

Le Musée du Québec The Quebec Museum

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LE MUSÉE DU QUÉBEC

Henri Barras

Jamais, comme aujourd'hui, le musée, en tant qu'institution, n'a été autant attaqué et, jamais pourtant comme maintenant, n'a-t-il été autant nécessaire à une communauté. Si la préservation des espaces verts est au faite de nos préoccupations dans le but d'assurer à la ville un saine respiration; si l'on déploie tant d'efforts pour sauvegarder les monuments ou les quartiers témoins de notre évolution, comment peut-on, du même élan, réclamer que les musées se décaractérisent pour épouser les signes de déshumanisation qui gangrènent le mode de vie que nous tentons de rejeter avec force et, parfois, il faut bien le dire, sans trop de discernement.

Collectionner, conserver et témoigner sont les rôles et les buts poursuivis par les musées. Si ces fonctions sont comprises et préservées, les musées répondent, mieux que toute autre institution, aux préoccupations qui obnubilent, de nos jours, nos pensées et nos gestes.

Réclamer que le musée *s'ouvre*, ressemble à de la démagogie s'il n'a pas les moyens financiers nécessaires à la constitution de ses collections et à leur conservation. Demander qu'il se *démocratise*, c'est, à coup sûr, faire preuve de machiavélisme s'il doit pour cela déroger aux principes fondamentaux de sa vocation et aux critères de qualité qui assurent

2 3 4

1. Trois siècles de mobilier au Québec.
(Phot. Kedl)

2. Antoine PLAMONDON
Portrait de Mme Joseph Laurin.
Huile sur toile; 84 cm 6 x 71,2.
Québec, Musée du Québec.

3. Blanche BOLDUC
Scène de confession.
Huile sur masonite.

4. Tapis à losanges superposés.
Ancienne-Lorette.



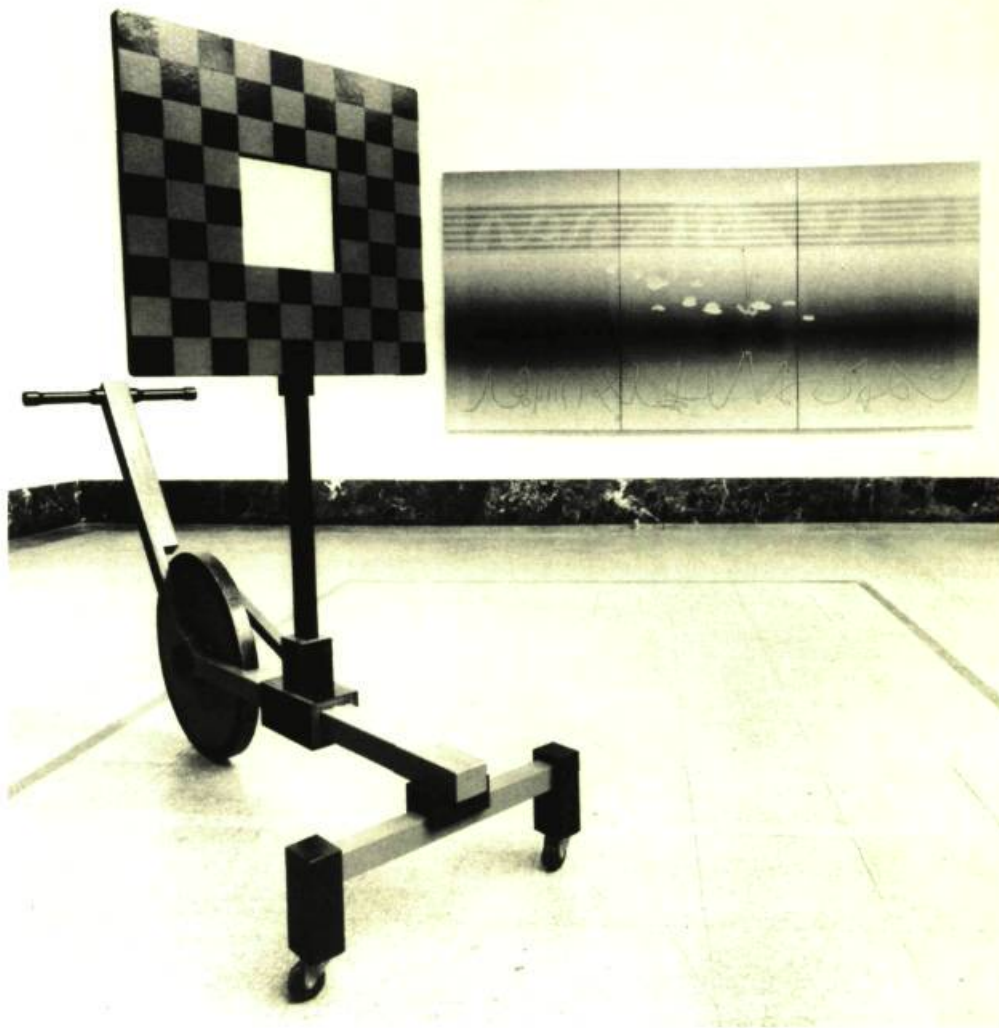


son orientation. C'est pourtant par ces ren-
gaines mal accordées que l'on entend définir le
nouveau rôle qu'on lui souhaite, dans une
société que l'on voudrait nouvelle, elle aussi.

En 1922, le Gouvernement du Québec sanc-
tionnait la Loi des musées de la Province. En
1933, le Musée du Québec ouvrait ses portes.
Édifice néo-classique, érigé au centre des
plaines d'Abraham, il abrite alors des collec-
tions de sciences naturelles, d'art et d'histoire,
ainsi que les archives publiques. Ce n'est que
vers 1950 que Gérard Morisset imprime à ce
musée une orientation nettement plastique, qui
ne deviendra exclusive que dans les années
1960. Dès lors, de révolutions tranquilles en
projections audacieuses, de stagnations inat-
tendues en élans concertés, le Musée du Qué-
bec devient le musée national du Canada
français. Il serait audacieux de le prétendre
parfait mais il n'est pas vain d'en souligner les
caractéristiques qui le rendent attachant et
presque exemplaire.

Je ne m'étendrai pas sur l'histoire de ce
Musée et ne m'arrêterai pas à analyser ses
collections fabuleuses, signifiantes tour à tour,
sur le plan esthétique ou sur le plan historique.
Les lecteurs intéressés pourront consulter avec
profit les articles d'Alice Parizeau et de Jean
Soucy, parus respectivement dans les numéros
47 et 63 de *Vie des Arts*. Mais, dans cet édifice
dressé sans conteste pour épater, les œuvres
présentées se trouvent auréolées d'un climat
de sérénité qui sied à merveille à la patiente
quête qui les a engendrées à une époque et
dans un lieu qui ne connaissaient, pour éblouir,
que les artifices du cœur. J'aime ces hautes
salles et ces rotondes qui sont comme un hom-
mage tranquille aux artistes qui ont peint,
gravé, sculpté ou ciselé les itinéraires sans
cesse contrariés de l'âme collective d'une
nation. J'aime ces lieux car leurs particularités
font que les œuvres échappent à la vénération
qui entoure d'ordinaire celles conservées par
un musée. Il faut rendre grâce, évidemment,
aux conservateurs qui savent que la création
est une question d'amour et que la fréquenta-
tion de l'art est aussi une affaire de cœur. Pour-
tant, si les œuvres sont traitées, au Musée du
Québec, avec tant d'affection, l'aspect critique
n'est pas travesti ou négligé, et toutes les pré-
sentations des collections s'attachent, non pas
à flatter le goût du public, mais à le sensibi-
liser en le renseignant. Le Musée du Québec
est donc à mes yeux un modèle où le public se
sent à l'aise et où, sans autres préjugés que
les siens propres, il est à même de comprendre
les gestes d'amour qui lui sont proposés. Ce
langage est certes anachronique ou déplacé à
une époque où rendement et efficacité sont les
caractéristiques qui doivent s'appliquer à
toutes les activités humaines. Pourtant, je crois,
moi, que l'œuvre d'art est témoin de ce que
nous sommes et, à ce titre, qu'elle mérite notre
affection assidue. Je pense aussi que le musée
est le seul lieu où ces œuvres peuvent être
réunies et en ce lieu qu'elles peuvent être
signifiantes pour le plus grand nombre. Le
Musée du Québec prend alors pour moi valeur
d'exemple. Il est pourtant loin d'être exemplaire
en tous points et, retraçant les grandes lignes
de ses réussites, je me dois de souligner ses
lacunes.

L'art ancien — peintures, sculptures, orfè-
vrerie, outils, textiles, art populaire — forme
une partie importante des collections. Notons
simplement — le sujet de cet exposé n'étant



5. Maurice BERGERON
Perception N° 1, 1975.
Bois et formica.
A l'arrière-plan: Reynald CONNOLY
Alchimie du temps, 1974.
Acrylique sur bois.

pas de faire la critique des œuvres conservées
— que la collection d'orfèvrerie est la plus
riche et la plus complète au Canada, comme
la collection de meubles québécois anciens
est parmi les plus importantes d'Amérique;
notons encore le nombre impressionnant de
Krieghoffs possédés par la Musée; la qualité
indiscutable des Plamondons, des Hamels, pour
ne citer que ces deux peintres célèbres mais
dont l'histoire n'a pas encore révélé toute l'im-
portance; et ces mentions partielles ne font que
suggérer l'étendue des trésors qui constituent
cette collection.

En outre, le Musée du Québec ne compte en
fait que quatre salles d'exposition. Une nou-
velle aile a été construite, dans les années
60, où ont été logé quelques bureaux admini-
stratifs, une petite cafétéria indispensable, une
petite salle de cours, une bibliothèque, une
salle de lecture et une salle d'exposition,
transformée récemment en réserve, le Musée,
jusque-là, n'en ayant pas. Le Musée est donc
trop petit pour présenter au public ses col-

lections. Des projets d'agrandissement faisaient
de temps à autre surface sans que rien de
concret n'aboutisse jusqu'au début de l'été où
le titulaire du Ministère des Affaires Culturelles,
M. Jean-Paul L'Allier, annonçait que la Petite
Bastille allait être transformée et annexée au
musée. Cette ancienne prison, qui domine les
Plaines jouxtant le musée, saura certes lui
apporter les salles d'expositions qui lui man-
quent et le dotera des réserves et des ateliers
indispensables à l'accomplissement de sa
vocation. Mais une fois agrandi et doté des
services essentiels qui lui ont toujours man-
qués, le Musée du Québec sera-t-il pourvu du
personnel nécessaire pour animer ses activités
à la mesure des dimensions qu'il aura alors
atteintes et pourra-t-il restaurer les œuvres qui
devront bien sortir des limbes où elles ont été
jusque-là confinées? Le modèle annoncé pâlit
quelque peu certes et, pourtant, parce qu'avec
beaucoup d'ingéniosité on a fini par créer une
image qui ne se trouble que lorsque l'on a
accès aux intimités muséologiques, le Musée



6. André FOURNELLE
Miroir sans image, 1968.
 Acier chromé peint en jaune et en vert.
 (Phot. Patrick Altman)

du Québec reste l'institution qui caractérise la notion moderne que nous devrions avoir du musée.

Car, les conservateurs du Musée ont parfaitement assimilé la double facette qui détermine l'approche traditionnelle des œuvres d'art comme celle des objets ethnographiques. Et ils ont tenté, non sans succès, de concilier ces deux points de vue, en organisant des expositions thématiques de longue durée, où œuvres et objets sont sélectionnés et mis en situation autant au regard de leurs valeurs esthétiques qu'en fonction de leurs caractéristiques sociologiques. Il serait laborieux de citer tous les exemples qui me viennent en mémoire, mais je citerai les expositions *Courtepointes et lits anciens*, qui eut lieu durant l'été 1975, et *Trois siècles de mobilier au Québec*, qui occupait une salle durant l'été 1976. Par de tels ensembles, le Musée présente tour à tour toutes les œuvres importantes de ses collections diverses, en les actualisant par un didactisme qui ne tombe jamais dans l'académisme désuet

ou l'élitisme déplacé. En outre, la présentation visuelle de ces ensembles atteint un tel degré de perfection que les ambiances ainsi créées donnent aux œuvres et aux objets exposés un air de familiarité qui, tout en soulignant les splendeurs à découvrir, procurent aux spectateurs un sentiment d'aisance et de familiarité, certes de bon aloi. Ainsi, le Musée du Québec échappe à l'aspect de mausolée, où l'œuvre choisie est religieusement offerte au recueillement du visiteur éclairé. Il s'est éloigné, par ailleurs, de l'étalage intempestif des œuvres qui attirent la cohorte par une publicité légalement trompeuse. Le Musée du Québec n'est ni une crypte ni un hall de foire. Il a choisi d'être un lieu où les trésors du patrimoine sont à la portée de tous, tant sur le plan de l'accessibilité que sur celui de la compréhension. Je ne connais que peu de musées dans le monde qui ont un tel amour des œuvres et un tel respect du public.

En outre, le Musée du Québec participe activement aux comparaisons stimulantes.

Dans ce but, de grandes expositions itinérantes d'art ancien et contemporain sont accueillies régulièrement dans les salles. Puis, une galerie d'art contemporain a été créée et est connue sous le vocable de Galerie de la Quinzaine. A cause de l'exiguïté des lieux, un espace relativement intime est consacré à des expositions de jeunes artistes qui se succèdent au rythme d'un accrochage par quinze jours. Ainsi, le Musée joue le rôle de promoteur qu'il doit assumer dans une communauté, et nous connaissons de nombreuses œuvres significatives grâce à l'unique opportunité que les jeunes artistes de Québec ont eu de se manifester dans cette galerie. Toutes les tendances y sont tour à tour présentées et, par ces activités qui s'inscrivent dans le présent, le Musée assume pleinement le rôle que toutes les institutions contemporaines doivent prendre à leur compte. En outre, un autobus, propriété du Musée, fait la navette tous les jours entre les écoles et le Musée; des cours de dessin et de peinture attirent tous les samedis plus de deux cents élèves assidus; des projections de films sur l'art ont lieu tous les après-midi; des catalogues sont produits fréquemment et un studio de vidéo a été installé, qui a déjà produit plusieurs documentaires qui facilitent la compréhension des diverses activités.

Le Musée du Québec a, jusqu'ici, justement affirmé son orientation et respecté ses fonctions dans la définition contemporaine du terme. Il lui reste à obtenir les moyens de sauvegarder ses précieuses collections et, si possible, de les compléter. Il devrait élargir son champ d'activité aux domaines de l'art contemporain, notamment au chapitre des acquisitions, afin que sa vocation de musée national soit entière. Depuis quelques années, le Musée du Québec a été déclaré musée associé par la Corporation des Musées Nationaux. A ce titre, il peut bénéficier de certains budgets supplémentaires, applicables notamment à l'expansion de ses services. Il eut ainsi la possibilité de créer un département d'expositions itinérantes. Ce programme de soutien est pourtant remis en question par la Corporation, car, si le Musée du Québec a obtenu des fonds supplémentaires dans les deux premières années de l'association, les technicalités imposées par une bureaucratie alourdie rendent l'obtention de crédits difficiles. Et, si les diverses municipalités du Québec ne possèdent pas toutes les cadres adéquats pour accueillir des expositions, si, en outre, les œuvres de la collection du Musée du Québec ne peuvent, sans danger, sortir des caves où leur état les confine, le Musée a néanmoins organisé régulièrement des expositions itinérantes présentées dans diverses villes du Québec, notamment, Rimouski, Sherbrooke, Baie-Saint-Paul et Montréal, à la Place des Arts.

Enfin, le Ministre, en annonçant l'agrandissement du Musée du Québec, a nommé à sa direction M. Laurent Bouchard, reconnu et apprécié pour ses qualités d'animateur. Depuis le départ de M. Jean Soucy, la direction intérimaire avait été assumée par M. André Juneau, maintenant directeur adjoint. M. Juneau et son équipe de conservateurs avaient imprimé au Musée un dynamisme qui sera sans doute soutenu, et nous pouvons croire que ce musée national pourra maintenant porter son rayonnement à la grandeur du pays.

mirror. Is the woman with the glass wand going to wake the sleeper? Is the dream coming to an end?

For now, the dream continues, and the drawing, the precious drawing, makes each of its forms clear. Raphael and Ingres suggest the positions of the woman-column and the sleeper. Geometry regulates the movements, the arrangement of the figures and the architecture. The mosses of Iles-aux-Grues climb on the polished limestone, and the iris of Matapedia abound. The forest and the water gleam. No wind comes to shake the branches or ripple the surface of the water. Silence. We are in the theatre, and the imaginary costumes of diaphanous silk and velvet are covered with gems. What shall we do? Follow this woman and leave the picture so that we will not see the mirror break? Wait to be awakened suddenly? Will the dream always be broken?

However, the dream continues. Sometimes during the night nightmare encroaches upon it; but in the morning harmony and pure forms hold sway. Beyond the mirror the real is made up of surfaces smooth to the touch. Stroking and caresses alone excite the imagination. The wealth of detail in the objects to be seen answers the tactile urgency.

The panther has come to quench his thirst at the lake and the persons have regrouped around the fire. Still this ambivalence: water, fire, marble, vegetation; the warm body under garments of precious fabrics; curtains that hide nature; the dream from which one will awake; the world to touch, to look at, to seize, but of which there remains only an image.

Marius Dubois recomposes this always contemporary image, trying to connect it with a tradition almost related to crafts. The artist is again the creator of his picture, in the manual tasks of the preparation of the surfaces, the pictorial materials. The work is built up slowly around an idea that evolves at the same time as the preparatory studies.

On the surface the blobs of colour, prepared on the palette, emphasize the exact value of the light colouring the objects and the figures. Is this reactionary painting, regression toward academic surrealism? Would it not, rather, be dealing with the reaction of a young visionary discovering the contribution of old techniques, witness of the maturing of his work and presenting a new ideal of Beauty? A beauty that combines personal symbolism and the constraint of tradition. Marius Dubois' painting bears witness of the North American marginal cultural phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century, a Renaissance.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

THE QUEBEC MUSEUM

By Henri BARRAS

Never so much as to-day has the museum, as an institution, been attacked, and never so much as now has it been so necessary to the community. If the conservation of green spaces is at the head of our preoccupations, with the aim of assuring healthful air to the city; if so much effort is expended in safeguarding monuments or districts that witness our evolution, how can we with the same emphasis demand that museums now modify their character to adopt the signs of dehumanization which corrupt the life style that we attempt to reject vig-

orously and, sometimes, it must be said, without too much discrimination?

To collect, to conserve and to bear witness are the rôles and the aims pursued by museums. If these functions are understood and preserved, the museums, better than any other institution, answer the concerns that to-day cloud our thoughts and our actions.

Demanding that the museum be *open* resembles demagoguery if it does not have the financial means necessary to the establishing of its collections and to their conservation. Asking that the museum should *democratize* itself is, certainly, to display Machiavellism if it must for this reason depart from the fundamental principles of its purpose and from the criteria of quality that assure its orientation. And yet it is on these old, badly-tuned refrains that we hear the new rôle defined for the museums in a society that is also intended to be new.

In 1922 the Government of Quebec sanctioned the *Law on the Museums of the Province*. In 1933, the Quebec Museum opened its doors. A neo-classical building, erected in the centre of the Plains of Abraham, it then housed collections of natural science, art and history, as well as the public archives. It was only around 1950 that Gérard Morisset imparted to this museum a clearly plastic orientation which would become exclusive only in the sixties. From that time, from quiet revolutions to bold aspirations, from unexpected stagnations to concerted spasms, the Quebec Museum became the national museum of French Canada. It would be daring to claim that it is perfect, but it is not vain to emphasize the characteristics which make it arresting and almost exemplary.

I shall not expand upon the history of this museum nor stop to analyse its fabulous collections, each significant on the aesthetic or the historical plan. Interested readers will be able to profitably consult articles by Alice Parizeau and Jean Soucy, which appeared in issues 47 and 63, respectively, of *Vie des Arts*. But in this building surely erected to astound, the works presented are surrounded by a climate of serenity that wonderfully suits the patient search that engendered them in an era and a place that, to dazzle, knew only the contrivances of the heart. I love these high rooms and these rotundas that are like a quiet tribute to the artists who painted, engraved, sculpted or chiselled the paths unceasingly trodden by the collective soul of a nation. I love these places because their peculiarities bring it about that the works escape the veneration that ordinarily surrounds those conserved by a museum. Thanks must be given, naturally, to curators who know that creation is a matter of love and that frequentation of art is also an affair of the heart. However, if the works of art are treated with so much affection at the Quebec Museum, the critical aspect is neither disguised nor neglected, and all presentations of collections are intended, not to flatter the taste of the public, but to sensitize it by informing. Therefore, the Quebec Museum is, in my eyes, a model where the public feels comfortable and where, without other prejudices than its own, they are able to understand the gestures of love that are offered to them. Certainly, this language is anachronistic or misplaced in an era when profit and efficiency are the qualities that must be applied to all human activities. And yet I believe that the work of art is witness of what we are and that, by virtue of this, it deserves our untiring affection. I also think that the museum is the only place where these

works can be gathered together and that in this place they can be significant for the greatest number of persons. So the Quebec Museum, for me, takes on the value of an example. However, it is far from being exemplary on every point and, retracing the wide lines of its successes, I owe it to myself to emphasize its gaps.

Art of the past — paintings, sculptures, goldsmith's work, furniture, tools, textiles, folk art — forms an important part of the collections. Let us simply note — the subject of this article not being criticism of the works preserved — that the collection of silver objects is the richest and most complete in Canada, just as the collection of old Quebec furniture is among the most important in America; let us note also that the impressive number of Kreighoffs owned by the museum; the undisputable quality of the Plamondon and Hamels, to mention only these two famous painters whose importance history has not yet revealed; and these few mentions only suggest the extent of the treasures which make up this collection.

Moreover, the Quebec Museum actually has only four exhibition halls. A new wing was built during the sixties, housing administrative offices, an indispensable little cafeteria, a small lecture-room, a library, a reading-room and an exhibition hall, recently changed into a store-room, the Museum being without one until then. The Museum is therefore too small to present its collections to the public. Projects for expansion were suggested from time to time without anything concrete resulting until the beginning of this summer, when the head of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, M. Jean-Paul L'Allier, announced that the Petite Bastille was going to be converted and annexed to the Museum. This former prison that overlooks the Plains next to the Museum will certainly be able to give it the exhibition halls it lacks and will endow it with the store-rooms and work-rooms indispensable to the fulfilling of its purpose. But once enlarged and equipped with the essential services that it always lacked, will the Quebec Museum be provided with the necessary staff to animate its activities in proportion to the dimensions it will then have attained and will it be able to restore the works that will have to come forth from the limbo in which they have been confined until then? The promised model pales somewhat, surely, and yet, because with a great deal of ingenuity they have finally created an image that becomes blurred only when one has access to museological secrets, the Quebec Museum remains the institution that characterizes the modern notion that we should have of a museum.

This is so because the curators of the museum have fully assimilated the double facet that determines the traditional approach to works of art as that of ethnographic objects. And they have tried, not without success, to reconcile these two points of view, by organizing lengthy thematic exhibitions in which works are selected and grouped as much with regard to their aesthetic values as with regard to their sociological characteristics. It would be hard work to quote all the examples which come to mind, but I shall mention these exhibitions: *Old Quilts and Beds*, which took place in the summer of 1975, and *Three Centuries of Furniture in Quebec*, which was put on in the summer of 1976. With such ensembles as these, the Museum displays in turn all the important works of its different collections, by actualizing them through instruction that never falls into antiquated academism or misplaced elitism. Further, the visual presentation of these ensem-

bles reaches such a degree of perfection that the environments thus created give to the work of art and the objects displayed a feeling of familiarity which, while emphasizing the wonders to be discovered, certainly give the viewers a genuine feeling of ease and closeness. In this way the Quebec Museum escapes the aspect of a mausoleum, where the work chosen is religiously offered to the contemplation of the enlightened visitor. In another connection, this museum has moved away from the ill-timed display of works of art that attract crowds by misleading though legal advertising. The Quebec Museum is neither a crypt nor a setting for a fair. It has chosen to be a place where the treasures of our heritage are within reach of everyone, as much on the point of accessibility as on that of comprehension. I know of only a few museums in the world which have such a love for the works of art and such respect for the public.

Beyond all this, the Quebec Museum participates actively in stimulating comparisons. With this in view, large travelling exhibitions of old and contemporary art are regularly welcomed in the halls. Further, a contemporary art gallery has been created and is known as the Galerie de la Quinzaine. On account of the small size of the premises, a relatively cosy space is reserved for exhibitions by young artists, which take place for a period of fifteen days. In this way the Museum plays the rôle of promoter that it should assume in a community, and we are familiar with many significant works of art thanks to the unique opportunity the young artists of Quebec have had to make themselves known in this gallery. One after the other, all trends are presented here, and through these activities of the present the Museum fully assumes the rôle that all contemporary institutions ought to take as their responsibility. Besides, a bus owned by the Museum shuttles every day between the schools and the Museum, drawing and painting courses attract more than two hundred diligent pupils every Saturday; showings of films on art take place each afternoon; catalogues are put out often and a video studio has been established which has already produced several documentaries that promote the comprehension of the varied activities.

The Quebec Museum has, until now, rightly asserted its orientation and fulfilled its functions in the contemporary definition of the term. It remains for it to obtain the means of safeguarding its precious collections and, if possible, to complete them. The Museum should enlarge its field of activity in the domains of contemporary art, especially in the area of acquisitions, in order that its purpose as a national museum shall be completely fulfilled. Some years ago the Quebec Museum was declared associate museum by the Corporation of National Museums. By virtue of this, it can benefit from certain supplementary funds applicable particularly to the expansion of its services. It also had the possibility of creating a department of travelling exhibitions. This programme of support is, however, challenged by the Corporation, because, if the Quebec Museum obtained supplementary funds in the first two years of the association, the technicalities imposed by an oppressive bureaucracy can make the obtaining of further credit difficult. And if the different municipalities of Quebec do not possess all the adequate facilities to accommodate exhibitions; if, besides, the works of art in the Quebec Museum's collection cannot safely leave the cellars where they are kept, the Museum has nevertheless regularly

organized travelling exhibitions presented in various Quebec cities, especially in Rimouski, Sherbrooke, Baie-Saint-Paul and Montreal, at Place des Arts.

Finally, the Minister, announcing the expansion of the Quebec Museum, has named to direct it Mr. Laurent Bouchard, known and appreciated for his qualities as an animator. Since the departure of Mr. Jean Soucy, the temporary management has been assumed by Mr. André Juneau, now assistant director. Mr. Juneau and his team of curators had given the Museum a dynamism that, doubtless, will be continued and we may believe that this national museum will now have the opportunity of extending its influence over the whole country.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

ART GALLERIES IN QUEBEC CITY

By Michel CHAMPAGNE

Painting the picture of the state of art galleries in Quebec city is not an easy task; to keep this in mind has been my chief concern. It does not entail forming a negative criticism of it but, solely, a presentation that will be the most exact and complete possible, by describing the activities, the styles, the trends, the principal orientations, in order that the reader may realize the existence of a living artistic life in Quebec and in order to spend some time there. More than twelve commercial galleries can be visited, and a few places where exhibitions can be seen.

The oldest and most prestigious gallery in Quebec was the *Zanettin*; some artists whose work was to be seen there are now famous. The death a few years ago of a valuable contributor of the house, Hélène Zanettin, and the passage of time prove to us that she was its soul, its dynamism, the advisor of artists and collectors. We owe her the finest years in the life of the plastic arts in the capital. Since her time, enthusiasm is gone. This gallery, which was the meeting place of the artistic milieu, is today, with its very rare exhibitions, the rendezvous of artists transformed into one for tourists.

L'Atelier gallery, its neighbour, has directed its activity in the same direction, offering a choice of Quebec engravings and Eskimo art.

For the last ten years, **Jolliet** gallery at Place Royale has seemed to wish to replace the latter, but it is only with very rare exceptions that Quebec artists have presented their works there. Exhibitions have been oriented toward Montreal artists of the Plasticians' School. More than a year ago, this gallery opened a graphics branch at the Commercial Centre at Sainte-Foy. We hope that this experiment in democratization will bring a much-desired increase in influence.

In a few years of existence **Bénédek-Grenier** art gallery on Youville Square has quickly taken first place, by presenting exhibitions of high quality by artists from Quebec and elsewhere. This gallery also offers a prestigious choice of graphic works by its artists and a wide selection by international artists. Too, this was the only Quebec gallery to take part in the Biennale at Basle in 1974. At present, this gallery seems to be hanging fire, but we are expecting a second resurgence from it, so that it will retain its important position.

Comme gallery, which was housed on the third floor of a building in Old Quebec, at the

rear of a courtyard upon which opened boutiques, restaurants, a café and a crafts booth, had an attractive atmosphere. This gallery has just moved to larger premises with studios for artists and a big shop-window. It came about through the efforts of young artists, unable to find a location to present their productions, works or research. This wonderful adventure gives them the opportunity to hold exhibitions quite regularly. It is unfortunate that this unique type of gallery is not more amply subsidized. **Atelier Galerie André Bécotte** has recently opened a few doors away. It is situated on the second floor of a large building very well arranged to receive exhibitions periodically.

Michel de Kerdour gallery, next to Parliament Hill on Place Quebec beside the Hilton, resembles a sumptuous jewel-case; walls covered with velvet, thick carpet and discreet lighting; its elegance and refinement remind us of certain galleries in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré or Place Vendôme. Works are displayed with a great deal of care in tastefully-chosen frames. The figurative is predominant, represented by a few important names placed next to illustrious unknowns.

Au Parrain des Artistes art gallery, situated at the heart of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste ward, has a history and a development different from those of the others. Its owner, Roland Gastonguay, was storekeeper at the École des Beaux-Arts at Quebec for more than twenty years. To round off his accounts at the end of the month and, most often, to help out students and professors, he used to manufacture in his basement borders, mouldings and frames. To this was added the sale of tubes of paint, brushes and other artists' supplies. Even to-day, he remains Jean-Paul Lemieux' sole framer.

After several years, Gastonguay decided to turn a little three-room flat into a gallery, next to his workshop, in order to be able to help certain artists and encourage the expansion of young careers. After a modest beginning, he is undertaking the enlarging of both his workshop and his gallery. We firmly believe that a few years hence this gallery will be the most active in Quebec and will remain the most attractive.

At the **École des Arts Visuels** of Laval University, in the Arts Tower, there is a little gallery open almost exclusively to certain professors who present their developments and intellectual research to their few disciples... The exhibitions there, quite numerous but not much frequented by the public, are open particularly to the university population.

The **Atelier de Réalisations Graphiques** on St. John Street is a cooperative group of some twenty young artists. Their first aim was to be able to continue to do engraving upon leaving the *Beaux-Arts*. The studio is subsidized by the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and by the Canada Council. Soon, in order to further aid the artists to disseminate and display their works, they opened a gallery. To-day, this gallery, renovated, continually offers exhibitions by its members and by other artists, in which research and dynamism predominate.

The **Charles-Huot** gallery, once located in the former home of Louis Saint-Laurent, has now moved to large, spacious quarters on the second floor of a building on famous Trésor Street. There, exhibitions take place on a regular basis. This gallery permanently owns an imposing collection of the works of Quebec artists. Further, courses in painting are given there and appraising, restoration and framing of works of art are also carried on.

A group of painters has established a gallery,