

## Translations/Traductions

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# TRANSLATIONS/TRADUCTIONS

## Editorial

### Toward synthetical simplicity

BY ANDREE PARADIS

In Canada, as elsewhere, there is growing concern about the unease that is prevalent in the world of plastic art. It is a fact, but it is not particularly new. Through sheer talking about the environment, it has been forgotten that this environment was in the process of becoming established. What is lacking most at this time "is a formidable intolerance to everything that comprises the established environment. This intolerance is the very sign of true creativity." (1)

What is the unease in question? The history of art according to some people, is coming to its end, the traditional role of museums has been completed, they are being transformed into "distribution agencies, community centres, or public relations offices" (2); the complexity of the trends in art, the confusion of styles, the anxiety that results from it, are disconcerting, of course; but then, the period which we are going through does not constitute a stopping point in an evolution—however, it marks an often distressing adjustment to a powerful social force: that of the mass media.

Let us note carefully that at the very time when the death of the history of art is being proclaimed, the mass media is very dependent on it and cannot dispense with its surveys, its descriptions, and classifications, even if it were only to contest them and throw everything open to question. The mass media's potential for consuming should rather excite the imagination of alarmists and invite them to rekindle the spirit of the history of art to properly keep alive the Pythoness of modern times.

And yet, artistic development such as we know it today is scarcely recovering from the appearance at the beginning of the century of a new legion of writers who were interested in art, after the inattention of the 19th century, with the exception of Baudelaire, and who, during the last seven decades, in criticisms, essays, histories, and perspectives, have guided for better or worse the current artistic development. Previous to 1900, the artist was almost his own single spokesman. Several viewer-critics who began with impressionism did not have any pictorial experience, which many people consider a serious drawback, especially if, in addition, there is to be deplored hesitating judgement, mediocre talent, and weak intuition. Jean-Eugène Bersier flays this type of viewer-critic "whose adeptness admits neither restrictions, nor responsibilities, and whose absolutism is deadly." (3) There remains the very creative contribution of so many other critics who, for fifty or sixty years, have been compensating for pictorial inexperience by a very appreciably keen perception.

Unfortunately this absolutism is found on every level, and sometimes this is surprising. Thus in spite of our very great respect for Harold Rosenberg, it is difficult to agree completely with one of his recent statements: "The capacity to define art has devolved to the history of art which manifests itself in museums." Now, it has been a long time since the museum has left the museum building. In its turn the museum has manifested itself in the great art publications; although forced no doubt, it did not hesitate to become the "imaginary museum", it thus continues to conserve and it retains moreover, many followers. It is the place of reading and preview which will become the sanctuary of reflection and meditation. Public places will become places of information and communication.

As for art, it continues to manifest itself where it can, if we take Rosenberg's word for it, it has entered the media system. Art for everyone, is everywhere, including the street, the wall, space, the printed and televised image. The only trouble, which would be deadly for art if it were to be imprisoned in any formula whatever, is that "the system is a trap. It is a renouncing." (P. Valéry). In the future, as in the past, art will be defined as the exceptional thing and it will live on the fringe of any system.

The art of the street, the "poetic hand-me-downs", the art of media, will remain popular art, that is to say art of unconscious imitation or tradition of a refined art that is lost.

In Canada, after art competitions, after Survey '69, it is evident that we are going through a period of important rejection. The numerous transplants from outside no longer meet the imperious need of a healthy organism. If it is no longer possible in the age of the dissemination of information to think in terms of regional art

with a well-defined character, it is still possible to think—that two things will remain essential in art: invention and accent; that is to say temperament, the personal element. Let this art emerged from spontaneity, subject to an expurgation by consciousness, inspire itself from a sound knowledge of reality, which is nothing else than a vast assimilated culture, then we will be able to speak of an ultimate product, of synthetical simplicity.

- (1) Jean-Dominique Rey "Pour l'impressionisme" Collection "Pour ou Contre" Editions Berger — Levrault
- (2) Harold Rosenberg — "L'Histoire de l'art touche à sa fin"
- (3) Jean-Eugène Bersier "Contre l'impressionisme" Collection "Pour ou Contre" — Editions Berger-Levrault

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

## Masterpieces of Canadian Indian and Eskimo Art at the Musée De L'Homme, A Fabulous Exhibition.

BY PAQUERETTE VILLENEUVE

The exhibition "Masterpieces of Canadian Indian and Eskimo Art", which opened at the Musée De L'Homme in Paris on March 25th and will run until September before being presented at the National Gallery at the end of the year, is the largest display of its kind previously organized. It is the first time that a Canadian collection of such importance has been assembled on an international scale, and it is also the largest exhibition presented in France by the Society of the Friends of the Musée De L'Homme. Everything combines to make it what it obviously is: a unique event in the history of the North American Indian culture, which specialists had previously explored but little and whose wealth they are now discovering.

192 objects, of which at least half are presented to the public for the first time, manifest the art of the pre-occidental civilizations of Canada, from the Eskimos of prehistory to the Pacific Coast Indians, by way of the East Coast and Plains Indians. The objects span a period of more than twenty centuries.

What marvellous surprises are in store for the visitor! How can one choose among the little ivory Eskimo sculptures, the bison in milky white quartz found in Alberta that has an ageless look, the tsimshian sandstone bird with a threatening and saucy beak, the highly decorated amulets of British Columbia or the white leather costumes decorated with dyed porcupine quills that resemble silk? Everything should be mentioned for if the organizer has "found in Canadian museums the material to make up a triply important and quite as beautiful exhibition", he has here achieved a perfect harmony among the works that he has chosen. The spirit of the centuries, a phenomenon to which we Canadians are unaccustomed, is present in this exhibition.

### AN EXHIBITION WHERE THE ACCENT IS PUT ON ART

"Masterpieces of Canadian Indian and Eskimo Art" is an exhibition aimed at the public at large. Everything has been done to make it at once interesting, pleasant, and meaningful for non-initiates.

There are a large number of masks, harpoon tips, figurines of birds, bears, ermines, and fish, and there are shamans' outfits and amulets, vases, sculpted human heads, pestles, clasps, and pendants; there are sculpted totems, chests, rattles, initiation rolls, ceremonial headresses, shirts and blouses, horse sacks, knife sheaths, and some jewellery. There are sculptures three inches long and others twenty feet high. The materials used are quite varied: walrus ivory, caribou antlers, soapstone, sandstone, bone, wood, antler, bark, skins, furs, they prove that man can use everything to good advantage to express himself.

### THE FOUR PARTS OF THE EXHIBITION

"Masterpieces of Canadian Indian and Eskimo Art" was divided into four parts: the prehistoric art of the Eskimo, the art of the North West Coast Indians: the Haidas, Kwakiutl, Vootka, and Salish from prehistory to the beginning of the 20th century; the art of the Prairie Indians, the Black-Foot, the Blood Indians, the Gros Ventre, the Assiniboines, and Crees, and finally the art of the Eastern Indians: the Algonquins, the Montagnais, the Ojibway, Iroquois, and Naskapis.



## PREHISTORIC ESKIMO CULTURES: A REVELATION

Prehistoric Eskimo art of the Dorset and Thule cultures is most powerfully suggestive due to its capacity for synthesis. Because of their plastic proportions which resurrect the entire image, two eyes, a nose, and a mouth are all that is needed to recreate a face, the elimination of features in between assuring a greater dramatic efficacy. The Eskimos no doubt brought from the Orient the tradition of a very evolved art that is rediscovered in these small ivory statuettes with stark forms, but which are always perfectly representative. Fifteen of the twenty one pieces exhibited come from the National Museum of Man in Ottawa, the six others, including the combed Thule (a woman's head that is reminiscent of Modigliani), the harpoon tip and the small figure of a naked man, were lent by the Eskimo Museum of Churchill, Ont.

The existence and the identity of the Dorset pieces have been known since 1925 thanks to the German scholar Jenness. One day Jenness, who was working at the Ottawa museum received from the Hudson's Bay Company a collection of objects which the Eskimos had found quite by chance buried in the ground. He identified some of them as belonging to the Thule culture, which had been discovered a little earlier by the Danes, and he realized that a common link existed among the remaining pieces. He studied them more closely and was led to think that they belonged to a different prehistoric Eskimo culture, the Dorset culture. But few pieces were known before 1955. About 180 of them have been found to this day. They are all interesting on the ethnological level but some of them have moreover, great value as modelled figures.

The most ancient piece of Eskimo art existing in the world, an ivory mask dating from the 7th century B.C. was found in 1958 by William E. Taylor, the present director of the National Museum of Man and the only Canadian archeologist who specializes in Eskimo art. He found it at a level of five feet under the ground after a week's digging on Sugluk Island almost at the very end of the work area! Proceeding by analogy, he was successful in guessing that some of the sculptures were used in funeral rites. Indeed, in several cases, the small objects were buried near human bones: mandibles and ribs were in frequent enough evidence for the interpretation to be valid.

The mask found at Sugluk reminds us that seven hundred years before the Christian era man had already "colonized" the barren lands of the Arctic. In confiding to objects of a very fine artistic quality the representation of the animals upon which he subsisted and the symbolisation of the relationships that he had established with the supernatural universe to free himself from fears, the prehistoric Eskimo has allowed us to become acquainted with his manner of living and thinking. So many centuries ago (the undated pieces are older still, some of them date back to pre-Dorset times), men equipped with rudimentary weapons, hunting and fishing in what still remains now one of the most dangerous regions of the country, succeeded in handing down to us sights familiar to them and their religious beliefs, by way of objects of which the quality of the modelled figure continues to affect us!

The second part of the exhibition is devoted to the art of the West coast Indians, from prehistoric times to the beginning of the 20th century. This brings into focus a more widely known art, particularly the large totems of which several European museums possess fine examples. The West Coast Indians have no doubt left the most monumental wooden sculptures that we know. The largest exhibit here, the beaver totem pole, having belonged to chief Whiha, measures 19 feet.

A certain number of the works exhibited come from the most ancient and entirely maritime civilizations of the area (3,000-2500 B.C.) The first piece, a holy water vase, shows a young girl in a crouching position with her hands brought back upon her chest, giving birth to an enormous head of a child. It is thought that this piece was used in the rites marking the passing into puberty. The back of the child's head is hollowed out to receive the holy water. The girl's face is full of some vague worry and suffering, and the little hands in their very modest gesture are very poignant.

Some amulets and some shaman's rattles, like the ones where we see a man and a frog entwined and joined by the same tongue or a child's face held between the neck and wing of a bird with the beak of a heron and whose tail ends with the upside down man's head, reproduce perhaps attempts to escape a sexual anxiety expressed in a symbolic way, as they are still found today in the canvasses of the surrealist painter Victor Brauner, among others.

In any case the patina of the amulet, catalogue number 119, sculpted in bone and which seems as smooth as marble, gives a magical quality to this object whose mystery is deeply sensed although it cannot be interpreted. That is why certain pictures stay in our memory, no doubt finding again in the most unconscious or dormant layers of the memory, the remembrances of situations that have been experienced.

In the most recent periods, especially in that which concerns decorative objects: platters, spoons, chests, hairstyles, the artist by repeating the main design in a very stylized manner achieves a work where his virtuosity plays an increasingly large role. This is the ostentatious period where the object moves increasingly away from its literal function to mark with its splendour the eminent position of its owner.

The last parts of the exhibition regroup the art of the East Coast and Prairie Indians, but it is especially the latter that are to be found here. Indeed, the Eastern Indians are represented only by about ten pieces; wampums (pearled belts), mitasses, medicine bags, pipe bowls, and the sumptuous Naskapi tunic that belongs to the Archives of the province of Quebec. Decorated by a group painted in red, blue, and gold, and with very complex abstract designs which must be symbolic interpretations of dreams, this tunic of lightened buff-coloured caribou leather has something majestic about it.

It is Melville Sask. that the quartz bison mentioned in the beginning was found, and in a field near St. Paul, Alberta, another prehistoric stone bison was found, whose simplicity of form also reaches perfection.

The costumes are perhaps the only objects that seem out of place under glass. However a certain warrior's shirt with its ermine tails sewn on, its geometric patterns embroidered on the shoulders and chest, the black vertical lines indicating the number of knife thrusts received by the warrior and the blackened circles showing the number of bullet wounds, looks good even presented in this way. Another very beautiful garment is the Ojibway tunic whose shape is inspired by the frock coat that was worn by the fur traders but it is embroidered with very delicate floral motifs of porcupine quills. A touching attempt to take possession of the personality of the whites!

The initiation rolls of the Ojibway Indians all date from about the 19th century, and reproduce on birch-bark the various phases of the initiation rites. The Indians had no written language, so they had to reproduce by drawings that they used as manuals the steps to follow and the position of the different characters during these ceremonies. One of the very lovely pieces of the exhibition—that makes the manner in which the Indians resolved the problem of the lack of writing appreciable — is a caribou skin on which is reproduced in paintings the biography of a warrior. This exhibit belongs to the Museum of Man.

Finally some mention must be made of Iroquois masks. With its hooked nose, its wrinkled forehead, and its enormous mouth from which hangs an aggressive-looking tongue, the Mask With the Stuck Out Tongue, belonging to the Society of False Faces, certainly had the ability to chase away illness! The Mask with the Twisted Mouth reveals a still more fantastic imagination, with its misshapen lips that take up half the face and from which there appear about ten deer teeth. There is something very powerful in these two figures, that indicates a certain cruelty. The war-like soul is felt, that does not seek to placate the spirits but to terrify them!

## AN EXHIBITION PREPARED FOR A LONG TIME

Two years, six trips to Canada, and the participation in Paris of about twenty people were needed to set up this exhibition. First Baroness Alix de Rothschild, the president of the Society of the Friends of the Musée de l'Homme travelled to Canada twice to talk with M. Gignac, of the Department of Cultural Affairs, who helped her contact the director of the National Museum of Man. Mr. Taylor Everyone displayed a remarkable understanding and generosity, the directors of the Cultural Affairs Department ensuring the expenses of packing, shipping, and insurance, and subsidizing a large part of the free distribution of the catalogue to French universities, cultural centres, cultural organizations and libraries. Mr. Taylor agreed to centralize all the loans from the eleven museums. Then M. Evrard travelled to Canada on four occasions to choose the exhibits. Mr. Ian Clarke, a Canadian cultural attaché in Paris, who was making excavations at the age of ten, and who is a personal friend of Mr. Taylor, collaborated closely with the organizers in Paris and in Canada.

The exhibition occasioned the writing of a catalogue that is an essential document. With the texts of the Canadian experts Wilson Duff writing on the West Coast, Hugh Dempsey on the Prairies, and Rémi Savard on the East, not to mention Mr. Taylor's text on the Eskimos and the introduction by Marcel Evrard, and, in addition, with its detailed notices on each object, its very numerous first quality photographic reproductions, and its bibliography, the catalogue is one of the most precious working documents for those who are interested in native art.

The Secretary of State, M. Gérard Pelletier accompanied by the under-Secretary of State, M. Jules Léger, were the Canadian



delegates to the opening of this important exhibition at which M. Edgar Faure, the Minister of National Education represented the French government. The preceding day M. André Malraux had made a lengthy visit to the exhibition.

"Why would this exhibition be held at the Galerie Nationale and not in your country?" I asked the director of the National Museum of Man. "Because I do not have any decent show-rooms!" he retorted. Let us hope that after the splendid success achieved by "Masterpieces of Canadian Indian and Eskimo art", that more generosity will be shown in regard to what Mr. Taylor, intending no pun, calls our "common wealth!"

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Hans Hartung

BY RENE DE SOLIER

For many years the painting of Hans Hartung could have constituted the elect place where were joined: "gestuelle" (spontaneous gesture), dynamics, the art of stroke and background, the hieroglyphic sense of line and scatterings, the sweeping full arm strokes, acute, interrupted or broken in a kind of foreknowledge, of science, and of instinct (the three are not contradictory). In any case the artist can "summon" and stop his creative force, the *gesture* (from which comes the word "gestuelle", that was once used) acting as a revealing agent on the screen canvass.

Once, and since the time of the work of a friend, Gastone Novelli, who passed away a short time ago,—we wish we could thus render homage to the work and to the man,—we used another expression: THE CANVASS DREAM.

In Hartung's work, (in the good days, a short time ago, before the time of great backgrounds) vividness of the scatterings and lines, of that which is born and wells up from the gesture—the tracer instinct, and promptitude and dynamics were such that one cannot but admire this vigour, the rather abstract "viridianness" of the dash. Everything was fiery spirit. That man, now after so many trials, can still be so dynamic is surprising in a so-called Western civilization that is surely feminine for all that, or feminized. To be sure!

The strange blending (man-woman, or woman-man, the complement obvious to everyone, of the nature of the couple), this union in the artist, of instincts and temperaments not contradictory but belonging to different poles, imbues to work (blending and union) with a weight, a density and tonality, with an amplitude in the course and drives that seems to escape the critics.

It is true that critics now . . . Well! considering the works that appear, that are shown in museums and exhibitions, in spite of the fullness of the contestation (indeed, art must be "demythified": from that to proceeding to secondary works, Pop and Co, or Erotica "photo", or cannery, in César's work); considering the works which still belong to painting, and not to the simulation of a rather inefficient "rapid facsimile", it must be said that the work of older artists like Hartung, Chastel, Bram van Velde, Charcoune, and still others, stimulates or maintains the question: WHERE IS PAINTING NOW?

Undeniably, and despite the methods now employed and the too large sizes,—painting is evolving in a manner contrary to the "gigantism" that is taking hold of the minor arts or the secondary formation (using mechanical methods),—Hartung can maintain a festivity of colours (that is found again in Zao Wou-ki). Where, before the period of "great backgrounds", fullness of form (that a close look reveals) develops and maintains the hieroglyphic sense of a creation that can encompass the ardour, and the ability to bear in mind the totality of the vision in lively, brisk sketchings that result from the painter's action. On the contrary, in Hartung's work, the arabesque, suddenly broken, contributes "in its forward sweep" when the movement is interrupted, a sharp twisting that is a flash.

The burst of the stroke, of the line: ardour, and not dash, without yielding to the impulses to decorate or make noise, that indicates elsewhere an ease which is not found in this meditative art.

The West is imbued with several cultures: Germanic, Asiatic, and no doubt, "European"—a strange composite whose time may not yet have come, and that has hardly been studied, since the "disappearance" of the "Paris school" (so many others have been born since then!); the West, at the cross-roads in a city, a big city, but we dare not say a capital, is in the centre anyways. In a crucible resisting fusion.

Every artist in the elect place says—we have no liking for countryside, while recognizing the possibility of another way of life, the attraction of scenery and rural life, but we are no longer in the time of Brugel or the Impressionists; each one in his place searches ardently, patiently, throughout the long night of working, of experience. Having achieved success, which is dangerous no doubt, in a time when critics scarcely intervene (or regret doing so, but it will ever be thus!) in this time, without being retrograde, on the contrary, the artist can conquer his "demons" (that threaten every creator, or the "isolate", who for all that needs not live on a pedestal, like Bunuel's "Simon"); the dangers that emanate from another culture, from that which is *beyond*. Hartung was able to conquer and remain faithful. This symbiosis is redeeming; who is aware of it, on the other side of the Rhine, across the ocean? Have we come to disparaging times? Often the history of art is tainted by amazing nationalism. Mondrian in Paris, in the epic days, is not the Mondrian "of the United States"; Kandinsky in Paris (It is evident enough in the history of the Bauhaus, that is now better known and almost perfectly celebrated) develops and builds a masterful work, in several phases.

About 1950, when people were beginning to speak of *gestuelle* in connection with art, Hartung, with skill, and with the deepest instinct was able to develop dynamics that integrated the new hieroglyphics, and sweeping full arm strokes and scatterings, into the history of painting born from the art of movement (very dense in Soulage's work, or quick and nimble in Alechinsky's). The painter has been an innovator since dynamics were finding on the canvass-screen, the SCREEN CANVASS, these solutions that depend on gesture and concerted art, the drives of passion, of life, it must be said, of painting: of work in the laboratory, in the studio, in search of new pigments.

When painting is thus able to unite force and rhythm, ardour and flight, broken curves and small arced lines, traces, what architecture is being elaborated? And who could relate in Hartung's work this sense of power, of force, to the great constructions of the time?

Here it will be necessary to clear up some misunderstandings, and especially to recall to art criticism its role in history. The writer of the preface of the recent Hartung exhibition at the Musée National d'art moderne in Paris, Bernard Dorival, takes it easy, there is no other expression: indeed for a long time there have been critics interested in friend Hans, including Charles Estienne, this is a fine link of loyalty among us. We find it difficult to accept that after twenty years, the efforts, or struggles (one cannot say elbow-to-elbow, but why not?) that gave to the work and to the friendship a vigour that was that of the men of the times, should be ignored. Should we speak of it now with nostalgia? No. But with a resolution that it would be good to find again, as far as concerns the arts depending on exact and inventive disciplines.

Indisputably, Hartung belongs to this time, as the master who was able to reconcile line and volume, force and twistings of the line, springings and breakings of the arabesque, without ever yielding to the decorative. In these breaks another abstract art was born, that remains human. Which, by colour, volumes, and backgrounds, registers all the vibrations of experience.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Serge Cournoyer

BY JEAN BASILE

Serge Cournoyer has not produced many works but let us remember that he is young. Five machines, at least they are called machines, have made him famous almost too quickly. Let us name them in chronological order: ZEPHIR, LA NOURRICE, L'EPOUVANTAIL, L'HUMIDIFIQUEUR, and finally, ALPHA DU CENTAURE, which recently presented at the Province of Quebec's art competition, has just been acquired by the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art.

First machine, first and last psychedelic impulse, that does not come naturally to the young artist, ZEPHIR, a rather rudimentary optical system of mirrors and prisms to project onto a screen a few hazy colours, turns itself off, not without the tacit consent of the builder.

That leaves four, but the four machines contain so much; here we have pipes, motors, and crank-arms. How do they look? Not at all aesthetic.



Machines? Builders? Today everyone seems to be taking the dispassionate approach of engineering. They are bending, fitting together, welding, and joining. Where did this rare breed come from? Vinci was one of them, and how many others before him. Then after that what wasn't there: the immobile nudes by Duchamp, Picabia, and the ever ours THE BRIDE STRIPPED BARE BY HER BACHELORS, EVEN. It is hardly possible to realize their erudition. It may serve us well to recall these already old but meaningful words quoted by Marcel Jean: THE SEXUAL FURY OF FACTORIES.

Undoubtedly, Serge Cournoyer could not have been a painter. But a sculptor, yes. At least in terms of what he is, of his life, of his feeling for three dimensional forms, and his need to touch. As for the visual aspect, what does it matter anyway.

First I shall ask this premature question. What is a machine? We would go astray if we look upon the machine as either an accomplice or an antagonist. Thus God created man; thus man created the machine, and the creation of man stands opposite the creation of God. There are very touching dissertations that ensue on this subject.

I would have preferred that when Serge Cournoyer was discovered, he had been called a creator of three-dimensional structures, anything neutral, anything common.

Finally we come to the artist, and he speaks. We also have the work, and it also speaks. This article is based on both.

Here is the artist as photos of him could not reveal: a self-sufficient, ambitious, and seductive young man.

Here is the place: an atelier, not a junk-room, although it is strewn with bolts, shanks, and metal plates. An interior that is far too obvious. Yet it is rather tidy, elegant, and without any aggressivity.

The young artist does not own much; however, he has more than some people whose poverty is very noticeable. Let us say almost poor but American. Besides that: a sports car (Spitfire), three books whose titles are revealing: L'HOMME DANS L'ESPACE (Man in Space), L'ASTRONOMIE D'AUJOURD'HUI (Astronomy Today), and ROAD AND TRACKS; let us add to that the existence of a private life, and finally sound friendships in art circles and the ability to make other ones. Let us admit it, he has what it takes to succeed.

The young artist, born in Shawinigan in 1943, under the sign of The Ram, with The Crab in the ascendant, (a magnificent but dangerous cosmic combination), graduated from the Montreal Ecole des Beaux-Arts, where he was taught by the sculptor and professor, Archambault. He also tried teaching, a short period tinged with distaste, and doomed to failure. He has always been first and foremost an artist.

In his workshop-dormitory the Young artist willingly answered our questions. Cournoyer's answers are transcribed word for word and reproduced verbatim.

A) MUSIC: "I love sounds, particularly the timbre of a clarinet."

B) WORDS: "I talk like a good "Canayen"; words don't inspire me, I may think about them, but I am not caught up in them."

C) THE ARTS: I am not theoretically a cultured person; the practical aspect of things concerns me most; a recital can affect me, but not more than a car, or a rocket taking off; I am, in short, attracted to things that move.

D) COMMITMENT: "Politics is a rather disagreeable thing, rather frightening in the bargain; I am neither for the revolution, nor for contestation; I am interested in my work."

E) THE PAST: "It is funny to talk about that".

F) SCULPTORS: "Perhaps Giacommetti and Moore, but I don't know much about that."

G) WHAT HE LIKES: "I like animals a lot, and I like people a lot."

H) HIS ART: "My machines are in their plant-like phase, like nature at the beginning of creation."

I) HIS SCULPTURE: "One does not talk about one's sculpture, in the same way that one does not talk about one's mother."

Let us leave our artist responsible for his surroundings and his tastes, which, moreover, are praiseworthy. But for the time being let us retain this: PLANT-LIKE PHASE, LIKE NATURE AT THE BEGINNING OF CREATION. Let us also point out some conclusions from Cournoyer's statements: he leaves no room for revolt, for criticism. Everything is fine, well-ordered, everything seems well.

What does Serge Cournoyer mean, when he uses the expression: plant-like phase.

Let us cast a spell on the machines and let them talk! Only ZEPHIR remains silent.

LA NOURRICE, a spiky tubular device has scarcely anything in common with the plant-like element. It waters a plant though. This

plant, set in its vase, is not a part of it, it is different from it, replaceable, exterior to it.

HUMIDIFICOULEUR? Tubulures, a flat canvas where the sunflower takes on the form of a rosette; there is nothing of the tree, of the bush, nothing of the plant kingdom that is illustrated by the rose or the maple. Thus, in the same way, very exactly, ALPHA DU CENTAURE, is a direct extension of it.

Finally, let us consider EPOUVANTAIL (the Scarecrow). The first glance perplexes us: perhaps this assemblage where four parts open rather like petals would, is a flower? The very obviousness of this flower will make us wary and make us think that we looked too quickly (or, at least that it was shown too quickly), this will not be what deceives us. For the time being, let us wait.

For the present let us get back to our artist who says: "My works are . . . still rather primitive forms, steps towards a better nature, a better handling."

This sentence by itself, is a worthy example of the intrinsic quality that seems to be instilled into every creator: OPTIMISM. Opposing the expression plant-like, which is incomplete and a reference to that which has already been created, there is a declaration that is more precise in its unformulated state.

Plant-like? I do not think that such machines will be so, in the sense of imitation. Let us retain rather PRIMITIVISM, not meant in the relative sense of the word, like the statues of Easter Island. Yet in the absolute sense of a personal adventure: primitive as applied to the entire work in the process of becoming.

Let us now formulate this question: what is a primitive machine? Is it the wheel? Is it the base of support? What the eternal sphinx answers: the primitive machine is man, whose body encloses our great mechanical principles, Eye-Wheel, Hip-Lever, Kneecap-Gear . . .

Let us take apart this primordial plaything, let us shamelessly spread out beside the bones, the glands, the intestines, the ribcages, the body-fluids, the instrument, and the function. Let us be the privileged dismantler. What will there be left. There will be left a soul, according to some people, and all agree, organs.

It will not be said that I would easily give up the soul. Personally I am rather fond of it, at least as a temporary refuge against Barbarians. Without seeking the help of what others call a transcendental life, let us call it spirituality.

Serge Cournoyer stands aside from it, declaring without preliminary that he, "like an adolescent" (here we see the sacro-sacred myths of childhood appearing), let us continue "without emotion" (by the very negation we see the reason for this emotion, the tears shed in front of the altar, the terrified but touching recognition of God), let us continue, brought to it as he is by an abused and searching, and accomplice, eye . . . . Let him finally say it: "I do not give my spirituality the opportunity to be expressed; I prefer to be matter-of-fact; but if I can do it safely, I will use it to the advantage of my work."

I am trying to avoid the limitations of our modern life. And, since we are speaking of spirituality, let us see on what manna he feeds.

Marijuana, time-space, turgescence musicality, laughs and games. He says: "OK, no objections, but just for fun".

Acid (LSD 25): technicoloured pyrotechnics, a double chasm, an ether-abys. He says: "It frightens me biologically."

Let us stop . . . let us stop.

Now there is a possible choice in view that we hope would be disengaged and lucid.

Serge Cournoyer, former machinist, WHO ARE YOU?

He is not a builder of machines. He is a young man in search of himself, thus a poet, on the threshold of life. This life is what it is, it is not something else: a flower or a tree. But it is ours, his, our human condition: organ and biology.

What critic said it, wanting by it to give a naive compliment, that Cournoyer's organ made him laugh? Blackout . . .

Surgery, inventor of gestating cells . . . Nor an inventor of science fiction, in the manner of Ray Bradbury. Explorer or the oldest and the nascent. For this creator, everything must be invented, built, in his head, with his hands . . . Such is the young artist in his assured and obvious approach.

Organ, all right. Which one? There are so many of them from the noble kidney to the unworthy brain. One does not have to be a sorcerer and in Africa to guess. Still young, that is to say inward-looking and seeing thus the entire world in himself, Serge Cournoyer is at the stage of considering the metallurgic element, the driving force: Sex.

While speaking of the work, I try to understand the true complexity of the man. During our chats there was an implicit struggle, awkward and graceful. Between coffees, we went at it, from one seduction to another; making a sculptor talk is like a jousting match.



I asked him to classify by order of preference, three key words: INSTINCT, SENSITIVITY, INTELLIGENCE.

Let us not understand by preference this other word IMPORTANCE; but rather the very personal pigment of a taste or even a passion.

The question thus put to him, Serge Cournoyer chooses in this order: 1) instinct; 2) intelligence; 3) sensitivity. Has there been a better picture of a young man since art has been representing them? A short time after, the artist cries out, exclaims that he is mistaken, that it is not so simple, who doubts it? And then our instinctive wiseman, reflects, retreats into himself. Then he says: "When I imagine abstractly, a sculpture growing, I call on sensitivity; when I lay a plan on paper, plans, designs, proofs, my intelligence is brought into play, when I build, it is by instinct."

This precious gear, this instinct against which too many natures are broken, he keeps to it, he respects and admires it. He adds: "I insist on not intellectualizing my life; I have more confidence in my instinct than in my intelligence; my best weapon in attack and defence is my instinct."

Once more we look at the works. What we were saying about the organ, about biology (no longer the machine), is it not still this instinct again, for as constructed as it might be, every organ is first of all an instinct or a superior force that ORGANIZES.

Thus, in the continuity of Time and in the irrevocable evolution, the imperfect forms of another prospective man stand before us. For the time being, Serge Cournoyer who is reconstructing himself, point by point, while waiting to be drawn to something else, will sooner or later, forcefully make a discovery, will look, and will like. I was saying that these four organs that are already built stand before us. They project towards us, not as witnesses to some tragedy, neither for us, nor for them, as the machines of Tanguely are wont to do in their complacent stagnation, destroying themselves but not destroying, alas, their creator. The machines project towards us not sarcasm, nor a disillusioned smile, nor fear, but like a living work, modest and necessarily fragmented: TRUTH.

These pipes and motors illuminate what we are since the artist through them does not promise us the partial or total destruction of the world and ourselves but, on the contrary, eternal reconstruction.

Is the organ thus conceived by the artist enough? No. Let us be careful. That is why (let us admit the existence of a principle of eternal motion), the young artist conceives the organ first, then lets it go to the bosom of our museum-universe, this world where it will live. A paternal gesture that is another indication. It can be defined in this way:

"I create you, now live without me."

Finally we will not have the pretention to know how a young artist DEFINITELY acknowledges himself. We suspect the danger of the work since we know the weakness of man. As well I will be asked, why Serge Cournoyer and not such and such?

Let us then take these steps.

1) LA NOURRICE: wild seed separated in its jar, luminously set up under a sunlamp — the organ (father or mother, lover or mistress, begetter) conceived compactly, motorized in time, not space reduced in itself — its function: thus recovered in the most sparing way, the humidity of the air and of our era draining in its canals, then watering the plant — as it is built, LA NOURRICE by itself can water the plant without the necessity of a precarious human intervention.

2) L'EPOUVANTAIL (Scarecrow): here the title is, arrogantly, an antithesis, for after all, no scarecrow really looks like a flower, let us rather see in it his first alter ego: woman intimately discovered by man (evidently himself); and at the end of a secret canal there is no longer a plant put there by chance, but as a substitute, there is an egg, the ovary built by antithesis.

3) HUMIDIFICOLOUR: behind the stretched canvas we can still admire the network, issued from its humidifying function of LA NOURRICE — but the function is reabsorbed in itself, is more exterior, — the humidity of the air is collected, transformed in the capillaries of the glands, transformed, reconstituted into water in the hidden complexity of the work, and then projected, ejaculated sporadically by a moving shaft, visible, aggressive.

4) ALPHA DU CENTAURE: the more perfect younger brother of HUMIDIFICOLOUR — the moving shaft gone forever, not by decency, but through knowledge of oneself, by assured virility, convinced — thus the mechanism is quite hidden, almost through negligence, behind the womb-canvas — only the function appears to us henceforth.

This is why we think Serge Cournoyer is important: everything follows in his work, everything is elaborated, illuminated, according to the imperious need for self-knowledge and knowledge of life.

In his way, according to some chemistry, that he draws from his own crucible, he builds organ by organ, point by point, the great

future body of a TRANSPARENT BEING: the total man, foreshadowing the world, different for everyone, yet the same for all. Although it is scarcely begun, the work of Serge Cournoyer is a summation.

The young artist is great because he is, by nature, a father and a father despairing of a life that grafts onto his life, that only he will be able to understand.

And we are prosaic witnesses. Yet we are accomplices since we are organs and men. He builds us, that is why we understand him.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

### *An aspect of the early sculpture of Quebec: Mimetism*

BY JEAN TRUDEL

Among the iconographic types that were repeated with variations in different periods of the traditional religious sculpture of Quebec (1), there are certain works, in round or in relief, that are practically copies of one another. Whether executed by the same sculptor or by different sculptors, they are distinguishable only in infinitesimal details that can escape a rapid examination. The great number of these works, from the 17th to the 20th century, allow us to come to the conclusion that there was a general phenomenon in the early sculpture of Quebec. The careful study of three cases can give us an idea of the extent of this phenomenon and its repercussion in the history of art in Quebec.

The first and the most simple case, concerns the *Vierge à l'Enfant* in sculpted and gilded wood conserved on the high altar of the Beaumont church. Although the account-books of the parish do not make mention of it, Mr. Gérard Morisset attributes this sculpture to Noël Levasseur (1680-1740). This is quite possible. (2). The crowned Virgin is standing and holds in her right hand the free end of a cloak that covers her head. The knee of her right leg is bending out slightly in the front. A sash gathers the dress under the bosom and fleurs de lys appear in the folds of the cloak. The left arm is holding the child Jesus whose left shoulder is uncovered and who is holding a crown of flowers in his hands. This sculpture is treated rather weakly, but it does not lack elegance.

Very recently we had the opportunity to discover the model for this work. It is a *Vierge à l'Enfant* in gilded and polychromatic wood which is in the Old Ursuline Monastery in Quebec city and which has been used in processions for quite some time. (3). It is like the one in Beaumont in all respects save for the Virgin's crown, and the incisions in the gilt of the cloak and the general treatment which is steadier and more definite. Unlike the sculpture of Beaumont, the mother and child are not smiling. Both works show sensuality, but discreetly. In all likelihood, the Virgin belonging to the Ursulines is French; it might have been imported in the 17th century in the early days of the establishment of the community in Quebec. An analysis of the wood could confirm the stylistic analysis. The Beaumont sculptor having received an order might have used the Virgin of the Ursulines as a model, but one can also wonder if the priest and churchwardens of Beaumont did not require him to imitate the Virgin of the Ursulines. This is an important matter for it involves the whole process of the creation of the work. Three sculptures from the Montreal area pose the same problem, but a bit differently.

The first one is in the church of the Visitation of Sault-au-Récollet (4). It is a polychromatic wood *Vierge à l'Enfant* that is set standing on a rock. It is mounted on a wooden base decorated with the head of an angel sculpted in relief. The head is covered by a veil and she is holding the Infant Jesus who is sitting on her left arm. The Child has his right arm around her neck and is holding a globe of the world in his left hand. It is appreciably the same iconographic type as the preceding sculptures. It formerly adorned the high altar of the church. The first account-book (5) of the parish mentions it in an item dated June 21, 1818; fifteen Spanish piastres were paid for it. It is thus quite logical to attribute it to David Fleury David (6). A native of this parish, the sculptor worked in the decoration of the church from 1816 to 1827, according to R. Traquair. The item in the account-book reads as follows: "... contracted to pay in part a small statue representing the Holy Virgin and the child Jesus, that is to say that the church council will pay to the workman. ..." It is easy to assume that "the workman", since 1816, has been David Fleury David.



Another *Vierge à l'Enfant* was to be found in the church of Rivière-des-Prairies, even a short while ago. Today it is in the collection of Dr. Herbert T. Schwartz of Montreal. A photograph from the Survey of the Works of Art of Quebec shows it to us, with its base, in all respects it is identical to the one of Sault-au-Récollet (7). The base has now disappeared, but there is no doubt that the same sculptor executed both works at about the same time. A third *Vierge à l'Enfant* is conserved in the Musée du Québec. Acquired in 1952 by Mr. Paul Gouin, it came from the church of Sainte-Genève in Pierrefonds. This sculpture, which was cleaned and gilded at the museum in 1955, is slightly different from the two others in the execution of the face of the Virgin, the hang of its garment, the gesture of its right arm. It is very probable however, that it is still the work of the same sculptor.

We are dealing with three churches that are not very far from one another. David Fleury David worked for more than eighteen years in the church of Sault-au-Récollet. It is possible that he sought to sell a copy of the Virgin and Child that he was executing exclusively, or that he had copied from an already existing work, but it is not very probable. He was being paid a substantial sum (8) for his work in Sault-au-Récollet. It is more probable that once the statue of the Virgin was acquired and installed in Sault-au-Récollet neighbouring parishes would have wanted to obtain similar work made by the same sculptor. A keen rivalry existed among various Quebec parishes concerning the ornamentation of churches.

One last example will let us consider the same phenomenon from a different point of view. When the Musée du Québec acquired, in 1967, a *Vierge à l'Enfant*, there was no doubt that this was an important sculpture; it is one of the few sculptures done in a mannered style that is known in Quebec. According to information that was obtained, it would have been part of the property of the early Jesuits; it is not possible for us to confirm this (9). However, we can say from the wearing away of the sculpture, the repairs that were made to it, and the manner in which the reliquary-base is treated, that it is a work of the 18th century. It is a crowned Virgin whose hair falls down to the shoulders and back. She is dressed in a cloak and is holding the Child Jesus with a globe, on her right arm. Her left hand held a sceptre that has disappeared today. The height of this statue did not permit it to be placed in the usual altar niches. Its reliquary-base is also an indication of the value that was set on it, for it must have been the main work of the church or chapel in which it was placed.

In the collection of Mr. Rosaire Saint-Pierre, in Beaumont, there is a small and very faithful replica of the Museum's *Vierge à l'Enfant*. There are differences in the manner in which the child is held, in the hang of the cloak and especially in the base which has lost its function as a reliquary. The Virgin has retained her sceptre. We are inclined to think that this is a copy of the Museum's Virgin executed for a parish that knew its reputation. It is difficult to know if it was made by the same sculptor; there are some rather marked differences in the countenance of the Virgin, but there are also many resemblances. Even if it was executed a long time after the original, this copy must have been ordered from the sculptor.

We could give several other examples that would only confirm this phenomena of mimetism. The work of the sculptors is only indirectly concerned; they were content to execute, in their own style, copies of different works. That does not mean that it was always so and that they never created an original and personal work; there is not one copy that does not have its own life and that does not present an aspect different from the original. It is difficult to say whether they chose to copy or whether models were imposed on them.

It is certain that those who ordered the works, that is to say the Quebec community through the intermediary of its priests and churchwardens, were characterized by a desire to imitate what they had seen in such and such a place and that they considered beautiful. In the beginning it must have been the desire to adorn churches as beautifully as they were adorned in France. Gradually, they probably looked less far away for inspiration. Two passages taken from the *Account-book* of François Baillairgé (10) can enlighten us: July 12 1786 "price settled with Monsieur bedard of St François to decorate the main pew of Berthier like the one at St François for twenty eight piastres received on account eight piastres" October 8 1798 "agreed with Monsieur chamare of Camouraska, to make for the High Altar and for the pew of the Churchwardens of the district, two candlestick fittings 2½ feet tall and in the style or almost like the new candlestick fittings of Quebec"

In the first case, the decoration of the main pew of another parish is to be imitated, in the second, the latest style of Quebec city is to be followed. When a new element of the decoration of a church was to be decided upon, there were no other examples than the

churches of the surrounding areas. Innovations were not easily accepted, but if a parish risked them they were all the rage.

Mimetism is not limited to sculpture; it also affected the goldsmith's craft (we have seen this recently in the works of François Ranvozyé) (11), painting, and architecture. It was one of the factors that contributed to maintaining the traditions of the 17th century until the end of the 19th century. A more searching study would no doubt tell us a great deal about the Quebec mentality.

*Notes:*

- (1) See *Six Enfants Jésus au Globe* in *Vie des Arts* no. 49
- (2) In *Les Levasseur* (La Patrie, January 8, 1950), Mr. Morisset dates this sculpture "about 1719-1720". In *Madones Canadiennes d'Autrefois* (La Patrie, May 14, 1950), he says it is from 1718. These dates are no doubt based on the fact that a new tabernacle was installed in the church in 1719 (Ramsay Traquair, *The Old Church of St-Etienne de Beaumont*, McGill University Publications, Series XIII, no. 39, 1937). However, nothing is known about the sculptor, and this Virgin could date back to before 1719.
- (3) A handle, set in the back of this sculpture serves to hold it during ceremonies.
- (4) Concerning this church, see P. G. Roy, *Les Vieilles Eglises de la Province de Québec*, Québec 1925, pp. 195 to 207, Ramsay Traquair and E. R. Adair, *The Church of the Visitation*, McGill University Publications, Series XIII, no. 18, as well as the files of the "Inventaire des Oeuvres d'Art" (The Survey of Works of Art).
- (5) Quoted in the files of the Survey.
- (6) See the biographical notes of the catalogue *Sculpture traditionnelle au Québec*, Musée du Québec, summer 1967.
- (7) The Rivière-des-Prairies file, photo A-11.
- (8) According to Traquair, 46,000 pounds in all.
- (9) The list of the property of the Jesuits at the time of their dispersion, does not permit us to verify in a very definite way the works of art on it. Concerning this subject see Marius Barbeau, *Trésor des Anciens Jésuites*, Ottawa 1957. Moreover, this sculpture would also have been a part of the collection of Louis Carrier.
- (10) Mr. Gérard Morisset is in possession of the manuscript.
- (11) See the catalogue *François Ranvozyé, Orfèvre*, Musée du Québec, summer, 1968.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

*ceन्द्रillon noire*

PAR LÉON LIPPEL

La sculpture tribale de l'Afrique, originale et expressive, de grande énergie créatrice, est peut-être le plus mal connu des grands arts du monde. L'Exposition *L'Art du Congo* qui nous vient du Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale de Tervuren, nous apporte une compréhension et une révélation de l'importance de cet art et de sa place dans la religion et la philosophie de l'Afrique.

L'influence de cet art sur les peintres et les sculpteurs des années 1900 est déjà bien connue, trop connue, la tentation étant de regarder minutieusement les œuvres de ces artistes en cherchant les détails imputables à l'art nègre. Les figures des Bayakas et de Basongo nous feront donc penser à Braque ou à Picasso; les figures et masques Baoulé, à Modigliani., etc.

Bien qu'il y eût beaucoup d'exemples d'art africain dans l'art européen de 1910-1925, les artistes ne cherchaient pas la copie, mais un moyen d'expression libéré des lois rigides du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, persistant dans la peinture et la sculpture du temps. Ils voyaient dans l'art qu'on appelait *primitif* une libération des formes et des proportions, une liberté complète d'exécution, une conception nouvelle et fraîche de la forme humaine. Ils trouvaient dans les figures et les masques un dynamisme et une puissance, une gamme immense d'exploration formelle. Cette prolifération de formes sculpturales fut, peut-être, la plus grande contribution de l'Afrique à la civilisation mondiale. Plus encore, comme le dit William Fagg, que l'influence africaine sur la musique populaire de notre temps.

Le monde de l'Africain est peuplé par des esprits. Les esprits des ancêtres, ceux des chefs de tribu, des dieux de la pluie, de la fertilité, des récoltes, exercent une influence qui se répand sur la vie quotidienne. Un monde d'esprits qui peuvent agir pour le bonheur ou le malheur, à qui il faut offrir des sacrifices, dont il faut invoquer la présence par des rites spéciaux et des danses de cérémonie interminables. Les masques de danse représentent donc un ancêtre ou un animal totémique, et fréquemment un mélange des formes, en abstraction, de tous ces éléments. Accompagnés des vêtements spéciaux qui dissimulent la personne, ils transforment le danseur en un être surnaturel. Dans la création de ces masques, l'imagination du sculpteur est libérée de toutes références aux formes naturalistes. Les fantaisies de l'artisan, les mythes d'origine et leurs interprétations cachent des idées plus complexes et plus profondes. Elles sont liées à la religion, à la médecine, à la divination et aux autres activités de l'homme, qui cherche et croit trouver sa place dans l'univers. Il est donc certainement très difficile pour nous, si nous regardons ces



œuvres en nous référant à nos canons habituels, de les bien comprendre.

La différence de pensée entre l'Africain et l'Européen entraînera par exemple à définir l'expression d'un masque (ou d'une figurine) en réalité comique et fait pour amuser seulement, comme une tête horrible destinée à créer la terreur. Il faut donc chercher à comprendre l'art africain pour lui-même, et non au travers des valeurs de notre civilisation. Comme le dit F. H. Lam:

"Au lieu d'aller de l'extérieur à l'intérieur par une démarche rationnelle en apparence, la sculpture va de l'intérieur à l'extérieur. Elle tend à exprimer des idées en recourant à des formes inventées d'après la nature, et non pas imitant la nature. Cet art est né par l'esprit, et ces sculptures sont belles à la lumière et sous la main. La sculpture créée ainsi pourrait être comprise par un aveugle".

En d'autres termes, à l'inverse des sculpteurs impressionnistes de l'Occident qui jouent avec les ombres et la lumière, la sculpture traditionnelle africaine est basée sur l'expression et sur le volume.

La sculpture ethnique africaine ne tente jamais de faire ressembler. Les célèbres portraits des rois bakoubas ne sont identifiés que par le symbole qui a rendu célèbres ces personnages durant leur vie. Les visages, quoique finement ciselés dans le style et la langue de la tribu, sont stylisés et l'intention du sculpteur est toujours de faire revivre la présence de l'ancêtre.

La sculpture sur bois est travaillée au moyen d'une herminette avec laquelle la masse est d'abord dégrossie et les volumes secondaires formés. On se sert d'une herminette de plus petite dimension pour les détails afin de donner une surface à facettes. Chaque tribu a sa façon de finir les surfaces. Quelques sculpteurs plongent le bois dans le limon du bord de la rivière, d'autres couvrent la sculpture d'un mélange de bois carbonisé et d'huile de palme et la polissent par la suite avec des feuilles rugueuses. Les objets sont souvent patinés avec le sang du sacrifice et autres substances magiques. La fumée de la hutte et une manipulation constante donnent à certaines sculptures une patine profonde.

Les Bayakas, Bakoudas, Bapendés et autres tribus du Congo se servent de couleurs brillantes sur leurs masques et ils y ajoutent des étoffes à texture compliquée enrichies de coquillages et de perles. Au Nigeria, les Yorubas emploient des couleurs vives sur les masques de la Gelede Society, bien que les couleurs foncées dominent ailleurs aussi bien sur les masques que sur les personnages. L'argile ocre, le kaolin et le *tukula*, sorte d'écorce d'arbre en poudre, sont employés de temps à autre dans la sculpture.

Comme le bois est sculpté quand il est encore vert, la plupart des vieilles sculptures sont fendillées et crevassées. Cependant, le concept de l'âge est très relatif dans les pays tropicaux où les ravages que font les insectes et l'humidité ont pour résultat de désintégrer les sculptures en quelques années et même en quelques mois si on ne prend pas les précautions voulues. Dans la savane de la Haute-Volta et du Mali, les sculptures tribales ont été conservées durant des générations aussi bien que dans la partie semi-désertique du Nord, chez les Dogons, dans la région du Biandagara, où des figures d'ancêtres et des masques qui dataient du 18<sup>e</sup> siècle ont été découverts.

Il est par conséquent difficile d'évaluer l'âge d'une sculpture. Les anciens explorateurs des XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles avaient rapporté des sculptures africaines en bois, en bronze et en or dont quelques-unes se trouvent dans les grandes collections européennes et américaines. Lors du pillage de la ville du Bénin en 1897, on trouva dans le palais d'Oba des ivoires et des moulages en bronze à la cire perdue qui dataient du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle. Les découvertes archéologiques au Nigeria et sur les bords du lac Tchad démontrent aussi que non seulement des centres d'art existaient dans cette région avant le XV<sup>e</sup> siècle, mais qu'un art admirable — celui de la culture Nok — florissait à cet endroit avant l'ère chrétienne, dans un style nettement africain.

L'étude ethnographique révèle un monde de sculptures d'une diversité de formes inconnue en Occident: les masques géométriques presque à deux dimensions des Dogons au Mali et des tribus Mossi et Bobo de la Haute-Volta, les têtes extravagantes de la Gelede Society des Yorubas au Nigeria, les figures et les masques gonflés du Cameroun, toute une variété de styles qui, en conservant le caractère classique de chaque tribu, permettent une liberté que seul peut connaître le sculpteur au cours du processus de création. La symétrie et l'équilibre des figures d'ancêtres des Baoulés ont la dignité et la sérénité d'un Bouddha. Les impressionnantes sculptures Fang, gardiennes des reliques sacrées, font contraste avec celles des Bakotas, leurs voisins, qui ont créé le "M'bulu — N'gulu," une tête en bois, couverte de bandes de cuivre, munie d'une base insérée dans un panier contenant les os des ancêtres.

Le territoire du Congo situé presque à la limite de ce long chemin semé de sculptures qui couvre l'ouest et le centre de l'Afrique, du Sénégal à l'Angola, est la patrie de quelque cent tribus et sous-tribus. Durant des siècles, ce vaste territoire d'environ un million de milles

carrés a produit une grande partie de la sculpture africaine la plus étonnante et la plus dynamique qui soit. Les tribus, qui pourtant vivaient côte à côte, ont été peu influencées les unes par les autres. Chaque groupe a développé un style qui lui est particulier. Par exemple, les figures sévères et anguleuses d'ancêtres des Bayakas, sur le Congo, rappellent les premiers cubistes; les masques de bois, de raffia et de tissu lourdement incrustés de coquillages et de perles de couleurs vives sont utilisés pour les rites de la fertilité, les danses d'initiation et autres cérémonies de sociétés secrètes. Ils contrastent fortement avec ceux des Bapendes, plus en amont du fleuve, qui eux sont célèbres pour leurs masques minyaks à face triangulaire.

Les Batetelas, les Dengeses et les Bakoubas se trouvent entre le Kasai et le Congo. Les Bakoubas sont prospères et vivent dans un pays agricole favorable au développement culturel. Comme la majorité des peuples africains, leur art est lié à leurs croyances religieuses et à leurs légendes; même leurs coupes à boire et leurs fameuses boîtes sont décorées de dessins symboliques. Ces mêmes dessins apparaissent dans le tissu à effet de velours appelé *velours de Kasai* qu'on fabrique encore aujourd'hui. La grande variété de leurs masques perlés ou peints de couleurs vives sont typiques de l'esprit d'invention et de la naïveté du sculpteur africain.

L'art tribal s'exerce aussi dans une grande variété d'objets. De petits poids de bronze de formes différentes coulés à la cire perdue et dont on se sert pour peser la poussière d'or. Des poulies de métier à tisser dont quelques-unes sont d'une grande beauté et d'une certaine élégance. Des bâtons de cérémonie en bois et en fer battu, des colliers aux ciselures compliquées, des pendentifs en ivoire et en or, des tabourets de fantaisie et enfin les magnifiques portes des Dogons et des Senufos sculptées en haut-relief. Ajoutons à ceci les étoffes imprimées et tissées qui servent à couvrir les masques et qui sont décorées de coquillages, de perles et de plumes.

La magie qui fait partie de la vie quotidienne des Africains se manifeste aussi dans la fabrication de fétiches et d'amulettes. Le ciseleur ou le féticheur qui offre des objets d'une grande variété de formes doit répondre aux désirs des éventuels clients. L'amateur d'art africain n'est pas à proprement parler un collectionneur dans le sens où le terme est appliqué par exemple à un collectionneur de timbres ou de pièces de monnaie qui se procure avec joie une nouvelle pièce complétant sa collection. La sculpture africaine trouve au contraire sa raison d'être dans les musées ou les collections particulières, comme objet unique destiné au plaisir de la contemplation. Une tendance déplorable s'est manifestée cependant ces dernières années vers l'achat d'œuvres africaines comme moyen d'investissement. Cette pratique, tandis qu'elle éveillait naturellement l'attention d'un vaste public, a eu pour effet simultané de diriger les pièces rares et uniques entre les mains des spéculateurs, de sorte que les vrais connaisseurs, généralement moins fortunés, se sont vus privés de ces objets d'art.

Une industrie croissante s'est donc développée en Afrique (et même en Europe), causée par une demande de plus en plus grande de ces objets. Les artisans sont ainsi devenus très occupés à fabriquer de larges quantités de sculptures commerciales qu'ils exécutent et polissent en ayant soin de reproduire les déprédations des termites. Ces pièces se retrouvent chez les antiquaires et dans les ventes aux enchères ou on les achète à bon marché, quoique en certains cas leurs prix puissent atteindre ceux des objets authentiques.

Cependant, les connaissances répandues au moyen de bons livres écrits sur le sujet peuvent aider les acheteurs à distinguer l'objet falsifié de celui qui est créé dans le style d'une tribu donnée et dont les Africains se servent vraiment en fonction de l'usage pour lequel cet objet a été créé.

Ces mêmes livres traitent aussi des civilisations qui existaient sur ce riche continent avant l'arrivée des Blancs. Si on a longtemps appelé l'Afrique le "Continent noir" c'est sûrement en raison des ténèbres où nous tenait notre ignorance des différentes cultures de ces peuples.

Traduction de Lucile Ouimet

### *The Plexi Discotheque in Old Montreal*

BY LUC D'IBERVILLE-MOREAU

With increasing frequency, local newspapers are reporting new restorations or projected restorations which, if they are all carried out, would make Montreal one of the most important witnesses to



the presence of France in North America in the 17th and 18th centuries. This historical group, intelligently restored and operated could become one of the most lively and engaging centres of cultural and tourist attraction for Montreal. A few months ago, there occurred the opening of Les écuries d'Youville (The Youville Stables), the former Youville hospital which had been tastefully restored by a private company.

Old Montreal is being rejuvenated. If its buildings house private offices, they also accommodate art galleries, shops, restaurants, and discotheques whose youthful clientele somewhat influences the life and character of this old district. The most recent addition to the quarter, the Plexi Discotheque located in Place Jacques-Cartier, is a rather unique example of agreement and understanding among the architect, the designer, and the owner. While not neglecting the commercial aspect of his undertaking, the owner, Mr. Léo Ruelland, played the role of a patron of the arts, for patronage supposes confidence and loyalty on the part of the patron towards the artist, but it also encompasses the most subtle agreement on the principles of an art, of a form, and of a manner. And that is so rare today. As for presenting government aid as a modern patron, we have seen some local examples of that recently, and that seems rather funny to me. What confidence and loyalty would you want there to be between a free creator and the state? Between a state who will always require that the candidates under its protection prove before "ad hoc" commissions that they are very neutral, very colourless, and very incapable of disturbing the peace. The state giving a free hand to Borduas, to Réjean Ducharme, to Ulysse Comtois. Why, it's inconceivable!

The Plexi Discotheque is a success in which technology proves that it is playing an increasingly important role in our society and that art can be directly under its sway. By choosing to give to the decor of this discotheque a character that is alien to that of the district, the architect, Mr. Gilles Lavigueur, did not choose the easiest solution of fashionable contemporary decor and revealed an adventurous spirit and a great deal of originality.

The abundance of new materials and techniques of which plexiglass is an example, of materials invented for commercial purposes and then discovered by artists as a new form of creation, has evidently influenced architecture, but it has also permitted a rapid evolution of sculpture. The latter will certainly replace painting as the most representative art form of the second part of the 20th century.

The Plexi Discotheque is a sculpture and the architect, influenced by the problems of space which preoccupy most artists quickly realized that he had only to follow abstract designs to capture the taste and style of the times in which we live. If concrete has been the material of the 20th century, plastic will no doubt be the material of the 21st century. The modules which make up the main decor, that of the ceiling, were made by the Hickey Plastic Company. Mr. Alfredo Haddad, a designer, was in charge of the selection of the place settings and utensils that one can admire during the day when the discotheque functions as a restaurant. The confidence and understanding which existed between the architect and the designer have made the "Plexi" a contemporary success of impeccable taste. They have created there an atmosphere worthy of the best international designer, an atmosphere that one rarely has the opportunity to see in Montreal.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

## Roger Paquin

BY NORMAND THERIAULT

— Graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, sculpture and integrated arts option. Exhibitions:

- Youth Pavilion, Expo 1967
- Galerie du Siècle, 1967
- "New Sculpture at Stratford", 1968
- Provincial Competition, 1967 and 1968 (two award-purchases).

To find oneself again in front of the pieces of Roger Paquin, is really to stand before "sculptures", for the work itself is its sole

presence and is in no way supported by writings or verbal affirmations. Roger Paquin declines to make a "statement" and wants to leave to these plays of forms and colours, which are his works, complete independence and, by that very fact, total affirmation.

His work lends itself to this well for, in opting among all the tendencies of present day art, for an art that is above all "plastic", he produces pieces whose significance is totally the result of a perception, and this perception is relative to the look that the viewer casts on it. In other terms, in Paquin's work, the work-author-viewer relationship is never given a personal touch, the first term (the work), being the only element that is real and present, the two others being dependent on it on different levels and remaining unknown to each other. This searching for an "anonymity" thus permits no altering of the meaning of each of the sculptures.

The primary interest of Paquin has always been to suggest by sculpture a space that creates a free play of volumes with sharp edges, and that, independently of an individual experience that would confer upon the work a chronological notation. And his first pieces almost created an architecture, and even an architectural monument.

This stage is characteristic of his education and his apprenticeship in the profession and, finally, when he was taking courses in the integrated arts option at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, he found his direction. Then he executed solid cement blocks, that could weigh as much as 500 pounds, and whose forms were reduced to the simplest expression. However, if they consisted primarily of volume, they allowed a place to the material, the surfaces varying by diverse treatments, according to whether their author retained traces of the various stages of the casting or removed their rough appearance.

With his pieces he determined the formal universe that would be his own and gave his own definition of the sculptor's occupation. For him, it was no longer a question of considering the sculptor to be an executant whose principal capacity was to refine forms by a direct meeting with the material that allowed him to express himself. For when the form has been decided upon, its realization becomes anonymous and does not result from a subtlety of treatment. It is only a matter of forming a sculpture that, ideally, already exists.

This was the case of the first piece that he executed in the Youth Pavilion. "Rochers-causerie" was first put down on paper and its structure was carried out by an "anonymous" treatment. At this stage of the execution, the artist becomes a technician and his work consists in clearly affirming an indispensable design. But the latter requires more than one experimentation to compensate for the lack of knowledge.

Thus it was possible to see Paquin applying various colours to find the one that would unite the best with the blue of the interior and exterior surfaces, in such a way that the side edges define the general form as clearly as possible. For colour does not "decorate" a volume, but it helps to define the forms and to accelerate the viewer's perception of the piece so that the viewer is finally meeting with a global "message".

With this piece, Paquin also opted for the art of metal, for the latter allows a more definite and clearer affirmation of forms. He creates a free play of space which, by the spans of the volumes, registers itself in the more general area of the surrounding environment, to render the relationship between the work and the environment more dynamic.

But "Rochers-causerie" and the two pieces that will follow it retain the notion of the work of art. "Staccato" and "Vulcania" are works, being in effect conceived as a physically united group that without any doubt participates in the environment but by making an opening in the latter rather than by integrating it.

This limitation of the pieces (where they necessarily suggested a play of space) was however to be abandoned. And as in "Rochers-causerie", where two independent elements made up a "single" piece, the entire "Canyon" series was going to play on a modular structure that was really going to permit the viewer to "dialogue" with the sculptures.

For if the piece at the Youth Pavilion still allowed an interest in form for itself to persist, by putting the accent on the curve that was interesting for its beauty alone, the "Canyon" series really plays on the values of space. It is not a question of saying that the material has been broken up, but it is now no more than a support for a rhythm created by the forms. The latter, not as in "Staccato", where it arose from an intellectual association with a "chosen piece", questions the whole environment and has the same role as an architectural work—its purpose is to create in the viewer (or rather the one who participates in the environment) a questioning.

For, by choosing a structurally simple form, a broken line, he allows a play of designs and shapes that condition the entire encompassing space by dividing it and imposing on it another range of



values, and the various designs, far from being static, communicate among themselves by the coloured surfaces which, of identical dimensions, vary in density according to the various relationships that the viewer establishes among them.

In fact, there is not any assemblage that is necessary to them: it is possible in the presentation to work with the diverse elements that compose them. Perhaps this can be doubted in the case of the first two pieces of the series, for, because of their smaller size, they may have some difficulty resisting a separation in space. But with the piece that was shown in Stratford, no questioning is allowed: the play of the dispositions is infinitely varied and the diverse ways of presenting them make them so many sculptures. For what is important now, is no longer the accidental nature of form, but the participation of a group with another that is more vast, that encompasses the pieces, the people, and the physical space that is not normally "sculpture". But there is also sensed the necessity for large size and the artist's intention to create an "architecture". Thus, in this respect we understand that Paquin affirms about "Canyon #4", the piece shown in the last Provincial Competition, that "I am discovering more and more that the piece had been conceived for a museum". For it really acts on a free play of surface and is above all a "beautiful" piece, independent of the idea that subtends it. And we apply ourselves to contemplating each of the surfaces, the latter clearly removing us from the environment decor to "play" the game of the "beautiful thing".

It was this position that made him work for a long time on rounded forms where the aspect of "pleasure" of looking at the work would be its greatest quality. His research has been temporarily abandoned, for it does not fit in with his present preoccupations. More and more Paquin is aiming at the creating of large size pieces that would permit a varied use. And to accomplish this, he is turning to a sculpture of a modular conception.

This interest is not new, but he now feels that he possesses a language that would allow him to make valid realizations. In 1967, there was "Les paravents" and "Goduram": the first were units that had the shape of a greek "lambda", the second were L shapes that marked divisions in space and on the ground. And, since that time, he has been able to widen his knowledge of materials and metallurgy, to be able to reach the conception of a modular unity as a base to which other sections, of varied shapes could be joined. And its use could have a presentation that is as much horizontal as vertical. Thus, in the execution, it will suffice to fabricate in a factory several of the modules and to use them under presentations which, by the adjunction of other components, will assure a variety. The result is thus more economic and the notion of the work is thus abandoned, for a single piece even after its setting down could be transformed.

Thus Paquin's sculptures no longer seek to "signify" the world and their author, but to make the environment that contains them "significant." We are no longer dealing with a visual art where the viewer reflects for a moment on a piece that he has been looking at for several months but rather this is an art that intends to be continually present to the environment and that wants its action on those who live there, on those who are not always aware of it, to be constant.

With such pieces, Paquin places himself within the tendency of sculpture that was introduced by the Guggenheim exhibition at the Fine Arts Museum here last summer. It is an art that, like that of Morris Judd, Caro, Murray, and several others, is clearly dependent on the look cast on it by the inhabitants of the place and which finally gives it its meaning. It is a question of making "a universe of forms" and not of fabricating "illegal" objects in a physical environment that has not foreseen them.

It is an intellectual art but it can be perceived only by the senses which give a total view of it. In Paquin, this is seen by the importance he grants to coloured surfaces.

As for the importance that this form of expression will assume here, that depends on the interest that we take in it. Paquin, among others is working on the level of forms which are very ambitious physically and we will only understand their beauty in the extent that that we can perceive them as such. And, in public squares, as in large buildings, these sculptures will no doubt have more interest and meaning than a few scurvy boxed shrubs.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

## operation clothes-pin and door-handle

BY FRANÇOIS GAGNON

### *The beginning of a project by Giusseppe Fiore*

Using clothes-pins in a work of art sounds rather familiar. Last fall Hugh Leroy distributed a prospectus of the Montreal Museum whose cover had a series of clothes-pins, that also evoked in a disconcerting manner a "rayogramme" from the '20's by Man Ray (1). In 1967, among other projects for imaginary monuments, Claes Oldenburg proposed erecting an immense, nightmarish, concrete clothes-pin over Chicago (2). Let us go back a little further in time, and let us not look too closely at the form of the pin, and we will recall that Francis Picabia had used hairpins in a famous collage: "La Femme aux Allumettes" (3).

It will have been noted however, that these uses of the clothes-pin (or other pins) in contemporary art smack of dadaism (Picabia and Man Ray), or pop art (Oldenburg). Might Giusseppe Fiore, a Canadian of Italian origin, be joining their ranks, — to tell the truth — a little late?

Really, it is nothing of the kind. Neither the education nor the previous work of Fiore take this direction. Born on April 18, 1931 in Mola, a little city in Southern Italy, on the Adriatic coast, Giusseppe Fiore received his first lessons, which were quite academic in fact, in the shop of Stella, an unknown local sculptor. Drawing and painting were considered to be a way of reproducing reality photographically. Fiore seems to have succeeded quite well at it, for the Liceo Artistica of Naples confirmed this teaching by granting him a diploma of "Maturita Artistica" . . . in 1950. Then for two years he studied at the Naples Faculty of Architecture. This biographical detail is worth being remembered, for the current project of Giusseppe Fiore depends on an art that integrates architecture, as we shall see.

The course of Fiore's Italian career stops here. After a visit to France and Belgium where he discovered Cézanne and "Le Douanier" Rousseau, Fiore emigrated to Canada in October, 1952. He was 21 then, and far from "artistic maturity", with all due deference to the Liceo Artistico of Naples! Having arrived in Canada, he enrolled in the fresco courses that Stanley Cosgrove was giving at the Montreal Ecole des Beaux-Arts (4), and was there for two years. He returned to the Beaux-Arts after his marriage to Monique Girard in October, 1957, but this time to receive a diploma in the teaching of art, in 1959. It is evident that this is not exactly the formation of a future dadaist or pop artist! On the contrary what these facts bring out is the tendency to integrate his artistic work into a precise social context, teaching being the main such endeavour for the time being.

Fiore's previous work confirms the impression left by the review of his education. The reader will be able to ascertain this for himself with the help of several reproductions of his paintings that are printed here. The oldest one dates back to 1961 and is entitled "La Femme au Chat". It was exhibited at the Galerie XII of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts from March 17th to April 2nd, 1961 (5), on the occasion of one of Fiore's most important exhibitions. The English critics of the day (6) had thought it clever to relate this picture and others in the exhibition, to Italian futurism. This was forgetting that futurism; such as it was expressed in Marinetti's "Manifesto" (7) was not only a pictorial technique, but also an enthusiasm for contemporary subjects, and notably for speed. "A roaring racing car that goes like a machine gun is more beautiful than the Winged Victory of Samothrace. (8). War was also declared on classical subjects like the nude, the landscape, and the still-life. . . . If the technique of "La Femme au Chat" by Fiore is reminiscent of the faceted treatment that Severini borrowed from the cubists after November 1911, then the peaceful subject of this picture places it in quite another sphere. It would have been more accurate to have seen it as the attempt of a young painter to get out of the Impressionist impasse where up to that point his painting risked being confined, to set problems of the pictorial surface as such. And, as a matter of fact, it is the tendency that was going to dominate his production thereafter.

The mural that we are dealing with now clearly indicates what this mastery of the surface was going to make possible, and also it indicates his first attempt to put his painting into an architectural framework. We are referring to the mural that Fiore executed for the "La Lanterna Verde" restaurant in Dorval, in 1963. (10) Certainly the vague figurative references in the exciting composition of this mural rather get in the way. If we insisted all the same on showing this work, it is because it prefigures Fiore's current study of the problem of the wall in architecture.

However that may be, the production of 1964 and of the following year is abstract, as is magnificently illustrated by the "Composition" of 1964 (11), or this other one of 1964-65. The structure of the latter, in thin vertical bands placed side by side anticipates in a curious way



the walls covered with clothes-pins or door-handles that Fiore is now offering us.

We now suspect that there is nothing subversively dadaist about "Operation clothes-pin and door-handle". It is a matter of a large-scale project trying to resolve certain problems on the human scale, which is something that our architecture seems to need today. These are the circumstances in which the project was born. I hold the details that follow from Fiore himself, with whom I have had several conversations since December 1968.

Everything began last summer, in the Montagnard region near Saint-Jérôme, where Fiore and his family have been living for some time. Assisted by a grant from the Canada Council, Fiore explored the possibilities of inscribing forms on a surface by pouring cement into a shuttering prepared to this effect. These forms were created by the impression of objects fixed on the walls of the shuttering: pieces of construction wood, pieces of styrofoam plastic containers used in packaging etc. . . . One only had to look around to discover a multitude of forms of this kind. However the project which had already produced some appreciable sculptural and monumental possibilities, retained some aesthetically gratuitous quality that was not completely satisfactory.

It was then that Fiore thought of clothes-pins, and door-handles, and of the wall at the same time, that is to say a form, and a function. Why could the elements not recall a familiar form, like that of the clothes-pin and serve at the same time, to modulate the surface of a wall in an architecture. Without losing its aesthetic quality, the project gained in functionalism and in social integration, a prospect which Fiore thought not completely devoid of merit.

But after all, why favour a form as banal as that of a clothes-pin? or a door-handle? — These objects are on the human scale. Their utilitarian function brings them, I was going to say necessarily, to the hand of man. They possess hidden mathematical proportions that can be taken seriously. A system of proportions can be multiplied without losing its intrinsic structure for all that. Let us multiply by 2, 5, 10 . . . the system of proportions inherent in a clothes-pin, without modifying it in its structure, and we obtain a modular unit, which applied to a wall in a series imposes on it a scale and a rhythm that recall the initial proportions. The wall then takes on a familiar character. Its integration into the social context is all the stronger since there is no question here, as with the Modular by Le Corbusier, for example, of a system of proportions abstractly deduced by the creator, but rather of a system that is popular in a sense, since it respects proportions that people have already mastered, as it were.

Certainly it is not always easy to recognize the clothes-pin or the door-handle on Fiore's walls. In his model, the clothes-pins are glued in the most varied positions, after first having been separated in half. In the same way, Fiore seems to give preference to door-handles from the drawers of Scandinavian furniture, and this, after all, is not the most common door-handle. In the case of the clothes-pins, the fact of separating them in half and removing the spring, gives them an ease of handling that they would not have otherwise. The combinations and multiple arrangements to which they are then subject on the wall, reveal new aspects of the clothes-pin and, as well, they serve to make the wall familiar.

The door-handle is borrowed from the Scandinavians, because they have been able to retain the qualities of the materials used, especially with wood, even on the level of industrial production. This respect for the material testifies to a finer and more delicate sensitivity, since it has respected a certain human scale.

Displaying its clothes-pins, enlarged according to the needs, the wall of Fiore takes on a sculptural quality. It catches the light. It was becoming tempting to add chromatic effects to these textural effects. There also, the model permits us to explore several possibilities quickly. Chromatics are, so to speak, required by the fact that the clothes-pins have become, in these structures, modular unities and lose their exclusively utilitarian quality.

Certainly a project of this kind raises some — I was going to say philosophical — questions. As we have seen the choice of the clothes-pin is very intentional here. Why! Because Fiore believes that these products of modern technology seem to have retained contact with the human element. "Human", what a delicate notion with which to deal!

I think I understand that what still links the clothes-pin to the human element is the very great age of the technical principle that it implements. As early as the last Bronze Age and the first Iron Age, that is to say between 1300 to 930 B.C., the Israelites were already using some types of "fibulae", a kind of pin with a spring used to fasten two flaps of a garment, as the ivories of Megiddo testify, and these objects themselves have been found in architectural excavations. Would such an old object — and it is not the only one, the needle was in use in the Paleolithic — not point the way to a certain definition of man's permanence, on the very level where his continuity

seems most questioned, that is to say on the technological level itself? Would these very old extensions of the human hand so related to the biological structure of the hand, to its proportions, to its functioning, not be the tangible, manipulable proof of this very permanence of man?

But then the small size of the objects, their very insignificance, worries me. Does this famous human continuity beyond the contemporary technological fact rest quite entirely on such a fragile base? Already automatic dryers are questioning the very existence of clothes-pins. Their area of distribution corresponds geographically to the outlying regions where it is not profitable to install "laundromats", and corresponds sociologically to the classes of society for whom the use of these automatic machines still constitutes too large a weekly expense. We will have noticed that it is a question of the sectors of society least affected by contemporary technology.

Certainly the meaning of Fiore's undertaking is not to hark back to the days of the spinning wheel. But does it not indicate a possible direction for art — certainly not the only one — to assure this continuity of forms and their inexhaustible fruitfulness, beyond the technological revolution? If it is so, it is possible that Fiore's clothes-pins rejoin Tinguely's crank-arm machines and Calder's "mobiles" that preferred to obey the rhythm of the wind and imitate the movement of the clouds, rather than the staccato of modern machines. If it is so, it is possible that these walls on the human scale would assure man's permanence, even long after the form of the clothes-pin and its name, have been forgotten.

#### NOTES:

- (1) Reproduced in André Breton, "Le surréalisme et la Peinture", N.R.F. (Nouvelle Revue Française), revised edition 1928-65, p. 32.
- (2) Exhibition at the Sidney Janis Gallery, in New York. For a reproduction see "Times Mag." Nov. 22, 1968, p. 59.
- (3) 1920, Simone Collinet collection. Reproduced in "Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage" by W. S. Rubin, The Museum of Modern Art, N.Y. 1967, p. 27 among others.
- (4) These courses were then being given in the former Monument National building on Saint-Lawrence street.
- (5) With Phillip Surrey. Cf. Press release in the "Montreal Star", March 15, 1961. Ibid "Montreal Gazette", March 16, 1961.
- (6) Robert Ayre in the "Star" and Dorothy Pfeiffer in the "Gazette".
- (7) Written near the end of 1908, published in "Le Figaro", February 20th, 1909.
- (8) "Manifeste du Futurisme" quoted in José Pierre, "Le Futurisme et le Dadaïsme", Lausanne, 1966, p. 11.
- (9) Fiore was 30 at the time.
- (10) Lixitex, 24' x 10 1/2'. Let us recall some other murals by Fiore: a mosaic in a restaurant on Ile Bizard, in 1962; another mural in a restaurant of the Beaconsfield Shopping Centre, in the same year; a wood montage in the Nunzio restaurant on B. langer Street in 1964.
- (11) Acrylic and oil, 48" x 64", 1964, Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Cohen, Montreal.
- (12) Collage and oil, 36" x 48", 1964-5, belongs to the artist.
- (13) Twelfth century B.C.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

#### A cinema of wandering

(Jutra, Don Owen, Carle, Garceau, Lefebvre, Ransen)

BY DOMINIQUE NOGUEZ

"Oh Earth, in wandering, we dream . . ."

No matter what one does, it seems that the theme of youth, which was the focal point of the first of these chronicles about the Quebec cinema, is inextinguishable and that it now appears in all of the films like a haunting obsession. Everything conspires to its supremacy: retrospectives, excursions into public movie houses, previews. Whether we like it or not, upon seeing *A tout prendre* again, or seeing *Ernie Game*, *Le viol d'une jeune fille douce*, *Le Grand Rock*, or *Jusqu'au Coeur*, and on previewing *Christopher's Movie Matinee*, we meet it everywhere. And the first thing that we must understand is that the cinema of Quebec or of Toronto (I wish to discuss the one that counts) is at once the scene and the sign of a *newness*, it being understood that we leave to that word all its force and all its indeterminateness. Let us not try to decide whether the "new" aspect of this newness is the result of the original and growing importance of the cinematographic *means of expression* in itself (what English-speaking people and a few Anglomaniac French-speaking people call very inadequately the *medium*), or the result of the *manner* in which it is used, or finally the result of the *material* that is presented there. It is a *newness* that is *less renewal* in any event (for it starts from almost nothing), than a permanent and groping *innovation*. In the work of Jutra, Don Owen, Lefebvre, or Ransen, in varying



degrees of lucidity and control, the film willingly assumes the force of a *wandering* — with however something more brisk than what the Heideggerian word usually suggests, but with a certain (secret) seriousness all the same, for the first steps are always those that engage one the most.

The wandering of *A tout prendre* — which the Cinémathèque Canadienne had the good idea to present last March, and which it should present every week, for it is one of two or three most beautiful films ever made in Quebec —, is a wandering of the heart. But a heart that is "mis à nu" (bared), with all that this Baudelairian term can imply of a-romanticism. We know that there is a romantic manner in which to treat one's heart; concealed, and delicately enveloped in tissue paper or light cotton. For it is, basically, a poor little thing that we dearly love and that we bleed only with very little pin pricks, with frightful moans: twenty tears for each drop shed. A-romanticism, on the contrary, can be a complete and magnificent ablation of this cumbersome organ — consider Don Giovanni, and Valmont, and a certain Montherlant —, it can also be an indiscreet heart treated with a joyous lack of indulgence, that is to say in short, like the big bit of red flesh that it is; what bursts of laughter then will greet stabs and thrusts of stiletto and knife. Look at Stendhal, at the work of the young Flaubert, at Lautréamont, Radiguet. Look at the "hussars", Nimier at the head, and Vian (Boris). And in cinema, look at the hussars that were the Malle of *Le Feu Follet* (he had to be forgiven for *Les Amants*), or the Godard of *A bout de souffle*, *Le Petit Soldat*, *Pierrot-le-Fou*. Claude Jutra belongs to that group, and were it not for the fact that he is slightly late (*A tout prendre* is of 1963, but what importance?), one would gladly say that he reveals himself to be one of the French literary hussars of 1955 (those carefree types who had a little gallop in St-Germain on the streets of King Sartre before the Robbegrilletian and Sollersian bands came to test their steam rollers there), and one of the most talented New Wave film producers. We apologize for these references to literature and to France but until things change, Jutra is the most literary and the most French of Quebec film producers. He is literary in his commentary in counterpoint that accompanies the picture (by Jean-Claude Labrecque) and which constitute the true "graphie" (writing) of this autobiography. For, as far as concerns the actors and the sets — which are usually in the film the grounds of a slight transposition, and of the *distance* that the author establishes, in relation to his own life (which is thus the sign that there has been rewriting and not a pure and obvious presentation of an event that is actually unfolding) they are in a certain and troubling manner the same as those of the related event. Without saying it, Jutra and Johanne Harelle, actors, only mimic their *own* story. This is a false "happening" because after all it is the *second time* that what is shown to us is occurring and this reiteration necessarily deprives the film of what characterizes every true *event*: unpredictability and singularity). This activity however, has something less free and more dangerous than a simple reconstitution; it has the incalculable importance of a psychoanalytical tale, that runs the risk at any moment of considerably modifying the one who speaks it, and the perilous character of playing with fire (with the heart): consider in another respect *Les liaisons dangereuses*. The I of *A tout prendre* is thus the exact opposite of the I of *David Holzman's diary* a recent film by the American James McBride, a false diary where acts a false actor (who fools us) and, (that is to say) a real actor; in *A tout prendre* on the contrary, a false actor pretends to act; it is the author — and he is not acting, for he is playing his own role.

What role? The role of an upper middle class young man who is brilliant and lucid, cultivated and witty, I mean full of vigour, lucidity, culture, and wit (and I am skipping some) all these things that are to be had by a refined education and thus, originally, by the thousands of dollars of mother and dad. Yes I am skipping some; I left out the pious adolescence, the devoted son aspect of his character — of which we notice some traces in the scenes with the mother or with the priest, in short, the noble soul. And especially I am passing over a very praise-worthy flow of courage after the great spiritual ebbs of adolescence, the tone of self-bereavement which Vailland calls "having a cool look", with (and even in the most pathetic moments) a capriciousness, an impulsiveness, a taste for jokes (as noticeable in the picture as in the commentary, let us bear in mind the end of the film), which allows us for once, without misusing this fine word, to speak of humour. Humour here is protection, as it often is, but it is legitimate, for the heart here, I come back to this is bared, bravely bared (shades of Gide). None of the small or great weakness that are ordinarily suppressed will be concealed including: evasion of responsibilities, apathy towards the ex-boyfriend of an ex-girlfriend, and even a homosexual inclination which had never been mentioned in films in such a calm and natural way: he is a kind of chatty boor, a nuisance (and on occasion, a pest).

This serious reflecting on one's own conduct is thus the opposite of a complacent harking back to an old story. It is the at once tender and fond resumption of a sentimental wandering that was a prelude to a vaster wandering in the world and in art; of that, something is said at the end of the film: like Frederic in *Education sentimentale*, Claude has travelled. Of the latter and of this film, let us hope that it is only the first phase.

There is something from *A tout prendre* in *Ernie Game* (1967) by Don Owen. With this one exception, that Ernie, a young English speaking Quebecer, is socially uprooted: he wanders in a city to which nothing, neither past nor future, binds him. No word of a political nature, no aesthetic searching comes to distract him, like the hero of *A tout prendre*, from his sentimental weariness. Besides, does he still have feelings? No doubt there is a secret confusion before an emotional and aesthetic impotence, clearly experienced, but the two women between whom he hesitates and with whom he experiences brief moments of equilibrium are for him more like mothers or older sisters than occasions for heart-break. The hero of *A tout prendre* was a kind of Europeanized, Stendhalian upper middle class, Pierrot-le-Fou, the one of *Ernie Game* is an American Pierrot-le-Fou, whose madness comes not from love but from an immense instability. The only way of wandering that he knows is physical and emotional vagabondage. At once akin to the heroes of Kerouac, Camus (*L'Étranger*) and Christiane Rochefort (*Le repos du guerrier*), he takes his place in the gallery of characters of postwar Western literature or cinema without anything in the film calling attention to his "Quebec-ness" or his "Canadian-ness" — not even on the level of form (the latter is deceptive, at once in its colours, that are rarely good, and in the very traditional handling of the film mounting and editing).

On the other hand, there is no more Quebecish a film than *Le viol d'une jeune fille douce*: which in no way means that this film is unexportable, on the contrary, but the problems that it tackles (the emancipation of girls, abortion) are among the problems that are posed with the greatest urgency in Quebec, and which are posed in an *exemplary* manner in Quebec. I am wrong moreover, to speak of problems, even though the film by Gilles Carle has, at least in the beginning, very rationally (and sometimes even very Godard-like) the appearance of a case study. In fact, in this savoury film, Carle simply *shows*, with a great deal of verve and finally, without commenting (and thus with humour) the rather considerable gap that is increasingly widening in Quebec between a closed society of a catholic and traditional type where sexuality remains the cause for all kinds of taboos, and the more receptive society, that is non-religious and emancipated, that is gradually supplanting it. In this sense the film is to be related to a film like *Georgy girl* by Narrizano, where he called attention to, and stressed this gap between the two types of societies, the two kinds of morality, the one that is dying and the one that is coming, by dealing with the birth of a child to a modern young couple who wanted none: it is an emptiness finally that surrounded Narrizano, the absence in the evolved Western societies, of a collective structure able to substitute itself for the contested and out of date structure of the traditional family. The presence of the three brothers, the ruined survivors of the sacrosanct French Canadian family, proves that this problem is not absent from Carle's film, but it is the clash of the two mentalities that seems to interest him especially. Now everything unfolds as if the very form of the film mimicked this confrontation: modern, discontinuous, Godard-like in its beginning in which we are shown the healthy and free life of a young Quebec student in Montreal, — more traditional, more narrative, as soon as there intervenes, like escapees from a funny strip, the three brothers come from the country to avenge in the Sicilian manner the supposedly sullied honour of their sister. The middle of this circular film (whose beginning is *already* the end, and whose end resumes and explains the beginning) is constituted by the news of an unplanned pregnancy (thus scandalous in a kind of society where everything must always be settled in advance). It is in relation to this "scandal" that there crystallizes the whole series of oppositions mentioned above (catholicity/ non-religiosity; shamed sexuality/ free sexuality; family/ individualism; country/city). In this matter, Carle's position is not to be doubted, he is not neutral. His position is simply *implicit* (the source of the humour): and is completely recorded in the ambiguity of the title. For in this society which claims to be horrified by rape, the rape in question is not the one we think.

*Le Grand Rock* is also a completely Quebec film. But it is a film that lacks courage. It is the story of a strapping young fellow that begins very well and turns out very badly. (I am talking here not so much about Rock as I am of the film of Raymond Garceau). This film was presented under the best auspices: the whole beginning up to the wedding scene, attests to a very sound effort to contribute to



the elaboration of a national cinema, which owes nothing to the mystifying cinema of Hollywood or anywhere else, and which retains consciously or not, the best of the lesson of certain Frenchmen. (Rouch, Marker, Eustache, Claude Berri), of certain Italians (Olimi), and of certain Czechoslovakians or of certain Quebecers that are known in direct cinema. And here, in a few minutes, all of this, in which one feels an indisputable talent, is set aside by the desire to please, in the worst sense of that word (the one that was formerly denounced by Jean Gascon in *Sel de la Semaine*), that is to say of giving to the public (but what is the public? "The public" does not exist, it is a fantasy invented by soup merchants) what it is thought that they are expecting — and what they perhaps do expect. But it matters little. For art has always consisted exactly in producing what was not expected. Art is *surprise* or it does not exist. Real cinema, in the same way, recognizes itself in that it changes something, were it a very small thing, in the mind, or at least in the perception of the viewer. *Le Grand Rock* changes nothing. *Le Grand Rock* only encourages Quebecers to do what they have never stopped doing in consuming the opium of Hollywood or the *Fantomas* or other ignoble French *Gendarmes*: to dream away their life. Art must make one understand more clearly. Now *Le Grand Rock* makes us understand nothing. Where it could have called attention to an alienation, to a few awful problems (scandalous the latter), it clouds everything: the goal is not to disturb and consequently to hide the harshness of reality by making it *romantic*, fabulous, unreal — that is to say ideal, idealizing being exactly an erroneous and mystifying manner of showing (of masking) reality, — one might as well say it blinds everything. At last the degradation and failure of *Big Rock*, due to a certain number of economic and social conditions that might at least have been emphasized, are blamed on this kind of simple fatalism that is to be found in adventure novels or melodramas and which brings forth at most, a few weepy outbursts, but never a sense of outrage or thought. Everything is played out beforehand and this is the opposite of a cinema of wandering, that is to say of confusion, or research and innovation. Let us leave the lovely red cowls of *Grand Rock* to those who take pleasure (have some interest?) in persuading us that the alienation of a big fellow who is too gullible and hot-headed, or of a little old woman stupefied by television commercials, that unemployment, the increase of delinquency, are not problems, but are at the most a few spices good to enhance the insipid gruel of commercial cinema. Let us simply note that a certain immanent justice saw to it that *Le grand Rock* by aiming low fell low, and even completely flat, since this uncourageous film that aimed only at success drew less people in Montreal than *Le viol d'une jeune fille douce* or than *Jusqu'au coeur*.

Recently two films about the heart were shown in Quebec. One film was about a heart being removed (transplants) and the other was about a heart that could not be removed: the film by Jean-Pierre Lefebvre. The first one ends rather well, according to what I was told; the second one does not end. It does not begin either. It has the vague shape of a chemical solution that has precipitated and that could not be broken up except with a massive bombardment of neutrons or the frightful work of strong acids. One would say simply that the solution has just precipitated and that a revelation is very soon to occur. It might as well be said right away: *Jusqu'au coeur* is a gay story full of surprises. It is the steady walk of a tightrope artist above emptiness, while two jokers on each side begin to cut away at the rope.

It is a very happy story, I maintain, for if he allows his brain to be operated on, Garrou, in revenge, keeps intact until the end, what seems the essential in Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's work, this bit of bloody and sensitive muscle that is called a heart. Mouffe, at the end of the film presses her finger on it to see, there is a howling of pain: it is still there. That promises fine love stories (and with the Godard-like rhythm in which he is filming, when this will appear, Jean-Pierre Lefebvre will perhaps have already composed four or five, with a preface, afterword, and appendix — so such the better). Why then we will ask, an inscrutable manner, silences, inward directed rage, the tenderly sinister expressions of a Pierrot-le Fou who is not betrayed by his Marianne? It is that misfortune dogs the steps of this long haired and abnormal (although he is reputed to be curable) Quebecer who has something in excess (a heart) and something lacking (the feeling for war). *Jusqu'au coeur* is a film about violence; in this sense it is the very clear reply to the obscure denunciation of *Révolutionnaire*. Violence that is faraway (American aggression in Viet Nam), or close at hand (the upper middle class that its parties guarded by armed servants), or brutal or insidious (the posters, the worker priests), or manifest (Garrou's aggressors), or disguised (the hippie-soldiers or the soldier-hippies), represents everything that Garrou rejects and which makes the tender Garrou scandalous.

Although this film is arbitrarily laid down and is very explicit,

its interest results rather from the manner in which everything is implicit. It would be necessary here to speak very knowingly — and Lefebvre formally invites us to do so — of the dialectics of colours (black/white — dichromatic-polychromatic), in noticing that in *Jusqu'au coeur* black and white is the colour of authenticity (love, tenderness, and intimacy), and corresponds to a natural use of direct cinema (the most immediate reflection of daily life possible), yet polychromatic colour is the most ostentatious ornament of the unauthentic (seduction, alienation, and violence), and combines with an original use of direct cinema applied, as in Godard's work at least since *Made in USA*, as in the Pasolini of *Uccellacci e uccellini* and *La terra vista dalla luna*, as in the Klein of *Mr. Freedom* or the Peter Brook of *US*, in the very concrete presentation of very abstract signs (allegories, personifications, and symbols). I leave it to my namesake, my double, and nonetheless my friend of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* to pursue this. One last word to conclude, about the humour of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre: it is precisely like his colours, sometimes black (cf. of the song of the aborted children), sometimes of two colours — white and pale blue — (cf. the honeymoon trip of Mouffe and Garrou; "My dear, do you want me to carve our names?", etc.), sometimes red (when Jean-Pierre sees red, that is to say rather often) and sometimes technicoloured (when it is a question of mimicking a carnival float in the great Quebec parade). In short this film by nature is never completely rose coloured.

The socio-geographic opposite of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre relies as completely on improvisation as Jean-Pierre Lefebvre relies on his intelligence (on his intellectuality, but akin to him in a certain taste for formal innovation and a manner of showing characters that are much less posed and poised than hesitating, strolling about, walking tightropes, Mort Ransen, from Toronto, has made a very arresting unbounded film, *Christopher's movie matinée* (1968)).

We know this rondeau by Voiture that begins with  
*My word, it's all done with me; for Ysabeau*  
*Begged me to make her a rondeau:*  
*That puts me in extreme difficulty.*

and which finishes with a triumphal "My word it's done!" The poem is only the story of its own (and difficult) origin. This is also exactly the meaning of *Christopher's movie matinée*: a film that makes itself before our very eyes, or rather that does not make itself—that fails to make it while making it. The originality of the undertaking is that it is not artificial, that improvisation in it is not what it is in most of the modern works in progress, a parody of improvisation following a rigidly predetermined line. Here, adventure and groping, have been constants, for the object was to film adventure and groping—youth. A handful of technicians, the producer himself, put themselves at the disposal of a group of young people in Toronto, to whom they entrusted the task of making a film about themselves. We see them creating—that is to say *actively* reflecting together (camera in hand) about what they will show, about the possibility and the means of showing it. Finally, a "film party" is organized in a park, during the course of which (this is one of the high points in the film) everyone films everyone with N.F.B. cameras. At almost the same time a protest, called "hippie" by the local press, takes place on one of the central thoroughfares of Toronto so that automobile traffic is forbidden there(1). The public is shocked: "The N.F.B., it is said, is inciting riots to film them". The film is interrupted, the team leaves. In fact, by, and for this film-happening, the producer had *incited* nothing, at the most he *invited*. The film here does not produce the event, it allows it to produce itself, accelerates it only a little by its solely observing presence. The film is revealing.

Here it reveals the difficulty of being young, that is to say of being absolutely free to create. This unfinished film is basically the only possible film about youth, for it is a film in movement and without a real ending about a group of young people in movement seeking its end (its goal) and not finding it.

Youth, said Michaux, is a time when one does not know what is going to happen. Here too, one does not know what is going to happen (the "producer"—and the quotation marks are necessary—did not know, the technicians did not know, the young people who availed themselves of the experience did not know; and the viewer does not know). *Christopher's* a film about wandering, is a wandering film. Wandering like youth — clearly defined here as "those who don't have a place", whose place is nowhere: chased from public park to public park, from street to street, the group is not even at home in the poorly built classroom where it fails, this room with the desks that are too small, immediately turned away from its purpose by the parody of the "teacher" and all the drawings that he has just made on the board. Young people are *squatters* everywhere. Whether they want to be or not (and the middle class press didn't wait to generalize), they are *hippies*.

In the midst of these films about wandering or, like the latter,



about these films by young people about the impossibility of making a film about young people, there is one exception—an outright exception—Pierre Perrault. From *Pour la suite du monde* to *Voitures d'eau*, there is the same effort to wander no more, to return to the sources. An ambiguous effort and return, whose meaning is still undetermined: nostalgia and love of the past, or immobilization preparing a new advance? It would be a pity (and very unlikely) if Perrault were not to engage himself on this second path. For that is the one of true cinema, and of the art that is proving the most propitious of all for inquiry and questioning, for the delights of uncertainty and the perpetual necessity for innovation. Delights, yes, for what greater happiness can there be than that of being able or of knowing how to find before one according to the lovely title of Julien Green, "a thousand paths open"?

(1) cf. the film by Robin Spry for the N.F.B. *Flowers on a one way street* (1968) from which the former has, moreover, borrowed passages.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

### *In Quebec city, four art galleries in search of a public.*

BY MICHEL GAUQUELIN

For a long time, Quebec city lived with a minimum of animation in the field of the plastic arts. Painting and sculpture interested only an infinitesimal minority of artists and art lovers, those who are still called the elite. To tell the truth, there were a few art galleries that tried to interest an indifferent and reticent clientele made up of businessmen, for whom the idea of hanging a picture over the livingroom sofa was about the same as the purchase of a refrigerator.

There were few connoisseurs, and development was very slow in a city particularly disadvantaged in the cultural field. The Zanettin Gallery, founded in 1885, but which has been "operational" for only about twenty years, had a great deal to do to track down talented artists, make them known to the public, and have them accepted by the buyer.

In spite of the development of the last five or six years, and in spite of the growing number of artists, Quebec city has at this time only four art galleries: Zanettin, LeSieur, Jolliet, and Champagne, and they each have their own personality.

Some time ago galleries were born, existed, subsisted, and died ingloriously. There may have been as many as six at the same time. Those were the days of Jean Leblond, of Denys Morisset's La Huchette where a certain warmhearted spirit ruled. But purity of intention was not enough to settle financial difficulties created by the tightness of the market.

No doubt it is the provincial museum that began to rouse the good old capitol, that was fast asleep. For twelve years M. Gérard Morisset, then M. Guy Viau, and finally M. Jean Soucy were able to bring the energetic and expert inspiration that was needed. One fine day the venerable natural history collections were loaded into vans to make room for Quebec's artistic output that has finally emerged from the background. The public is going to start coming to the museum to see. . . . It will notice that there are not only the by-products of Marc-Aurèle Fortin, but there are young painters who will be renowned very soon. The names of Pellan, Lemieux, and Riopelle will help to break down the almost shameful distrust that the public experienced towards a Quebec signature.

No doubt lagging behind Montreal, a city that is more exposed to a multiplicity of socio-cultural influences, Quebec city is slowly changing. The answers that the directors of the four galleries try to provide all revolve around this idea: there are few buyers, for the clientele is small, because the public is small, for the public is not yet informed in the cultural field. Behind all of this there is sensed the eternal theme of the provincial city in which one is engaged in missionary work, like a real pioneer.

Both situated on the side of the mountain, the Zanettin and LeSieur galleries resemble each other only by their frontages. The galleries are well situated to attract the passerby who will stop to look at the enameled objects, the pottery, the jewellery and a few pictures in the window.

The "tourist" will find what he fancied he saw: a lovely piece of jewellery. But at least this Quebec craftsmanship is aesthetically valid. These stores are thus open year round. Behind these windows, the real gallery draws only true art lovers.

At M. Gérard Zanettin's, painters have been "followed" for many

years, Ariste Gagnon for nineteen years. Length of service gives a not negligible experience in the quest for future talent and a certain philosophy towards the customer. It is often at the Zanettin gallery that a boy, confident of himself, with a large package under his arm, will appear saying: "I would like to exhibit in your gallery". Much beleaguered, Gérard Zanettin must choose and make understood that one can be a good family painter without, for all that, aiming at the Louvre. Besides, "the ones who approach us like this are almost always bad. One must often go and look for the true, the pure."

The Lemieux, Denys Matte, Paul Lacroix, J. Antoine Demers, A. Dumas, Louise Carrière, Monique Mercier are names found in the Zanettin gallery. There is moreover a great variety in the styles and a wide range of names, a remarkable broadmindedness to many trends. But many of the visitors buy more for an occasion than for the work: canvases are offered at Christmas, a metal sculpture for a birthday. . . .

The situation is somewhat similar at "L'Atelier" which is directed by Renée LeSieur. Discreet, sensitive, one might say timid, she is above all an artist. The art gallery, behind the showcases, conceals works by Roland Giguère, Picher, Lebeuf, and Jean Bastien, for example. Twenty one years in this trade have again formed an assured competence.

These two galleries hold regular exhibitions, but it must be said that in part they carry on due to the support of tourists. Some call this a concession. In any case the itinerant exhibitions of the two galleries are held as a proof of the best good faith. Eight to ten times a year, part of the gallery, an exhibition or a personal collection, goes on tour to make art known in disadvantaged towns. This initiative obtains appreciable results in the arousal of artistic awareness, especially among the young people who do not have the opportunity to have a direct contact with a painter. Trois-Rivières, Baie Saint-Paul, and closer by Charlesbourg, for example, have profited by this "art-at-home", whose purpose is solely cultural, as the matter is not financially profitable.

Beside these two galleries deeply implanted in Quebec life, Michel Champagne and still more Michel Groulx with the Jolliet gallery, follow a different and no doubt more austere direction. Both hold to the following reasoning: "I exhibit only what I like". Young and aesthetically formed artists, they choose to be strict with themselves, and if they are receptive to different styles, they will refuse compromise.

Michel Champagne is approaching his thirties. Energetic and lively, he studied at the Institut des Arts appliqués in Montreal and at the Quebec Ecole des Beaux-Arts. A painter himself, he has exhibited in groups about forty times. He works at the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, which eases some of his cares. Without being a "fighter", he "is forging ahead" and, he says "one day I shall devote all of my time exclusively to the gallery".

The Jolliet gallery, on little Champlain street, with its woodwork, its cupboards set in white walls, is very suitable for exhibitions. The exhibitions have followed one another with a sustained rhythm since its opening in September 1968, they include: Marie Laberge, Gaston Petit, Claude Bérubé, Riopelle, Marcelle Ferron, Lucie Côté.

When a lady arrives, looks the gallery over and exclaims: "It is lovely here, I must exhibit here next month", M. Champagne calmly replies like a well organized businessman, that everything is filled for the next three years. But the businessman quickly gives way before a friend. He does not prepare an exhibition with figures, dates, in business terms. It is above all the understanding of a work that pleases him or a new stage in a painter's work that is involved.

This approach is somewhat like that of Michel Giroux, who since 1966 has been installed beneath the Théâtre Lyrique du Québec, on Place Royale. The beauty of the beamed ceiling is conducive to meditation and a sense of peace, an almost physical well-being arises when one is looking at the paintings.

He also refuses any concession to commercialism: "It would be easy and profitable to sell works by Lemieux, for his work is in great demand, it is almost bought over the telephone, sight unseen." Thus, he promotes painters who are less well-known, but in whom he believes strongly including: Michel Labbé, Michel Hébert, Anne Bary, Louis Pelletier, Denys Morisset. He is even preparing to hold a group exhibition with three or four graduating students of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

Seeing the gallery visited infrequently is the risk that is thus taken, but a reputation is quickly made: "I want to exhibit and sell only what is beautiful. I have no desire to go into hiding after having sold a picture." The best promotion is indeed had by word of mouth among art lovers.

This care for honesty with oneself, and to the public, is very important. These two galleries want above all to be a link between the visitor and the work of an artist that they try to have you dis-



cover, understand, and like. The gallery thus becomes a meeting place. But will that be enough to support the director? In the interest of the Quebec public, in the interest of painters who ask only to exhibit, let us ardently hope so, and, after all, renouncing is not so easy when one is enthusiastic.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

### cardboard furniture

BY VILDER

The aims of an exhibition of cardboard furniture presented by the third furniture display of the I.A.A. of Montreal were directed at putting a solid and reasonably priced new material at the disposal of the public, and having cardboard furniture known and produced in Quebec.

In order to increase the trend to exchange and the volume of sales, we tried to survey and thereafter put on the market economical products which were within the reach of the mass of consumers, and which, because of their reasonable price, involve neither worries about upkeep nor concern about durability.

Cardboard furniture adapts perfectly to our life. It can be thrown out when no longer serviceable. We are becoming increasingly accustomed to thinking along these lines, and furniture in turn, is getting away from the durability that was formerly required of it.

The main cardboards used are: cardboard tubes and corrugated cardboard.

Cardboard furniture upsets our habits. This new technique is meeting with an astonishing success even though it is only just beginning.

### CONCLUSION

To conclude, I will say that cardboard can be treated for inflammability by adding to the pulp a chemical product like potassium silicate for example.

Humidity and dryness are the two drawbacks of cardboard but they can be eliminated by a wax coating or a fine covering of plastic film. The latter operations are combined in its manufacture.

Cardboard can also be coloured, printed, painted, and varnished. The simple and clever construction allows cardboard to resist pressures of several hundreds of pounds without being altered.

ANDRE VILDER  
PROFESSOR, I.A.A.  
AND DIRECTOR OF THE EXHIBITION

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

### la collection du conseil des arts du canada à charlottetown

Du 1er juillet au 1er septembre 1969 inclusivement.

PAR MONCRIEFF WILLIAMSON

Depuis son ouverture présidée, il y a cinq ans, par feu l'honorable Vincent Massey, premier gouverneur général du Canada d'origine canadienne, le Musée d'Art de la Confédération a tenu environ vingt-huit expositions par année. Ces expositions, ajoutées à la politique d'achats de cette galerie, ont exercé une influence profonde dans la région de l'Atlantique. Cette institution, fait partie du Mémorial élevé en souvenir des Pères de la Confédération et de ce fait, ses collections sont composées exclusivement d'ouvrages d'artistes et d'artisans canadiens. Deux cents œuvres font aujourd'hui partie de la collection permanente. L'engagement de cette institution sur le plan national va de pair avec les besoins éducatifs et culturels de la province et de la ville.

Charlottetown, qui a une population de 19,000 habitants, peut se vanter d'avoir vu passer dans sa galerie près de 70,000 visiteurs annuellement. En 1968, durant le Festival d'été qui a duré six semaines, plus de 4,000 visiteurs par jour ont franchi le seuil du Centre des Arts de la Confédération; de ce nombre, une forte por-

tion de touristes ont pu voir deux expositions importantes: *Trois Siècles de Peinture Écossaise* et la collection Rothman de *Tapisseries Françaises Contemporaines*. Les gens viennent en grand nombre à l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard afin de visiter le Musée d'Art de la Confédération, ce qui exerce une influence considérable sur l'économie de la Province.

En 1969, grâce à la coopération du Musée National du Canada, le Musée d'Art de la Confédération continue à servir le pays en faisant participer des milliers de visiteurs de l'extérieur à diverses expositions. La première exposition de la Collection du Conseil des Arts du Canada aura lieu cette année du 1er juillet au 1er septembre. A compter d'octobre, cette même exposition sera montrée à travers le Canada jusqu'au début de 1971.

En plus des expositions itinérantes organisées par Pierre Théberge, du Musée National du Canada, une exposition inusitée aura lieu au Musée d'Art de la Confédération: ce sera celle de la collection d'art graphique du Conseil des Arts du Canada qui circule actuellement dans les Maritimes sous les auspices du Atlantic Provinces Art Circuit et qui sera exposée à Charlottetown; on exposera aussi à cette occasion quelques sculptures et objets d'art ainsi que plusieurs œuvres faisant partie de la collection permanente du Musée et qui furent acquises avec l'aide du programme des bourses du Conseil des Arts du Canada. Ces récentes acquisitions comprennent des œuvres de Yves Gaucher, Jean McEwen et Richard Lacroix.

La Province de Québec a toujours été très généreuse à l'endroit du Centre des Arts de la Confédération et le Musée entretient des relations très cordiales avec le ministère des Affaires Culturelles, le Musée du Québec, le Musée d'Art Contemporain et le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. Des expositions d'artistes et d'artisans canadiens-français sont tenues régulièrement à Charlottetown, et nous espérons une participation encore plus large de ces artistes dans l'avenir.

Comme le Musée d'Art de la Confédération fait partie du Mémorial du Canada aux Pères de la Confédération, il estime qu'il doit être au service des artistes canadiens. Les œuvres des artistes étrangers sont aussi exposées à intervalles réguliers dans le Musée, mais la collection permanente ne comprend que des œuvres d'artistes canadiens achetées ou acquises par legs. Les dons d'œuvres d'artistes d'écoles étrangères sont aussi acceptés. Ces œuvres sont affectées à la collection destinée à l'éducation et elles sont montrées de temps à autre dans des expositions spéciales.

Nous considérons que notre premier devoir doit être envers les artistes contemporains représentant un éventail le plus large possible des provinces du Canada et des Territoires du Nord-Ouest, mais nous sommes aussi pleinement conscients de l'obligation où nous sommes de procurer aux habitants de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard une collection aussi complète que possible représentant les divers mouvements de l'art canadien. Les œuvres d'artistes canadiens anciens sont rares, mais nous espérons qu'il nous sera possible, avec le développement du Musée dans les années à venir, de combler certaines omissions regrettables à l'aide de legs ou de dons quand ces œuvres ne pourront être trouvées sur le marché régulier.

Les œuvres d'art d'aujourd'hui entreront elles aussi dans l'histoire du XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle.

La collection du Conseil des Arts du Canada, rassemblée initialement par monsieur David Silcox, est considérée comme la plus importante qui ait jamais été montrée à Charlottetown.

Traduction de Lucile Ouimet

### a meeting with jean-louis shefer

BY M. F. O'LEARY

("Scénographie d'un tableau" — Editions du Seuil)

Q. — What is the "scenography" of a picture?

A. — The term "scenography" is borrowed from Vitruvius, who contrasts it with "orthography" and "iconography" like the perspective drawing of architecture. The same term revived by Palladio is also understood as a "writing for the stage". In the title of the book, "scenography" indicates a setting of the picture disciplined by all the forms of reading that we can make of it. It is a setting that is bound to the perspective drawing of the picture, it being understood that drawing must be composed in its two "orthographies": at once its script and its plan, its purpose. As a matter of fact the analysis hinges on the overlapping of these two terms.



**Q.** — You have chosen *The Chess Game* by Paris Bordone; why this picture in particular?

**A.** — It is an *exemplary* picture that is placed at the end of what is commonly called the Renaissance, that is to say the 16th century, and Paris Bordone is an interesting painter because he tapped many what are still called "influences"; that of Titian, whose pupil he was, that of Giorgione, and through these two painters, almost everything that was done in Venice and Italy. This picture is distinguished thus already by many historical "references". There is something else that makes this picture interesting. At first it appears to be a picture of perspective and double perspective since it is divided in the middle causing a distortion of a tiled surface and a landscape; set on the angle of the tiled surface there is a chessboard that constitutes an intervention in the picture; a necessity to read the picture by itself. One's first guess might be that what makes the picture difficult to read and constitutes, no doubt, its interest, because all the terms of reading are going to be subject to this double retreat of the picture into itself: between the right and the left, between the reduced model (the chessboard) and the whole picture — the play, constantly regulated by the picture, of functions, of sequences, of intersections of movement, of characters, etc — is the momentary discontinuity that is written into the picture, and which, paradoxically, necessitates an increasingly comprehensive reading and, if you like, a reference to subjects which are not the picture, which are sometimes not even contemporary, but are controlled by the almost analogous demands of representations.

**Q.** — Can structuralism be a method of analysing a picture?

**A.** — People have often tried to apply structuralism uniformly thought, as a monolithic thing, to the history of art. Nevertheless they did not reach absolutely satisfactory results that would have considerably modified what had been done by the school of Vienna, by Panofsky, etc. . . I do not think, to this extent, that the application of a method can change anything whatever; it can only reinforce a very suspect ideology. You must first necessarily break the limitations of the history of art that is, if you like, the total body of a certain type of objects whose irreducibility it obstinately attempts to relate: in this sense it is absolutely invalid since it has never taught us anything either about history or about art, since, in short, one does not find in the entire history of art a single reading of a picture. On the other hand, structuralism, or more exactly, structural linguistics, cannot be transposed, such as it is, in the reading of an object it does not govern. It was, I think, the only method of systematic analysis; but the object of the book is also to elaborate a method in terms of the types of objects that interest us.

**Q.** — Is painting seen as theatre particular to the 16th century? Do we rediscover these themes of Bordone in other painters?

**A.** — We find them everywhere. For this reason this painting is "exemplary" and stands out as *representative* of all types of painting; at once painted, and classified. As for the theme of the theatre, it has been underlying all painting until very recently, until the time of the great rift of the 19th century; where the picture and representation finish at the same time in painting.

In a more narrow sense I do not think it is possible to disregard the great Vitruvian texts concerning the theatre in the reading of the picture, to the extent where all the elements represent almost literally a Vitruvian scene. . . Here the performance neither begins nor ends; that is to say, that the actors never leave the scene. What unfolds in that theatre is a search for meaning: the story that is narrated and played on the stage, thus constitutes an integral part of the structure of the picture, of the system by which one is going to read it. One of the major but little noticed consequences of representation is that we are obliged to read the picture in its own theatre, and according to rhetorical, logical organization which animates this theatre. And if this analysis is called "scenography", it is thus both as the writing of the scene, and as the theatre of its writing.

The divisions of the picture, the characters, the spaces, are connected with one another and acquire meaning only by what is called in linguistics, their connotation, that is to say, all the levels traditionally considered to be the virtual properties of the written communication and which, by an absolutely necessary reversal, become elements of the written communication. It is in this that the theatre of which we speak is very important, since it is in the very reading, that is to say in the text of the picture, that the signs are going to be constituted from the basis of which one reads the picture, in an absolutely closed circuit; and it is indeed this enclosure that makes the object of the representation. In that respect, the setting of the picture, that of the 16th century, is perfectly achieved, and enclosed in its own definitions.

**Q.** — Looking at a picture is for me, above all, to perceive it, and it is difficult for me to effect this transition from the first emotion to the analytic approach that you propose. Is it reconcilable?

**A.** — The entire history of art such as it was constituted after and beginning with the Renaissance has postulated an analogy between painting and language. Then Ephraim Lessing broke with the notion of the "ut pictura poesis" of Horace in trying to determine of what the specific nature of the pictorial sign consists.

I believe that if painting is not a language, one may, nevertheless, perceive it only through our language, through ourselves; through our history. It was constituted at the time of the Renaissance only by the involvement of many languages, all through the Middle Ages, all throughout the writings of Aristotle. Avowedly, at the time of the great theory-building, the picture had been conceived as a sort of discourse. That is what must first be "disinvolved" in the analysis.

From our point of view, that is to say at the present time, it is thus not possible to dispense with the research tools furnished by linguistics and psychoanalysis (Freud, in the *Traumdeutung*, and Jacques Lacan). The picture appeared as a matter of fact as the ultimate of all possible discourses on its subject, at the same time that it is the "system" of it. One will never find a language that will allow the picture to speak completely, to transcribe it finally, into even a contemporary language of the picture: it is itself the system of a certain number of *possible* readings. The very possibility of these readings is going to determine the structure of the picture, which is not one and rigid, but variable and the very function of all the discourses of which it is the diagram. This analysis does not remove completely the problem of perception or aesthetic emotion. In order to get back to your terms, it is not certain that emotion comes "first" here; it is already a reading, that is to say a text. It is at the same time the whole problem of "aesthetic reserve"; looking at the picture teaches us something about ourselves in so far as we look at the picture; that is rather the case of phenomenology; for as much as it is occupied with painting it has never turned only toward the subject perceiving and not toward the object.

**Q.** — Starting with the system that you have elaborated, is it possible to define all pictures, past and present?

**A.** — It is evident that the aim of the book is not to read a picture and to provide a key to it, since ultimately it is impossible to do so, except in a continual scenography of the text of the picture which is perpetually destruction and reconstruction, but the goal itself of the analysis is to construct a "semiotic" model, which does not refer only to one object but permits us to read a great number. I believe that one may elaborate (there is no theoretical impossibility in this construction) a model that permits the development of representative systems; it is, as a matter of fact, possible to read thus not only the pictures of the same period but any number of pictures as long as they have terms of reference and may be defined as pictures. Everything depends, in fact, on the definition of the structure of the object that one is going to analyze.

The rules of the system, which are briefly outlined, are the semiotic rules; they bear more on the relevance of the method than on the formal and objective characteristics of the object analysed. That is why it is not applicable to many objects, but many objects are applicable to it.

**Q.** — What research are you engaged in at the present time?

**A.** — I am trying to elaborate a program of the study of representative systems that constitutes a greater breadth of subject matter than "Scénographie d'un Tableau" to the extent that it permits the reading not only of pictures but all that which is characterised as belonging to a representative period; "period" that must also be understood in the Greek sense of epoch, a putting into parentheses, a figurative suspension as a system of inferences outside of which there is not a representative structure.

It then becomes evident, that the analysis, because it does not attempt a "description of objects or works", but treats them by what Freud calls "forepleasure", is always, through a first necessity, a critique of all ideologies as representation. This is particularly important, and that is where the work is not "isolated" at a time when there is nevertheless a tendency which is represented by the theoretical work of Such and Such a group, of destruction of representation, and of all the theological remainders born by the writing. What I am attempting to elaborate may be understood only in the context of other works: those of Jacques Derrida, Julia Kristeva, and Louis Althusser who have a same theoretical requirement in common.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson