

Pierre Gauvreau et le ressac automatiste Pierre Gauvreau and the Automatist Undercurrent

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Pierre Gauvreau

et le ressac automatiste

Le spectacle de l'évolution des formes naturelles sous la pression de l'énergie créatrice est un spectacle fabuleux, parfois vertigineux. Combien de formes sont apparues pour disparaître, comme si le jeu aveugle de la Nature ne suffisait jamais à combler l'aspiration secrète qui la tourmente? Nous appelons ces destructions des déluges. C'est alors que l'énergie créatrice se fait destructrice, se retourne sur elle-même, rêve dans le chaos retrouvé de la forme nouvelle qu'elle prendra.

Le déluge, au Québec, eut pour initiateurs les peintres automatistes. Qu'un ordre soit inhérent à ce désordre, qu'il y ait dans ce chaos de couleurs et de formes la présence d'un ordre, cela était certain dès Borduas, dont les derniers tableaux nous soumettaient le problème à résoudre: celui de la densification des formes géométriques élémentaires.

Ces formes géométriques constituent certainement l'une des conquêtes les plus évidentes de l'épopée automatiste, reliant par le fait même, comme le pressentait Borduas dans ses termes à lui, l'art moderne en général et plus particulièrement l'automatisme, en ce qui nous concerne ici, aux courants traditionnels les plus profonds. Fernand Leduc, signataire du *Refus global*, devait d'ailleurs, pour sa part, s'orienter plus nettement dans le sillage traditionnel sous l'influence directe de Raymond Abellio. Cette apparition de formes géométriques denses, particulièrement dans les tableaux les plus récents de Pierre Gauvreau, nous fait à la fois réfléchir sur ce dont peut être porteur un apparent désordre et nous aide aussi à comprendre la nécessité que constitua, du point de vue du ressourcement des formes, l'apparition de l'école automatiste. Car l'automatisme, les meilleurs le savent, ce n'est pas peindre n'importe quoi. Ce serait bien plutôt d'être le canal d'un contenu créateur autonome surgi du fond du chaos formel. L'automatisme impliquait donc et implique encore une déstructuration préalable de toute censure, une dissolution consciente des vieilles structures de comportement, du moins en face du tableau. La démarche automatiste s'apparente ainsi, dans certaines phases de son processus, aux phénomènes cathartiques provoqués par diverses techniques de méditation traditionnelle: un nettoyage psychique chaotique marqué, ici et là, par des ouvertures de conscience, la stimulation des centres d'énergie créatrice, l'apparition aussi, dans la toile, de contenus vivants, susceptibles de nourrir longtemps la

conscience même du peintre — ou celle du spectateur. Et la certitude croissante, à partir d'un certain point, que cette évolution pourrait être sans fin et que l'on peut et même que l'on doit toujours aller plus loin. Disons tout de suite que les captivants prodiges de couleurs acryliques des tableaux de Pierre Gauvreau ne sont pas *plus spécifiquement* le fruit de l'automatisme que les triangles, les losanges, les carrés qui peuvent aussi y apparaître, sans parler de la position de ces derniers dont le sens réel relève d'une connaissance incorporée que l'artiste n'a pas acquise encore mais qui s'offre à lui avec une générosité qui semble le privilégier. «Que nul n'entre ici s'il n'est géomètre», avait écrit Platon au fronton de l'Académie. Je n'ai pu m'empêcher de penser, en me rappelant soudainement cette sentence, combien l'automatisme nous conduisait au seuil d'une géométrie sacrée, renouvelée par le déluge dont il marqua ici le premier moment. De l'académisme en art (figement ultime de l'énergie créatrice) à ce que Platon entendait peut-être par l'Académie, il y aurait la distance qui sépare ce que l'on appelle, dans la tradition, la première naissance de la seconde. Mais notre héritage est au fond de la mer. Nous y serions porteurs de la *géométrie* c'est-à-dire de la science des mesures de la terre (que les Védas confondent avec le corps) ou, en d'autres termes, de la gnose, la connaissance vivante, incorporée, qui pourrait nous conduire, comme l'entrevoit Borduas, au seuil et même au sein d'une civilisation nouvelle dont la caractéristique principale serait la connaissance et la recherche psychiques.

La mer a des ressacs. Le temps aussi. L'automatisme aussi. Le retour du peintre québécois Pierre Gauvreau, frère du poète automatiste Claude Gauvreau, s'inscrit d'une façon organique dans l'ensemble du mouvement actuel qui s'applique à mieux comprendre ce que fut l'automatisme. Le fait du retour à la peinture de Pierre Gauvreau revêt donc à nos yeux un sens important: l'automatisme en art n'a pas encore donné tous ses fruits. Il est peut-être ici en voie de le faire. Il fait peut-être aussi partie de nous-mêmes maintenant, non pas à la manière d'une matière à muséologie seulement mais à la manière d'un rite de ressourcement. Si nous n'avions affaire qu'à une nostalgie, comme on a voulu le faire entendre un peu sommairement, tout cela serait sans importance. Mais Gauvreau est un créateur passionné. Il est demeuré peintre au

1. Pierre GAUVREAU
La Chasse-galerie; 1978.
Acrylique sur bois;
1 m 52 x 1,22.
Coll. de l'artiste.





2



3

2. *Les Fleurs de la Sainte-Enfance*, 1977.
Acrylique sur toile;
76 cm 2 x 91,4.
Coll. Louise Massue.

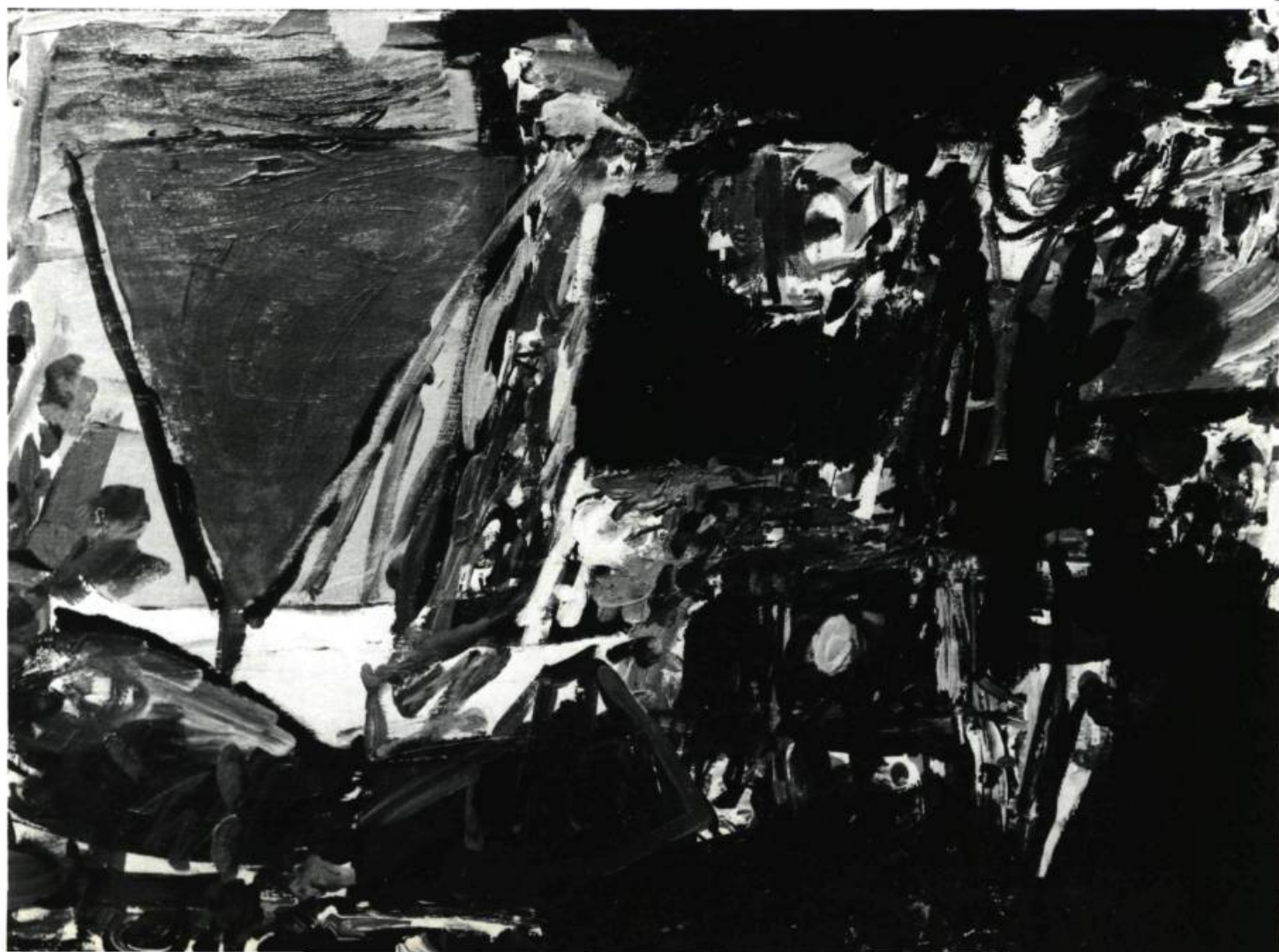
3. *Croque-monsieur*, 1978.
Acrylique sur toile;
45 cm 7 x 61.
Coll. de l'artiste.

4. *Entrée du pubis cobalt*, 1978.
Acrylique sur toile;
76 cm 2 x 1 m 16.
Coll. Janine Carreau.

sens le plus stimulant du terme, et sa démarche et ses œuvres ont actuellement beaucoup à nous apprendre sur nous-mêmes. D'ailleurs, à une époque où les galeries de tableaux ne vendent en moyenne que deux œuvres par exposition, quinze tableaux sur trente de Gauvreau ont été vendus lors de sa dernière exposition à la Galerie Gilles Corbeil. Depuis 1962, soit depuis quatorze ans, Pierre Gauvreau n'avait pas peint. Lui qui peignait ordinairement en été jusqu'à la Noël lorsque l'inspiration le visitait, voici qu'à la Noël 1976-1977, il déjoue ces vieilles lois et se remet à peindre. Et ce, sans arrêt jusqu'à maintenant. «Lorsque je peins, je peins abondamment», me dit-il. Et ce, en dépit du fait qu'il lui faille du temps «pour démarrer». Le fait d'être réalisateur à Radio-Canada ne l'empêche pas de laisser libre cours à son besoin de créativité. A la Galerie Gilles Corbeil, l'on pouvait voir récemment cette abondance de couleurs vives; des graffiti aussi, certains parmi les meilleurs. C'était bien le ressac automatiste, avec la passion qui le caractérise.

Gauvreau ne s'objectera pas si j'emploie, en parlant de l'automatisme, l'expression: «Cette voie...» Cependant, nous parlerons surtout de «discipline». Car bien que le résultat le plus immédiatement apparent des tableaux récents de Gauvreau soit l'éclatement dionysiaque du plaisir de peindre, l'automatisme exige certaines conditions psychologiques et physiques sans lesquelles, selon Gauvreau, l'expérience ne peut être conduite à bonne fin.

Nous avons entrevu ce que pouvait être cette fin. Pierre Gauvreau m'explique qu'il faut d'abord être en bonne santé et dispos. Ce sont les conditions physiologiques. Pas question d'abuser des drogues, qu'elles soient fortes ou bénignes: Pierre Gauvreau ne fume ni ne boit. Les conditions psychologiques sont un peu plus difficiles à cerner. Gauvreau appartient à cette catégorie d'artistes chez qui le contenu créateur mûrit longuement avant de s'épanouir dans l'œuvre. Jamais, durant ces douze années, s'est-il vraiment inquiété de savoir s'il peindrait ou non, dit-il. Bien sûr l'on éprouve certainement parfois la nostalgie des états induits par la création artistique mais, tout compte fait, le peintre sait que le temps doit venir. Et quand le temps est venu, la principale condition psychologique pour peindre selon l'esprit automatiste est de laisser le contenu créateur diriger entièrement le geste du peintre. Aucune censure ne doit s'interposer entre la montée créatrice et la projection, sur la toile, des lignes, des taches, des couleurs, ce qui, pour Gauvreau, revêt un sens tout particulier puisqu'il était naturellement doué pour le dessin. Aucune gratuité non plus dans cet acte qui doit se faire dans un respect intégral de l'énergie autonome, libère des aires, en rempli d'autres, suggère la couleur, les mouvements, etc. Il faut avoir tenté soi-même l'expérience pour découvrir, par exemple, combien le dynamisme créateur peut avoir de lui-même une notion claire et insistante de la gauche et de la droite.





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L'aventure automatiste est celle d'une exploration et, à mes yeux, d'un ressourcement gnostique à la faveur duquel des formes primordiales peuvent se manifester. Ainsi, ces deux tableaux peints coup sur coup, à quelque demi-heure d'intervalle, sans préméditation, et où l'on voit d'abord un triangle inversé à gauche (premier tableau: *Entrée du pubis cobalt*) puis un triangle dressé à droite (second tableau: *Quelque chose comme un drapeau qui flotte*). L'on sait que la jonction de ces deux triangles forme l'étoile de David qui est le symbole de l'équilibre des puissances d'élévation et des puissances d'incarnation. Cette jonction, dans le tantrisme, symbolisée par la même étoile, est toujours localisée dans la région du coeur. Mais je m'en voudrais de poursuivre ici ces connotations, utiles dans la mesure où elles situent la création artisti-

5. Oscar, *Poiseau décapité*, 1977.

Acrylique sur toile;
1 m 22 x 1 m 16.
Coll. Janine Carreau.

6. *The Red Connection*, 1978.

Acrylique sur bois;
1 m 22 x 1 m 22.
Coll. privée.

(Toutes les photos sont de Janine Carreau)

que apparemment la plus gratuite et donnent un sens inattendu à une quête qui d'ailleurs, selon Borduas, devait déboucher sur la connaissance des mondes psychiques. Il faut tenter de pénétrer avec une sensibilité soutenue et concentrée dans la densité toute spéciale — celle qui habite *Entrée du pubis cobalt* n'est pas sans rappeler ce que l'on peut éprouver en présence d'un yantra de Kali dont le dessin est celui d'un triangle inversé — qui peut se dégager de telles formes peintes et saisir en soi-même, grâce au tableau, le message contemporain que nous livrent ces signes réanimés du fond des temps en les plaçant dans la perspective eschatologique d'une dissolution cyclique.

Soulignons pour finir la qualité méditerranéenne, claire, apaisée, des derniers tableaux que peignait Gauvreau au moment où je terminais cet article. On y retrouve un équilibre souvent symétrique dans la disposition spontanée des figures et un univers clarifié. Tout comme pour les derniers tableaux de Borduas, les formes des plus récents tableaux de Gauvreau nous offrent une géométrie épurée qui devient ici une géométrie en fête. Voici une aventure à suivre avec intérêt, même avec passion. Un vent nouveau souffle sur nos rivages...

English Translation, p. 101



Pierre Gauvreau est né à Montréal, le 23 août 1922. Il fait ses études à l'École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal puis fréquente l'atelier de Borduas et participe aux expositions des automatistes. Il signe le *Refus global*, en 1948. En 1955, il entre comme réalisateur au Service des émissions-jeunesse de Radio-Canada. À partir de 1968, il circule entre Radio-Canada, l'Office National du Film et Radio-Québec où il occupe différentes fonctions. C'est en 1941, à la faveur de sa première exposition de dessins et de peintures, dans le hall du Gesù, qu'il rencontre Borduas. Depuis, il a exposé, presque chaque année, jusqu'en 1962: New-York (Studio Boas), Toronto, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Galerie

Dominion, Galerie Denyse Delrue, chez Tranquille, Galerie Nationale du Canada, à Ottawa, et, en 1962, au Festival des Deux Mondes, à Spolète, en Italie. En 1967, il fait partie du *Panorama de la peinture au Québec, 1940-1966*, au Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal. Puis, en 1971, c'est *Borduas et les automatistes* aux galeries nationales du Grand-Palais de Paris et au Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal. Il expose au Musée d'Art Contemporain, en 1976 et en 1977; en 1977, à la Galerie Le Patrimoine à Chloé sous le thème *Les Automatistes de 46*. Du 13 octobre 1977 au 23 janvier 1978, il expose chez lui et, du 2 au 21 mars 1978, il présente trente tableaux récents à la Galerie Gilles Corbeil, à Montréal.



Graphia studio, it has provided working space as well as two lithography presses and facilities for silkscreen printing for about ten active members.

The beginnings were in 1972, when Ghitta Caiserman-Roth and Susan Hudson, who had been working together at the Saidye Bronfman Centre for several years, decided they needed a space independent of the school to carry on their work in lithography and serigraphy. Their presence, as well as that of Doreen Lindsay and Ann McCall, has afforded a thread of continuity over the years as members have come and gone.

Such a turn-over is not unusual, given the nature of a printmaking studio, which caters not only to those working exclusively in the graphic media, but also to painters and sculptors, who may wish occasionally to express themselves in the unique language of the print. Nonetheless, to ensure a certain stability, it is the policy at Graphia to charge new members an initial fee of \$50, half of which is refunded after six months.

This and his share of the monthly rent is all that the printmaker pays to belong to Graphia. In return he reaps the many benefits of working in a collectivity. This, of course, is the primary reason for the flowering of printmaking ateliers seen in Montreal in the 1960's and early 1970's, itself the indirect result of the creative energies nourished by the pedagogical enthusiasm of Albert Dumouchel. It is a minor irony that printmaking, the most democratic of the fine arts by virtue of its wide diffusion and relatively low cost, is for the artist one of the more expensive to practise. Thus the basis of the group atelier is pragmatic and exists prior to any ideology that may influence its later course. This is not to deny that a communal spirit undoubtedly does flourish among printmakers in such an environment.

Those working at Graphia at the moment, a group which includes, as well as those mentioned above, Sylvia Ary, Frances Balough, Andrea Blana, Ron Headland, Earl Preston, and Pat Weyer, affirm that a philosophy of mutual assistance underlies their activity at the studio. But this communal spirit prevails more in the technical than the aesthetic realm. As far as the latter is concerned, Graphia members favour a completely individualistic approach. To emphasize this, they refrain from hanging any of their work on the studio walls, trying in this way to maintain as neutral an environment as possible. Quite another spirit dominates in technical matters. From buying supplies in common to pulling the print, members are able to work in concert and share information and resources. While no courses are given at Graphia, the informal sharing of technical expertise is especially valuable where members are undertaking all the phases of printmaking, from conception through to the printing of an edition.

It is through the technical aspects of printmaking and the concomitant emphasis on craftsmanship that one comes closest to the so-called *mystique* of printmaking. As Ghitta Caiserman-Roth points out, artists don't necessarily make the best printers, for while the fine art craft is still generally considered essential in printmaking, painters have been rebelling against it. While she herself considers craftsmanship secondary to imagery, Caiserman-Roth reflects that the medium is a demon that is only exorcised through familiarity.

Other members of Graphia vary in their attitude to the question of craftsmanship, but generally agree that the importance it assumes depends at least in part on the demands of the marketplace, where the buyer must be assured that no one print in an edition is superior to any other.

The nature of the individual printmaker's work is another consideration. Clearly, with Ann McCall's serigraphs, which depend on a subtle nuancing of tones for their effect, precise control of the processes is all-important. At the opposite pole are Andrea Blana's prints. She mixes traditional techniques — woodcut, lithography and silkscreen — with highly variable monotype effects, where accident becomes an essential ingredient. Her freer approach to individual variations from print to print is a legacy of her studies in Japan, where irregularities are valued as tokens of the artist's dynamic relationship with his work.

While a multiplicity of styles prevails at Graphia, one can discern certain affinities. All except Ron Headland use some kind of figurative imagery, although the interpretations differ.

Headland, who is also a painter and a musician, produces serigraphs in which he explores close chromatic harmonies, dividing the picture plane into rectangles of flat colour. Randomly distributed small flecks of contrasting colour animate the surface, suggesting the texture of graffiti on a scarred wall.

Perhaps the most direct use of the medium of lithography is made in Sylvia Ary's black and white prints of actors. The blacks are rich and velvety, and the touch sure and spontaneous. In mood they suggest the sweet melancholy of the half-world of the actor where fantasy and reality mingle for a while.

Ghitta Caiserman-Roth's and Susan Hudson's work in lithography and silkscreen have in common the use of figurative imagery in which fantasy dominates. Through multiple images and perspectives each creates a dreamlike world. They share as well a strong interest in drawing, which is evident in the graphic quality of the work of both.

Hudson also uses photographic imagery in her prints, but mixes this with drawn forms for a collage effect. Doreen Lindsay is the only one to concentrate exclusively on photographic techniques. Her photo-lithographs, *J'existe*, are an autobiographical essay treating the feminine experiences of conception, pregnancy and motherhood, and the curiously symbiotic relationship of mother and daughter.

Landscape and plant forms inspire the prints of Pat Weyer, Earl Preston and Frances Balough. Weyer does simple portraits of plants with expressionistic overtones, while Preston's colour lithographs are built up of landscape forms, abstracted from their context and rearranged. Balough combines landscape forms drawn with lithographic crayon with flat silkscreened rectangles. In a different vein, her photo-silkscreen *Doll's House* uses decorative flat forms and dramatic colour contrasts.

Landscape, too, provides the basis of the imagery of Ann McCall's serigraphs. It is, however, merely a starting point for a highly abstract and refined vision, remarkable for the very subtle gradations of colour she achieves.

Andrea Blana's series of mixed-media prints, *Kimono*, exploit strong effects of colour and texture. Indeed, with her combination of media and use of the unique image, her work hovers between printmaking and painting.

The workings of a group studio like Graphia, and the prints produced by its members are but one step in a continuum which begins with the recruitment of members and culminates in the search for a public. With Graphia, such anglophone teaching institutions as Concordia University and the Saidye Bronfman Centre, both of which have well-developed programmes in printmaking, have been a source of new members. Caiserman-Roth and Hudson have been teaching at both schools, thereby carrying on the pedagogical tradition of Dumouchel, with whom Caiserman-Roth studied.

As well as selling their prints through dealers who represent them, the members of Graphia have felt the importance of educating the public with regard to the printmaking processes. To this end, the studio holds an open house weekend once a year, at which time demonstrations are held and the public may buy prints. In tribute to the communal spirit which lies behind Graphia, a percentage of the sales is returned to the studio by each printmaker.

In many ways the concept of a group workshop is an old one, having its roots in the Middle Ages and earlier. The modern printmaking studios, which we have seen springing up in Quebec during the sixties and early seventies in answer to the virtual rebirth of printmaking in the province, have taken from an old tradition and added to it modern enterprise and flexibility. All may not be rosy for printmaking, but the enthusiasm and tenacity of groups like Graphia attest to its essential health.

PIERRE GAUVREAU AND THE AUTOMATIST UNDERCURRENT

By Jacques RENAUD

The spectacle of the evolution of natural forms under the pressure of creative energy is a fabulous, sometimes dizzying sight. How many forms have appeared, only to disappear as if the blind play of Nature was never enough to fulfil the secret yearning that torments it? We call these destructions deluges. It is then that creative energy becomes destructive, turns inward upon itself, dreams in the rediscovered chaos of the new form it will take.

In Quebec the automatist painters were the initiators of the deluge. That order was inherent in this disorder, that there was the presence of order in this chaos of colours and forms, was certain from the time of Borduas, whose last pictures submitted to us the problem to be solved: that of the densification of elementary geometric forms.

These geometric forms are certainly one of the most evident fruits of the automatist epic linking by the very fact, as Borduas forewarned in his own words, modern art in general and more particularly Automatism, in what concerns us here, to the most profound traditional trends. Fernand Leduc, a signer of the *Refus global*, was, moreover, for his part, to orient himself more clearly in the traditional path under the direct influence of Raymond Abellio. This appearance of dense geometric forms, particularly in Pierre Gauvreau's most recent pictures, causes us to reflect on what can be the bearer of apparent disorder and, at the same time, also helps us to understand the necessity that led to the appearance of the automatist school, from the point of view of finding the sources of forms.

For Automatism, as is known by the best, is not to paint just anything at all. Rather, it is to be the channel of an autonomous creative content arising from the bottom of formal chaos. Therefore at that time Automatism implied a preliminary destruction of all censure, a conscious dissolution of old structures of behaviour, at least with regard to the picture, and still does. So the automatist development is allied, in certain phases of its process, to cathartic phenomena induced by various techniques in traditional meditation: a chaotic psychic cleansing marked, here and there, by openings of awareness, stimulation of the centres of creative energy, and also the appearance on the canvas of living contents capable of feeding the very consciousness of the painter or that of the viewer, for a long time. And there is the growing certainty, from a given point, that this evolution could be endless and that we can and even should always go further. Let us say immediately that the fascinating marvels of the acrylic colours of Pierre Gauvreau's pictures are not *more specifically* the fruit of Automatism than the triangles, the rhombuses, and the squares that may also appear there, without speaking of the position of the last, whose real meaning arises from an incorporated knowledge that the artist has not yet acquired but which is offered to him with a generosity that seems to favour him. "Let none enter here who is not a geometrician," Plato had inscribed on the façade of the Academy. I have not been able to refrain from thinking, as I suddenly remembered this sentence, how much Automatism led us to the threshold of a holy geometry, renewed by the deluge whose first moment it marked here. From academism in art (the ultimate congealing of creative energy) to what Plato perhaps understood by the Academy, there would be the distance which separates what is called, in tradition, the first birth of the second. But our heritage is at the bottom of the sea. There we would be the bearers of *geometry*, the science of the measures of the earth (that the Veda confuse with the body) or, in other terms, of gnosis, living, incorporated awareness, that could lead us, as Borduas foresaw, to the threshold and even to the heart of a new civilization whose chief characteristic would be psychic knowledge and research.

The sea has undercurrents. Time has, too. Automatism as well. The return of the Quebec painter, Pierre Gauvreau, brother of the automatist poet, Claude Gauvreau, is inscribed in an organic way in the ensemble of the present movement which concentrates on better understanding what Automatism was. The fact that Pierre Gauvreau has returned to painting therefore takes on an important meaning in our view: Automatism in art has not yet yielded all its fruit. It is perhaps in a fair way to do it here. It may also be a part of us now, not in the manner of a subject in museology only, but in the fashion of a custom of resourcefulness. If we were dealing only with nostalgia, as had been understood somewhat hastily, it would all be unimportant. But Gauvreau is an impassioned creator. He has remained a painter in the most stimulating meaning of the term, and his development and works now have much to teach us about ourselves. Furthermore, at a time when picture galleries sell on the average only two works per exhibition, fifteen Gauvreau pictures out of thirty were sold at his last showing at the Gilles Corbeil Gallery. Pierre Gauvreau had not painted since 1962, a period of fourteen years. He used to paint usually in summer until Christmas when inspiration came to him, and at Christmas 1976-1977 he abandoned those old rules and went back to painting. And he has not stopped to this day. "When I paint, I paint a lot," he told me. This is so in spite of the fact that he needs time to "get going". The fact that he is a producer at Radio-Canada does not prevent him from giving free rein to his hunger for creativity. Recently, at Gilles Corbeil Gallery one could see an abundance of bright colours; graffiti too, some among the best. This was certainly the automatist undercurrent, with the passion that characterizes it.

Gauvreau will not raise any objections when, in speaking of Automatism, I use the expression, "This way . . ." However, we shall speak particularly of *discipline*. Because, although the most immedia-

tely apparent result of Gauvreau's recent pictures is the Dionysian explosion of the pleasure of painting, Automatism requires certain psychological and physical conditions without which, according to Gauvreau, the experiment cannot be carried to a successful conclusion. We have foreseen what this end could be. Pierre Gauvreau explains to me that it is necessary first to be in good health and spirits. These are the physiological conditions. There is no question of misuse of drugs, be they strong or mild: Pierre Gauvreau neither smokes nor drinks. The psychological conditions are a little more difficult to discern. Gauvreau belongs to that class of artists in whom the creative content ripens for a long time before blossoming forth in the work. Never during those twelve years did he really worry about knowing whether he would paint or not, he says. Certainly, one sometimes feels a nostalgia for the conditions induced by artistic creation, but, all in all, the painter knows that the time must come. And when that time has come, the principal psychological condition for painting according to the automatist spirit is to allow the creative content to entirely direct the painter's gesture. No censure should intervene between the creative ascent and the projection on the canvas of lines, blobs, colours, which, for Gauvreau, bears a very special meaning since he was naturally gifted in drawing. Nor is there any gratuitousness in this act which must be carried on in full respect for the autonomous energy that guides the arm, frees some areas, fills others, suggests colour and movements, etc. It is necessary to have tried the experiment to discover, for example, how much creative dynamism can have in itself a clear and insistent notion of left and right. The automatist adventure is one of an exploration and, in my view, of a gnostic resourcefulness in favour of which fundamental forms can manifest themselves. As proof, I wish to present those two pictures painted immediately one after the other, at some half-hour intervals, without forethought, and in which we see first a triangle inverted toward the left (first picture: *Entrée du pubis cobalt*), then a triangle rising toward the right (second picture: *Quelle chose comme un drapeau qui flotte*). We know that the junction of these two triangles forms the star of David that is the symbol of balance in the powers of elevation and the powers of incarnation. This junction, in tantra, symbolized by the same star, is always situated in the region of the heart. But I would be angry with myself for pursuing connotations here, useful to the degree to which they record the apparently most gratuitous artistic creation and give an unforeseen meaning to a quest which, besides, according to Borduas, was to open out on the knowledge of psychic worlds. We must try to penetrate with unceasing, concentrated sensitivity into the very special density — that which dwells in *Entrée du pubis cobalt* recalls what one can feel in the presence of a yantra of Kali whose design is that of an inverted triangle — that can emerge from such painted forms and grasp within ourselves, thanks to the picture, the contemporary message conveyed to us by these signs revived from the beginning of time by placing them in the eschatological perspective of a cyclic dissolution.

In conclusion, let us emphasize the Mediterranean, clear, calm quality of the latest pictures that Gauvreau painted when I was finishing this article. In them we rediscover an often symmetrical balance in the spontaneous placing of the figures and a clarified universe. Just as in Borduas' last pictures, the forms of Gauvreau's most recent pictures present to us a purified geometry which here becomes festive. Here is an adventure to be followed with interest, even with passion. A new wind is blowing on our shores . . .

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

Pierre Gauvreau was born in Montreal on August 23, 1922. He studied at the Montreal School of Fine Arts, then attended Borduas' studio and participated in the exhibitions of the Automatists. He signed the *Refus global* in 1948. In 1955, he joined Radio-Canada as a producer in the youth broadcast service. From 1968, he moved between Radio-Canada, the National Film Board and Radio-Quebec, where he carried on different functions. It was in 1941, through his first exhibition of drawings and paintings in Gesù Hall, that he met Borduas. Since that time, he exhibited almost every year until 1962: New York (Boas Studio), Toronto, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Dominion Gallery, Denyse Delrue Gallery, Tranquille's, National Gallery of Canada at Ottawa, and in 1962, at the Festival of Two Worlds at Spoleto in Italy. In 1967, he took part in *Panorama de la peinture au Québec, 1940-1966* at the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art. Then, in 1971, came *Borduas et les automatistes* at the national galleries of the Grand-Palais at Paris and the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art. He exhibited at the latter museum in 1976 and 1977. In 1977 he exhibited at the Galerie Le Patrimoine à Chloé under the theme *Les Automatistes de 46*. From October 13, 1977 to January 23, 1978, he exhibited at home and, from March 2 to March 21, 1978, he showed thirty recent pictures at the Gilles Corbeil Gallery in Montreal.