gestures having allowed him to escape the limited life to which, in other times, an indifferent world would have condemned him, it is not surprising to see that Juneau has never been at ease in the gestual; the few pictorial attempts made in this direction are valuable endeavours but never have the impact of more constructed and more intellectual canvases.

Juneau is a plastician by temperament, perhaps, or through interior necessity, but certainly not in order to sacrifice to passing fashions that often take the place of creative thought. In 1958, already, Rodolphe de Repentigny had written of Juneau that it would be wrong to say of him, "He is a painter, a sculptor or a designer when he is a *plastician* in the broad sense of the term; that is, an artist who applies form, intensity and rhythm to the stretched material"². This explanation was still valid twenty years later, to such a degree that, speaking of the *Spectrorames* exhibited at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Léo Rosshandler said that Juneau "displays in his *colour-spectacle* the persistence of the concepts of the *Montreal Plasticians*, particularly in the matter of the clarity of colours and the strictness of forms"³. This fidelity of the *Plastician* is demonstrated by respect for the strict bidimensional quality of the picture and the reduction of formal language to geometric elements encircled by sharp contours.

Juneau's tools are the hard-edge ones: masking tape, masks and stencils which allow the defining of the colour fields without smudging; and this colour is applied with a brush or a roller, but also with a shaving brush in order to avoid the tool's leaving its mark and so that nothing on the canvas should show the shadow of a texture or an impasto. As for the canvas, it is a closely woven one stretched on a frame of wood made according to the painter's specific instructions. It is interesting, when one has the opportunity of seeing a whole series of Juneau's canvases, to realize to what extent an artist who has a feeling for materials becomes more and more demanding as he understands them and as he attempts to thoroughly exploit all their qualities. And seeing new media appear, he is able to modify aesthetic concep-

tions. Thus, with acrylic that he has already been using for several years, Juneau can, if he wishes, work directly on unprepared canvas without recourse to gesso indispensable when oil is used. Colour is then directly impregnated into the fibres: this is the *staining* that was much used in the United States during the fifties. Canvas treated in this way becomes very strong ... "and washable", Juneau adds, laughing; he does not conceal from himself that it was because he had at his command such versatile material that he was able to throw himself into experiments in participation such as *Pendules* or *Spectrorames*.

Here it is that we must pay attention to the activity of forms, because the result is in no way the static, inert work that we might perhaps be tempted to associate with art that borrows its simplifications and its severe construction from geometry. The element of colour, as important to Juneau as the element of form, brings to the picture more than just the harmony of contrasts or complementaries. Arranged in series, rhythmized according to a skillful alternation, these circles, squares and ovals become, through the effect of the persistence of retinal images, possessed of a life such that it is impossible for a viewer to gaze at them for more than a second without a wild, fluttering dance being set off behind his eyelids. So the picture may be complete, but it is never finished, since the eye, resting on its surface, rebuilds it incessantly in a movement that ends only a few seconds after the viewer has closed his eyes or has looked elsewhere. Therefore the picture rests only when one stops looking at it. For Juneau, the use of the principles of optic art for such a purpose, beyond the interest of pure pictorial research, is a subtle way of making of the spectator no longer a passive being but one who participates through his view in a creative gesture unceasingly renewed. In this way a sort of connivance is established: the artist is no longer the one who nourishes contemplation by furnishing visually delightful subjects, but the one who encourages to a sort of playful communication.

This desire to extend the creative act to the viewer was carried out on two occasions in a concrete way with *Spectrorames* (1970) and *Pendules* (1973). Elements in bright, varied colours that one could manipulate and place at will to compose arrangements that escaped the wish of the artist, this was a happy departure from the "Please do not touch" that museums are usually obliged to adopt as a rule. But it is perhaps not known that some similar experiments were attempted outside of the usual exhibition locations. So it is that a Golden Age Centre in Richmond owes a decorative and magnetic mural panel to Denis Juneau: its coloured elements can unceasingly be manipulated at the will of the viewer, according to the weather, or simply any way at all, in passing, for fun. The sense of the playful is perhaps as strong in Juneau as his desire to find means of communication other than verbal with his peers. Let us not forget that there exists also at Cartierville, at Méry Park, a playground where children can climb, slide, frolic in a labyrinth invented for them by Juneau. This construction at the children's level is perhaps a kind of answer to those who protest that art should come down out of the museums into the streets. Art in the parks is already an important step, and it happily changes for us the statues that pigeons are always the only ones to make use of. One thinks of the sequence in the film *Bozarts* where one sees the children take possession of sculptures, as if they were

a huge toy, cast aside by a small town that had no use for sculpture gardens on its territory.

This Juneau who shapes concrete space for the enjoyment of children is the same man who was an apprentice goldsmith at the dawn of his career; the difference between jewellery and sculpture is perhaps only one of size or material. In a parallel fashion to the activity of Juneau the painter, there is that of Juneau the sculptor who has never given up. Sculptures in metal, one of which was exhibited at the Musée d'Art Contemporain this summer, are witness to this; in the same way as mural compositions adorn a number of schools and public buildings (at the Institute of Technology in the Jacques-Cartier Cité des Jeunes, at the one in the Vaudreuil Cité des Jeunes, to give only two examples).

In this life centered on a never denied, never interrupted creative activity, financial stability and livelihood have never been assured, except by a few grants, by anything else but industrial design and collaboration with architects' and decorators' firms. This is how Juneau has been able to avoid the danger that lies in wait for all our creators, which explains why many of them disappear from the walls of our galleries in spite of promising starts, sometimes for a long period and sometimes forever. That Juneau, as he said three years ago, hopes to devote as much time as possible to his personal and theoretical work in painting and sculpture is not surprising; that he also accepts freelance commissions from architects and decorators does not carry him very far away from his aesthetic preoccupations: the solutions he succeeds in offering in these domains are often very close to his personal aims. Besides, one has only to study the list of solo or group exhibitions in which Denis Juneau has participated since 1952 to understand that his presence in the Montreal milieu has always been as constant as it is important. And 1976 began for him with a large-scale exhibition at New York which is going to travel to the European capitals of Paris, Brussels and London. Eight months during which twenty-seven recent works, all of 1975, will give a very large public the opportunity of meeting, in accordance with Juneau's wish, the image of which he says that it is "a means of effective communication and a means of incommensurable perception"⁴. A rational conclusion by someone who has devoted his life to visual language.

1. John Cage, *Silence*, Middletown (Conn.), Wesleyan University Press, 1961, p. 10.

2. Rodolphe de Repentigny, *Émond et Juneau, deux mondes*, in *La Presse, Lettres et arts*, April 5, 1958.

3. Léo Rosshandler, Notes on the exhibition *Spectrorames, spectacle-couleur* presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, from Aug. 1 to September 15, 1970.

4. Denis Juneau, Catalogue of the Exhibition presented at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, from January 22 to March 7, 1967.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

NEW PATRONS OF ART
THE C I L COLLECTION OF
CANADIAN PAINTING

By Paul DUMAS

The great world art collections arose from the zeal of one or a few enthusiastic art pa-

trons, who incidentally had at their command powerful means of acquisition: victorious conquerors, emperors and monarchs, pontiffs and prelates, podestats and bankers, financial or industrial magnates — among whom we find more than one name famous in history: Leo de' Medici, Leonora d'Este, Julius II, Leo X, Francis I, Mazarin, Charles I, Catherine II, Frederick II, Napoleon Bonaparte, J. P. Morgan, Albert C. Barnes and Paul Getty. Sooner or later these collections will become the property of the State, through bequest, purchase, appropriation or simple confiscation. It has also happened more than once that the acquisition of a masterpiece, for example the Parthenon marble statues, the Berlin-Dalheim polychromatic Nefertiti and some great Venetian works in the Louvre has been strongly tainted with irregularity.

In our day, more than one nouveau riche collects works of art, to acquire prestige and also because, as they say, it would be "a good investment"; but with the disappearance of aristocracies, the increase in taxes and the development of nations toward a more or less modified form of socialism, one wonders if the era of great collections is not coming to a close. On the other hand, in truly democratic countries where free enterprise still holds sway, the rise of corporations, which the state invites in no uncertain terms to encourage the arts, has caused the appearance of new patrons of the arts, new collectors, without names this time. Among these are Rothmans of Pall Mall Canada Limited, Power Corporation of Canada and Canadian Industries Limited, better known as C.I.L.

The C.I.L. collection of Canadian painting has been established recently and comprises a limited number of pictures. In 1962, to celebrate the centenary of the company, the directors decided to acquire a certain number of canvases by Canadian painters, with the purpose of exhibiting them across Canada and encouraging the public to know and appreciate the works of our best artists; indirectly, this was a fine way of adding to the prestige of the company. Upon their invitation Dr. Evan Turner, director at that time of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and now chief curator of the Philadelphia Museum, gathered together several Canadian pictorial works, some forty of which were chosen by a panel of experts: these were to form the initial nucleus of the collection. Afterwards, Mr. Russell Harper, Canadian painting historian, succeeded Dr. Turner as artistic advisor and other pictures were added to the first ones; to-day the collection comprises a few more than seventy-five works.

The C.I.L. directors do not intend the collection to be too expensive, not for the lack of funds — far from it — but to keep greater mobility for it and to facilitate transporting it from one end of Canada to the other. For this purpose the C.I.L. technicians have perfected a special crate that assures complete protection for each picture. Since 1962 the collection has travelled a great deal and has been exhibited in more than eighty-five Canadian cities and municipalities, often more than once in the same place.

The collection is intended always to be up to date, to reflect the dominant trends in the most current Canadian painting and to include first class works of our most prominent artists. This is why it is continually being revised and why those responsible periodically remove some canvases; this is either because they are already a bit old — and such was the fate, for example, of works by Marc-Aurèle Fortin, Rob-

ert Pilot, Jack Humphrey and E. J. Hughes — or in order to replace them with more characteristic works of the same painter, or as a consequence of a more or less favourable reaction on the part of the visiting public.

Since Canadian Industries Limited exerts its influence from one end of Canada to the other, it is easily understood that, in the choice of works for its collection, the company was, to a certain point, obliged to take into account regional peculiarities and perhaps make some compromises. Such an assembly of pictures, therefore, does not result from the ardent enthusiasm of a single collector, a duke of Aumale or a Chester Dale, for instance, but is the well-balanced manifestation of a planned eclecticism, a wise acquisition policy in which, doubtless, diplomacy has had a part. If we take inventory of the C.I.L. painting collection, we realize that all the provinces of Canada are represented, except Prince Edward Island and the Yukon and Northwest Territories, that the list of artists contains some sixty-five names, the lion's share going to the province of Quebec with twenty-five chosen; Ontario is second with eighteen. It is important to explain, however, that no artist has been admitted for purely geographical reasons, but rather on the basis of the real aesthetic merits of his work. Likewise, the originators of the collection, wishing to include works representative of dominant trends in current Canadian painting, had necessarily to limit themselves and confine themselves to the most important painters and movements. In this way they risked displeasing more than one artist, and God knows how many of them are over-sensitive. Those responsible for the collection have, therefore, displayed much caution and have been very careful in their selections, restricting themselves particularly to painters who are well known or have arrived, to schools or groups accredited in the official milieu, and we could reproach them with lacking daring because they have put aside the most aggressive forerunners of the avant-garde as well as yesterday's conservative painters. So, in this way, if they have given a large share to the plasticians, the tachists and the hyperrealists, they have pretty well ignored the surrealists and the defenders of conceptual and minimal art (with the exception of Ronald Bloore). It is an astonishing fact that this big company's collection of paintings contains not a single portrait, nor any identifiable human face.

The C.I.L. collection comprises a few more than seventy-five pictures produced by some seventy different artists. Of these about sixty are represented by a single canvas, seven others — Jean-Paul Lemieux, Jean McEwen, Alex Colville, Harold Town, D. P. Brown, Ronald Bloore and Jack Shadbolt by two and only one, Esther Warkow, by three, but in the latter case it is a triptych. The choice of only one picture per artist can be criticized and not always be fair, since the talent of many of these encompasses several aspects, each as attractive as the others.

Finally, if we consider the list of artists chosen in the collection, we regret many omissions: for the Maritimes, Jack Humphrey and Tom Forrestall; for Quebec, Lise Gervais, Paul André, Stanley Cosgrove, Jacques de Tonnancour, Albert Dumouchel (vanished lately, but still timely) Benoît East, Roland Giguère, Claude Goulet, Alan Glass, Allan Harrison, Louis Jaque, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Louis Muhlstock, René Richard and Fernand Toupin, all as important in our opinion as some of the Quebec artists whose work was included, such as Yehudi Chaki, Miyuki Tanabe or Arthur Villeneuve;

for Ontario, William Ronald and Robert Hedrick (who took part, but whose canvases were not kept), Jack Bush, Dennis Burton, Greg Curnoe, Albert G. Franck, Gershon Iskowitz, John Meredith, Gordon Rayner and Joyce Wieland; for the West and British Columbia, Takao Tanabe, B. C. Binning, Claude Breeze and Iain Baxter. Furthermore, it seems to me that they could have emphasized the Canadian character of the collection by introducing indigenous artists such as Norval Morrisseau, Norman Laliberté and the Inuit engravers of Baker Lake.

With these reservations and account being taken of the limits that those responsible for the collection imposed upon themselves, it remains for us to admire its principal works and to draw attention to its strong points.

By way of information, the following is the complete list of the Quebec canvases in the C.I.L. collection of painting: Glen Adams, *76158* (1964); Léon Bellefleur, *Angles perlés* (1961); Ghitta Caiserman-Roth, *Sunflower No. 5* (1965); L. Yehudi Chaki, *The Winner* (1967); Reynald Connolly, *La Pendule* (1965-1966); Marcelle Ferron, *Peinture* (1960); John Fox, *Composition with Two Forms* (1970); Claude Girard, *Champs* (1970); Chris Hayward, *Bridge End* (1969); Jacques Hurtubise, *Rosa Rose* (1974); Denis Juneau, *Fond rouge* (1975); Patrick Landsley, *Winter Light* (1973); Jean-Paul Lemieux, *La Soeur blanche* (1961) and *Solstice d'hiver* (1961); Rita Letendre, *Sonar* (1973); Jean McEwen, *Midi, temps rouge* (1960) and *Fil à plomb traversant le rouge* (1961); Guido Molinari, *Mutation asymétrique rouge foncé* (1964-1965); Alfred Pellán, *Phosphorescence* (1961); Jean-Paul Riopelle, *Composition* (1957); Goodridge Roberts, *Port-au-Persil, Quebec* (1961-1962); Louise Scott, *Série des Jeux N° 1* (1968-1969); Jori Smith, *Possessions* (1975); Philip Surrey, *Brown Van* (1968-69); Miyuki Tanobe, *Samedi matin, rue Saint-Laurent* (1974); Claude Tousignant, *Stochastique en vert* (1965); Arthur Villeneuve, *La Danse du carnaval* (1972).

By way of commentary, we can consider Léon Bellefleur's *Les Angles perlés*, Jean-Paul Lemieux's *Le Solstice d'hiver* and *La Soeur blanche*, Jean-Paul Riopelle's *Composition 1957*, Goodridge Roberts' *Port-au-Persil* and Philip Surrey's *Brown Van* as very good examples of the talent of these major artists. Likewise, Rita Letendre's *Sonar* is one of her most successful efforts in her new manner (imposing perspectives of trajectories are joined in spatial infinity) and a very carefully executed work in a lovely harmony of greens, blacks, yellows and blues. Among the younger artists, Denis Juneau's *Fond rouge*, Claude Girard's *Champs*, Reynald Connolly's *La Pendule*, Louise Scott's *Série des Jeux N° 1* and Chris Hayward's *Bridge End* are original works that show real artists' temperaments. Among the most striking canvases, hyperrealist Glenn Adams' caboose *76158* and Ghitta Caiserman-Roth's huge *Sunflower No. 5* make us experience keenly, beyond a very painstaking craftsmanship, the poetic obsession emitted from these works. Arthur Villeneuve's *La Danse du carnaval* and Miyuki Tanobe's *Samedi matin, rue Saint-Laurent* are among the best pictures of two painters whom we do not appreciate much and are all imbued with a strong popular and folkloric flavour of which the originators of the collection seem to be particularly fond. But the finest work of the Quebec painters is Jean McEwen's splendid *Midi, temps rouge*, a vast composition of dazzling colour, radiant with majesty and joy, which, in our opinion, represents a peak in McEwen's art and even in all Canadian painting. This big picture decorates the company's

boardroom, and, on account of its large size, is never in the travelling exhibitions of the collection.

Among the entries from the Maritimes, we should note *St. John Harbour* by Bruno Bobak, artist in residence in New Brunswick famous for his panoramas of cities in the Kokoschka manner, in which we find his delightful colourist's verve. As for his wife Molly Lamb Bobak's *English Beach*, we see in it a lilliputian swarming comparable to that of the early To-beys, but we do not rediscover in it her usual exuberance.

Woman at a Dresser by Christopher Pratt, the magic realist of Newfoundland, is one of his most popular and bewitching canvases, in which we enjoy the delicacy of the drawing and the mellowness of the tints.

Milk Truck and *Children in a Tree* are two typical paintings, although of average quality, by Alexander Colville, the neo-Scottish head of the Canadian hyperrealist school.

Ontario is represented by some twenty painters, several of whom are hyperrealists: Ken Danby, D. P. Brown, Willis Romanow, Wim Blom and David Mayrs. The stars, Kazuo Nakamura (*Three plants*), Graham Coughtry (*Dark Room*), Tony Urquhart (*Near Wickham, Side Road*), Michael Snow (*Black and White*), Kenneth Lochhead (*Root Pile*), and John Chambers (*Three Sisters, Waiting*), offer us specimens characteristic, if not exceptional, of their talent. William Kurelek's *Hauling Sheaves*, all imbued with the special artlessness of this visionary artist, makes us deeply feel, by the boldness of its eccentric composition, the immensity and monotony of the prairie. Among the Ontario painters, we prefer Harold Town, the talented and versatile Toronto painter, who appears at his best in *Homage to Cubism*, of great finesse of texture, and particularly in his superb *Sky Panel*, where his gifts as colourist and his feeling for the picture are displayed; we also admire greatly Jock Macdonald's lovely blue harmony and the precious and delicate tracery of Ralph and Brian Taylor.

The most remarkable works of the painters of the West are, in our opinion, Christine Pflug's *Interior at Night* with its mysterious vista of the night, Marion Nicoll's *Prairie Farm*, whose extreme geometrical simplicity recalls some of Georgia O'Keefe's studies of barns, and the two Ronald Bloores, *Homage to Matisse* and especially *Triple Sun Panel*, of an infinite delicacy and artistry.

If we note in British Columbia's share the presence of a few "hard edge painters" like Gordon Smith and Bodo Pfeiffer, laurels are due, in our opinion, to Tony Onley (*Winter Landscape*), to Brian Fisher for his exquisite *Window*, a clever creation and a genuine masterpiece of symmetry, to Donald Jarvis for his flamboyant *Winter Figure*, and to Jack Shadbolt for his *Islamic Memory*, in which hieroglyphics seem to lie buoyantly in the shimmering atmosphere of an oriental miniature.

To conclude this brief evaluation, it is interesting to observe the reactions of the Canadian public to this collection. Its preference goes to the hyperrealists and to well-known names like Jean-Paul Lemieux, Alfred Pellán, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Harold Town and Jack Shadbolt, and among the most popular canvases, ten are the work of hyperrealists, with Alex Colville in the lead; and we find the two Lemieux, the two naïve painters Arthur Villeneuve and Miyuki Tanobe and two pictures that illustrate, one about games, Louise Scott's *Série des Jeux No 1* and the other the holiday atmosphere Myfanwy Phillips' *Adam & Eve & Pinch Me*. If we

were to believe the old adage, "Vox populi, vox Dei", such a verdict would be painful for those critics who accept in art only the unusual or the subliminal.

Within its purposely limited framework, the Canadian painting collection graciously put at the disposition of the public of Canada by C.I.L. has served the cause of art well in our milieu, on the one hand by encouraging our painters, on the other by causing them to be better known, not only by art lovers but also by the uninitiated. This is an auspicious venture that we cannot praise too much, and of which we would like to see many imitators.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

LÉON BELLEFLEUR

By Gilles DAIGNEAULT

Léon Bellefleur has taken off again. The first time, it was in 1954, and he departed in the two meanings of the word: he freed himself of his influences in painting and left to accomplish a dream that was "a bit delirious", at the age of thirty: to know Paris and live in Provence. This time, it is his canvases that are leaving to earn international recognition for him, another major dream of the painter; indeed, the English, and very recently the Danes, have been enchanted by our old alchemist's oils.

Bellefleur lives in his old Canadian house near the Richelieu River (another dream that came true!), where I met him. The day before, a very violent storm had raged in the area and had nearly thrown his neighbour — a giant — into the river; Bellefleur would say during the interview, "Pellán's return in 1940 was worse than yesterday's hurricane for the plastic arts!" He has remained the same likeable man, funny and sensitive (this precious sensitivity to which his work has been faithful for almost forty years). He has taken on very little self-assurance. Not as much as his canvases, however, of which he speaks easily, simply, calmly. He is no less convinced that his commentaries are of no help (... or so little) to people in understanding his work. "I know that there are artists who talk very well about their painting but, even in those cases, the explanation they give carries a rational dimension that... that...; in short, the painter has said everything when he has created his canvas. After that, it is the turn of the critics." However, these remarks would not prevent Bellefleur from adopting a very critical tone concerning the attitude of some commentators who do not see clearly enough how much his work is inspired by surrealism.

He recovered from three months of etching (one had to see him struggle with his old press to understand that the word is not too strong). And yet the complex, delicate and exhausting "cooking" of this medium enchanted him. "I am anxious to master all this and I believe I am on the right track. In certain aspects it is alchemy. Besides, etching rests me from colour and gives me the opportunity to draw; I always like drawing but, paradoxically, I no longer wish to do it as before. In engraving I can produce drawings with shades, a range of grays, blacks..."

If a period of engravings follows the oils of '75, a rather long period of gouaches precedes them. Do these changes of medium coincide

with dead ends? "This would be saying a lot, but there come moments when one tires of always using the same materials... and then one sometimes finds something else with another medium. Afterward, one returns to oil more alive, with more enthusiasm. As for gouaches, I wanted to link graphism perfectly with colour, a thing that oil allowed me to a lesser degree; I wanted a drawing that holds its own as a drawing to form with colour and the intensity of its lines a true coloured whole. I believe the experiment was successful: it was all fresh, light, sometimes more luminous but less sensual than oils. I had two exhibitions and my adventure is enough for me."

Let us consider the oils. I was fortunate enough to see the '73 and '75 ones before they were sent to England and Denmark. These admirable compositions created more than ever an impression of warmth, serenity and well-being; doubtless the painting of a profoundly happy man... "Attention: what a painter puts into a canvas is not necessarily what possesses him, what he has within himself. I also see this serenity that you discover in the latest pictures, and it helps me to live. If I put a fair amount of joy into my canvases — and there are a few exceptions — it is because my adventure is also a search for serenity and joy. This being said, I do not think a profoundly unhappy man would manage to paint as I do, but I know that I am much more vulnerable than appears in the recent oils. Art is magic..." Agreed. But it is in vain that we know this, we are always deceived. How many of us still believe from the evidence of its statuary that ancient Greece was populated only by magnificent beings? There is no doubt, however, that the Greek reality offered less serenity and balance than its art suggests.

Be that as it may, it is of no avail that Bellefleur's recent pictures reflect a dream rather than a real situation, they reach no less, on the plastic plan, undeniable fullness, wealth, and balance. "You are the one who is saying it, but I hesitate to contradict you... Let us say more exactly that I now know my craft, that there are fewer and fewer failures at that level, that I am succeeding more and more easily in resolving the problems, that henceforth my limits are approximately those of my inner resources..." At this stage, there is danger "of middle-class respectability, I know, of affectation, of decoration; no one is immune from it (I am speaking not only of painters) and I am aware of it. To some degree I mistrust my mastery which makes things too easy, which would allow me to paint mechanically, with only my eyes, canvases that doubtless would be pretty but without soul, in which what I had said was so thin that the canvases would bring nothing more either to me or to others. I prefer to think, however, that there are, particularly in this mastery, means of enormous advantage for anyone who knows how to conserve his ardour. My need to be exacting and honest, the very nature of my profoundly surrealistic development will succeed in preserving me from middle-class respectability. Also this importance of childhood..." I was getting there. Baudelaire's sentence came to mind: "Genius is childhood rediscovered at will." Bellefleur frowned: "Rediscovered? No, I never lost it, fortunately. I have always tried to protect within myself the best of childhood, the sense of poetry and dreams, the spontaneity, the freshness that no maturity can do without." Listening to Bellefleur speak of childhood, I understood that it was not only by reason of megalomania that he lives surrounded by sev-