

Texts in English

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TEXTS IN ENGLISH

LONDON LETTER

By Jennifer OILLE



1. Constantin BRANCUSI
Maïastra, 1911.
Haut.: 21 pces $\frac{7}{8}$ (55 cm. 25).
Londres, Tate Gallery.

2. Nicolas LANCRET
Famille dans un jardin à l'heure du café.
Londres, National Gallery.
(Phot. National Gallery)

3. Henri ROUSSEAU
Tempête tropicale avec un tigre.
Londres, National Gallery.
(Phot. National Gallery)



I was going to talk about how the Meanest Mugs become Priceless Picassos, the elevation of the pot that was never meant to be anything but a pot to the status of high art, through the manipulation of the artist, the market-place and history. And I was going to talk about acquisitions and acquisitioning, how galleries kill themselves to get the star attraction they can't afford, or could afford if they weren't penalized by the existing tax system and grant structure. But I suppose it isn't all meaningless because it's all part of the lack of definition, priorities and values that has led to a state of national emergency — and I suppose every country exists in a quiet, perpetual state of national emergency, albeit undeclared and unofficial.

I was going to start with a plethora of those early 20th century movements confronting the problem of aesthetics, the machine, the functional, the negative effects of the industrial age on production, product and consumer, which sought salvation in the craft approach and the application of a pre-existing aesthetic. Of course, this one-to-one methodology ignored the problem of mass/ man/ machine and could not apply an aesthetic standard to every utilitarian item of everyman. The solution is the confrontation with the 20th century on its own terms, the affirmation of machine and function and the negation of an a priori aesthetic. Machine and function together will create their own aesthetic.

I was then going to look at two groups of Royal College of Art students who couldn't care less about mass/ man/ machine — or craft either — and make insanely opulent objects which question the functionality of the functional. At 401 1/2 Workshop, a South-London warehouse, they landscape vests, embroider picture frames, patchwork furniture, sculpt anthropomorphic teapots and temper silver into baroque temples and De Chirico staircases. Michael Haynes runs it and makes one of a kind tables and chairs out of perspex. At the Glasshouse in Covent Garden they blow glass, roll it in white enamel or silver chloride, sand-blast it, draw on it affirming the total experience of heat, concentration and work. Sam Herman presides — the master of glass as art, conceived and realized by the artist rather than designed by the artist for machine production. Trained by Professor Harvey Littleton of the University of Wisconsin, an ex-Fulbright scholar, a teacher at the Royal College, he received a one-man exhibition at the Victoria and Albert in 1971.

I was going to continue with Hugh Moss and the elevation of applied into high art by market conditions, past and present. The Moss Gallery is Far Eastern Art in London, half commercial, half academic, complemented by a scholarly, self-congratulatory, printing firm and a research laboratory headed by Stuart Fleming, a pioneer in thermoluminescent dating. In 1475 the Chinese discovered that their native cobalt produced a finer blue porcelain underglaze than imported material. The Emperor agreed and hid the revered pots and bowls, untouched, unused, in his storehouse. Imperial Ming coexisted with a bastard brother, Export Ming, designed for sale, to the tastes of the barbarian consumer. The Chinese said Ming (Export) is our best. The Western scholar said, "Yes, it's good but Imperial is better." The

collector acquiesced and Ming priced itself out of the market. So the collector turned to 14th century objects, pots that were never meant to be anything else, and by demand and price turned them into Picassos. As the stocks dry up the process is at work on the Sung and Annamese. Now we have Moss, the commercial academic who assembles collections of "Chinese Snuff Bottles of the Silica or Quartz Group" and "Chinese and Annamese Ceramics Found in the Philippines and Indonesia" for research and exhibition, not sale. Word escapes of secret, priceless, mysterious hordes. Why else would Moss be interested? Demand and price zoom and he is accused of artificially inflating financial and aesthetic values. Is he?

Only the Geffrye makes sense to me now. Fact as fact. In 1911 the London County Council acquired a splendid Georgian almshouse built in 1715 by Sir Robert Geffrye, Lord Mayor, and turned it into a furniture museum, part of a series of specialized craft museums located in areas of specific trades. Shoreditch is cabinet making, so the Geffrye documents the environment of the Upper Classes from 1600 to 1900, for only the upper class could afford to reflect changes in style. But 20th century affluence permits a diversity of styles among a diversity of classes, class tastes rather than a Class Taste. A dining room, 1929, is art deco people, a sitting room, 1935, is general strike people. And a major exhibit, June 4 to September 28, is Utility, recreating the life styles of a generation under the impact wartime material shortages and official standards of design and manufacture established by Gordon Russel's Council of Industrial Design.

The children of Shoreditch, the sons and daughters of the Smithfield market carters, the Covent Garden barrow-drivers, visit the Geffrye with their school. They return, alone, on Saturdays and holidays. Their parents give them money to get rid of them and they prefer to spend it on tube fare to these fascinating rooms than on chips or flicks . . . Which makes history as fact more meaningful than pots into Picassos.

To-night Acquisition and Acquisitions, beset by financial problems, impelled by the ambitions, pretentious and pure, of galleries and museums, remain meaningful. Because they make the private public. Art shouldn't be hidden away in the great houses of the great lords, but then without the great lords there would be no art. Maybe there wouldn't be a national state of emergency either.

Until the Finance Act of 1972 all cash bequests to museums and galleries were subject to estate duty and securities to capital gains tax, a policy discouraging potential benefactors, cutting, for example, Sir Robert Hart's £500,000 legacy to the National Gallery to £100,000. Donations from current income are tax-deductible only if given to institutions classified as charities. Finally the government's annual purchase grant system is set on a quinquennial basis which presupposes normal price rise, not galloping inflation.

But there is the National Arts Collection Fund, established in 1903 to assist in the purchase of works beyond the means of an institution. Responsible for works which in some unfortunate places are the only things that make a visit worthwhile, it also enriches the already rich — Leonardo's cartoon of "The Virgin and Child with St. Anne and St. John the Baptist" at the National Gallery.

The National Gallery regards itself as the watch-dog of the national heritage, public and private, British and non-British, reviewing all requests for export licenses, acting as buyer of last resort to maintain the heritage. If choice rests between acquisition and the building

program the painting wins. Better crowded walls than bare and everything purchased goes on view.

To save Titian's "Death of Actaeon" from Getty's Malibu Museum cost £1,750,000. The government permitted the gallery to contribute £600,000 against its annual purchase grant over 4 years at a rate of £150,000 per annum, so lowering the grant from £480,000 to £330,000. During this period the gallery may not ask for special funds to obtain works that could have been acquired with the grant undocked. In spite of this potential mortgage on policy and purchase both continue. They fought US Ambassador J. W. Annenburg for the Douanier Rousseau's "Tropical Storm with a Tiger", a necessary addition to the weak French collection, an irresistible temptation considering the Tate and Courtauld each have only one small Rousseau. Annenburg succumbed and even made the final contribution which made purchase possible. Next in 1973 came Lancret's "Lady and Gentleman taking Coffee with Children in a Garden" and Jan Van Goyen's "An Estuary with Fishing Boats and Two Frigates".

In March, 1972, the Victoria and Albert received a cheque from an anonymous benefactor for £50,000 and a note "I think it would be nice if the Victoria and Albert used the money to buy some specific thing." Indeed they did, a carved red lacquer table, early Ming, c. 1426-36. Not only is this style unrepresented in the West, the particular piece is reputedly the finest anywhere. It transforms the museum's collection of Far Eastern Furniture, where the most notable pieces, such as Emperor Chi'en Lung's throne, c. 1750, had been of much later date.

The Tate just got Brancusi's "Matiestra", 1910. Seminal in the redefinition of sculpture, it states that sculptural harmony need not be based on the traditional relation of parts to the whole. In eliminating all but one part it creates a new harmony based on the relation of width to length to depth, deposited on a single continuous surface. The unpatinated bronze makes light a means of sculptural form, an unvariegated unity analogous to the new objective of wholeness, physical and psychological simplification.

Jennifer OILLE

And public exhibitions persist. The Arts Council is combining Vorticism, the brilliant photographs of Diana Arbus and French Popular Imagery at the Hayward Gallery between March 27 and June 2.

The Victoria and Albert is featuring "Byron" between February 18 and August 25, Ivory Carving in Early Medieval England between April 24 and June 23 and Railway Prints from May 15 to September 22.

Richard Dadd, June 20 to August 19, follows Klein and Manzoni, March 20 to May 5, at the Tate.

BETWEEN YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

By Andrée PARADIS

The advent of the media, it is certain, precipitated the instituting of a climate of upheaval from which it is almost impossible to escape. One disturbing fact remains: the slowness with which things really change and the weariness generated by words of impact that only superficially reach the conscience. The word *new*, for instance. Novelty presupposes a charac-

teristic of originality in relationship to what exists. To establish it seriously demands a complete knowledge of what went before and, soon, only the computer will be able to certify that a work is original. The word *new* can also imply that the thing appears for the first time. But watch out! The young carrots that appear in the spring for the first time are still carrots. What is newer than eternal reappearance?

In the arts, the fact is constantly confirmed. "The replacing of the picture by the object and the following implanting of the environment; the theme of the everyday and its treatment in pop painting; the apogee of op art and kinetic art in the form of multiples; the interpenetration of forms arising from different artistic fields and the strange creation of the happening; the growing acceptance of the poster; the intensive development of design and of art to be consumed; showings grouped under the name of conceptual art". All these manifestations, to which must be added recent videography, indicates that we are witnessing the end of a period that involves the end of the dialectical play between the creator and the spectator according to traditional terms, and that we are at the beginning of an era when the artist and his interpreters will seek to invent the modalities of a field of expression, more liberal and, let us hope, more human. Nonetheless, it will still be necessary for many years to question ourselves on the experience of the artist who lives in the period of transition, of the true artist torn between his belonging to a consumer society and his need to serve the revolution he desires. It will also be necessary to foster the development and the expression of the creative individuality more and more in our industrial and technological society. Jean Marabini, in a recent book, arrives at the conclusion that for once Marcuse and McLuhan are in agreement on the subject of its best area of expansion. In the domain of art, "the artist expresses his individuality in a form of creative work that modern culture has extolled as a manifestation of a higher liberty and a greater value. And contrary to the moral and spiritual autonomy that idealistic philosophy assigns to the individual, the freedom of the artist is of a more substantial nature; it is expressed again in his work and his life"². Outside of the field of art, Marcuse believes as well that creative individuality can flower more surely in the free time of the free man than in the leisure time, organized set time, of the man who is not free. And creative activity can be learned, true culture can be learned and the result is precisely the enrichment, the beautifying of a society.

For Jorge Romero Brest, Argentine art critic, Marcuse has understood the essence of the problem: the man who, through annulment of dialectic, has become the *one-dimensional* man in a society *without opposition*, where criticism has lost its strength. He finds Marcuse's arguments convincing when he establishes that, without contrast between art and reality, that is to say without the sublimation of experience, art is of necessity weak. He finds them much less convincing when the author of *Eros and Civilization* seems to desire a return to the past, without understanding the possibility of establishing a new dialectical play.

Between yesterday and today, between Eros and Thanatos, between life and death, the *new* is in league with the open mind.

1. Jorge Romero Brest, *La Fin du jeu dialectique dans et par l'œuvre d'art*; Coloquio Artes, No 11, p. 79.

2. Jean Marabini, *Marcuse & McLuhan et la nouvelle révolution mondiale*; Mame, 1973, p. 90-91.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

**LOUISE DOUCET —
THE RHYTHM OF THE EARTH**

By Gilles RACETTE

Born in Montreal on April 9, 1938, Louise Doucet won second prize in 1963 in the Artistic Competition of the Province of Quebec and obtained a grant in 1965 from the Canada Council. In Japan she exhibited at the Cultural Centre of the Province of Tochigi (1966) and at the Matuya Gallery in Tokyo (1967). In Montreal, last May, we were able to view her recent works at the Canadian Guild of Crafts.

Pottery as a handicraft, but also as tangible integration of sculpture and painting. Of music, of a rhythm, of poetry, and of a language. Of design.

To speak of pottery is, certainly, to circumscribe a certain number of problems fatally technical and inevitably inherent in this art, but it is also to touch with the finger a sort of primitive aesthetics, intimately bound to the slow, regular rhythm of the creative soul, of the hand, of nature. Pottery is a rhythm.

Louise Doucet is no longer what is commonly called a town-dweller, this versatile race nearing extinction. She recently abandoned this status and the nettles soon made only a mouthful of it. It was necessary from many points of view and the impact on her creation is clearly perceptible. She and her little family now live in Way's Mills — not far from North Hatley, where the famous Japanese potter, Tatsuzo Shimaoka directed practical works in August, 1964, in which Louise Doucet took part — on a splendid farm, in the very heart of the Eastern Townships. Way's Mills is the perfect miniature of the small Quebec village, a tiny settlement squeezed between Sherbrooke, Magog and the Vermont border. A decisive and outstanding change; reinforced concrete is found there in the fascinating form of earth, grass and trees. As for the family home, overlooking the village (whose houses number hardly more than twelve), it is surrounded by a studio, a kiln and a huge shed which will eventually be used to house cattle. A garden and, lost on this immense area of more than a hundred acres and buried in undergrowth, a sugar-house. That's it. A whole world. Scarcely anything more is lacking but original sin and a serpent. With a lot of exuberance, punctuated by large movements of his arms, Satoshi Saïto, Louise Doucet's husband, told me already of the land, the wind, the work, the obsessions, the projects of creation. A great peace, like a long, deep breathing.

The work of Louise Doucet is certainly above all a work of a craftsman. And, contrarily, an art which found its finality, its beauty and its density in constant, ascetic work. A saying of Michaelangelo comes to mind: "An enormous amount of effort is necessary to erase the marks of work." This is particularly apparent with Louise Doucet in the perfection of her works, their simplicity and their quietude.

The art of the potter takes part in a magical and alchemical union of the four elements: earth, fire, water and air. The most directly perceptible naturally remain earth and fire but, without the exact quality of an atmosphere and the precise dosage of water, the work will not be able to be born or else it will be born, but imperfect and unsatisfactory. Can we consequently speak of true birth?

The particular nature of Louise Doucet's work arises from the effective and artistic use

and manipulation of these elements. To know the earth, to knead it as one kneads bread, to penetrate it, to melt oneself with it, to become earth. To know fire, its strength, its slowness, its own life, to love it. And so on. Water. Air.

Fire especially fascinates me.

In 1971, Louise Doucet and Satoshi Saïto undertook the building of a kiln (catenary arch kiln). From then on this kiln allowed her a wide latitude in her creation, a suppleness, a kind of intimacy with fire which manufactured kilns do not offer. The size of this kiln enabled her also to do only twenty firings a year. On the other hand, this is a lot if we consider the astonishing production which is accomplished by reason of eight hours (at least) of work a day.

The art of the potter is in working the clay in depth and on the surface, in cooking it and in decorating it. Insight is total. In the works of Louise Doucet, there are no deep nicks or grooves. When the time comes to work the surface of the clay, it is there that the moving sensitivity of the hand is revealed most. Would it be a sort of dream that guides the pressure of the fingers? Or the necessity of the delicacy of touch which she demands of herself? By taste, by impulse? This clay is sacred. It lives, transforms itself. A great wisdom permeates the lines that one discerns on the objects shaped.

The economy of means is also an integral part of all this wisdom of Louise Doucet. Oriental wisdom which she brought back from Japan and which her husband perpetuates, perhaps well, but above all discipline and the art of living her work wholly, day after day. Thus the re-utilization of materials, this kind of recycling of tools, as much clay as water is noteworthy and of great importance with her. It is her way of better knowing her tools, of seizing their true reality, their only truth.

For Louise Doucet, genuine creation — in the fullness of its acceptance — resides essentially in the liberty she takes with technique. In this sense, the Japanese tradition into which she became assimilated is related to her work only to the extent where she is not the clew but rather an aesthetic and technical background, indeed ethical. She is an astonishingly Quebec potter. In the program of an exhibition of Louise Doucet held in Tokyo, Tatsuzo Shimaoka wrote: "What has impressed me most about the work she has produced, using entirely Japanese materials and kiln, is that her creations are still uniquely characteristic of her as a Canadian."

Japanese tradition has it that an article of pottery should not necessarily be produced by the hand of a single individual. There is a master who thinks, corrects along the way, orientates, guides the apprentice or apprentices who execute. From this fact, the forms and glazes attain a true perfection which will never be able to be equalled in the West, due to the single fact that they have many, many times been repeated. Each defends himself as he can. With Louise Doucet, as everywhere in the Occident, the duality of master and slave is found united in one and the same individual.

While fulfilling the personal demands of the artist, production is oriented toward economic survival. Combined with the production there is research, creation. It is the time of the master.

With Louise Doucet, all is only nuances, suppleness, quietitude and work. To go further ahead, to depart from the average, to seek new forms, to innovate, to create, finally, from this wonderfully unpromising material, as we say of a land that it is unproductive.

Indifference is unthinkable in the face of this work whose formal beauty is pure and simple like the course of everyday life. Hence the importance granted to the unique and mysteriously precious object. Plastic beauty and functional design, these two axes of pottery, merge with her with a rare density and a great penetration. There remains at the end only a work which, separated from its functional reality, has no other possible reference than to itself.

An object of pottery cannot and should not be completely finished. Its functional rôle assures it a continuity and forms its finality. An empty cup, for example, seen in a display, finds its fulfillment only at the moment when it is really used, when it becomes what it was created for. It becomes real, totally. Its use, the participation of the senses, the wonder and the acuteness of perception constitute the ultimate stage of creation, as reading often proves a re-creation. In a certain way, we love the cup at the moment when we begin to know it, to identify with it, to recognize the creation of it and the hand of the creator. To revive. All this, with Louise Doucet, is very easy. To follow, to pursue plastic, formal beauty through the work, to discover her rhythm, her truth.

As opposed to objects manufactured in our always astonishing consumer society, we learn to live with these objects. Slowly, as for something which does not allow itself to be grasped at first glance or at first contact of the hand.

Louise Doucet does not face her wheel without previously knowing her intentions or, at least, the vague form or the use of what she is preparing to shape. From this point of view, the function of the object is decisive and guides the advance of the work and even the rhythm of its creation.

The fascinating forms of this pottery and the perfection of the details make it an entity of a very strong power of suggestion whether the textures are richly coloured or faithfully close to the original material. Finally, a recent pre-occupation, *slabs*, do not fail to surprise by their strength, their massive body and their decoration which recalls a completely pictorial dimension. Is not the richness and the grandeur of a work dependent on the degree of perception we have of it?

Rediscover the rhythm of the work of Louise Doucet but, for that, it would be necessary to stop speaking of it.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

**MASTERPIECES OF TAPESTRY FROM THE
14th TO THE 16th CENTURY**

By Roland SANFAÇON

An agreement recently concluded between the National Museums of France and the Metropolitan Museum of New York opens new perspectives in the life of art on a more and more vast geographical scale. The first manifestation of this agreement is already under way. An exhibition at the Grand-Palais in Paris gathers together numerous *Masterpieces of the Tapestry of the 14th to the 16th century*; it will then be transferred to the Metropolitan Museum in New York¹. The museums of Europe, from England and the USSR, to Spain and Italy, those of America, from Boston to Honolulu, have contributed, as well as large centres of the preservation of tapestry in France, Belgium

and New York. This exhibition will brighten the holiday period of Christmas and New Year in Paris, that of Easter in New York. Such an association of tapestry with festivals, civil or religious, is a very fortunate one. It is at the very origin of this art.

Like Westerners, the Chinese and the Japanese practised the illustration of fabrics, but *makemono* or *kakemono* are always of an astonishing discretion in size and design. In the space of halls objectively rather limited, but emotively vast and uncluttered, we are led to saunter, to approach to look for a moment. Large occidental tapestry is very different. It is as fascinating from far as from close up. It played, at the end of the Middle Ages, a rôle quite as important as that of stained glass in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. It enabled the men of the West to identify themselves and develop in full confidence in spaces which they had intended extensive, but which would, without colour, have appeared too empty and too terrifying.

For the man of the Dark Ages, concrete things were less valid in themselves than by what they represented. In stained glass, this way of seeing was literally sublimated. The glassy surface counted less than the coloured light that it released and which filled the church with a divine or royal presence. In the same way, the lines of the pillars and the ribs of the vaults were of less importance in themselves than in the space which they suggested, as, for example, the longitudinal and vertical space of the big naves of Chartres or Rheims. Then, about 1260 and Saint Thomas Aquinas, men were inclined to reckon essentially on their reason, on the relationships they could establish between things, by themselves and with the help of God. This placed them in the centre of everything, free in the space which separates objects and in the time needed to join and bind them together. This became unbearable. They sought a refuge in the things themselves. All the elements of flamboyant architecture became fascinating in themselves: the twisted motifs of the windows, the prismatic mouldings of the columns and the portals. And, to avoid the bareness of the partition-walls, to vary the attractiveness of the surfaces, they enhanced them, when the opportunity arose, with completely covering tapestries. The warmth of wool, the charm of rich materials, threads of gold and silk, caused the viewer to feel very close to the tapestry, to cleave to it as if physically.

Indeed, most of the tapestries of the end of the Middle Ages suggested a certain spatial play, a very complex play. It is not a matter of a forward perspective, as in the Byzantine mosaics where the figures stand out in the direction of the viewers on uniformly blue or gold backgrounds. It is not a question of the perspectives that were invented then in the first years of the Italian Renaissance and which allowed the spectator to penetrate behind the surface of a canvas into a picture. In tapestry, more than in any other form of art, the spatial suggestion is intermediate. Figures or things seem to stand out a little from the woolly surface due to their precise, almost geometric and static contours (the unicorn, in the scene of the *Defending Unicorn* in the *Hunt of the Unicorn* in the Cloisters Museum in New York, prances in the manner of a rocking wooden horse for a child or for a merry-go-round) with their well-spread colours contrasting with the coloured particles of the backgrounds (we think of many *millefleurs*, of the few figures of each scene in *Apocalypse* of Angers). Elsewhere, some superpositions of personages or objects, more or less contradictory lines of flight, softenings in the colour, permit penetration into the fabrics.

And yet, these movements are extremely light, first because the crests and the recesses contradict each other, especially because a major perceptive centre has been maintained on the very surface of the fabric, a porous and gracious surface.

This predominance of the plane surface comes first from colour. This cannot be varied at will with the help of mixtures, as in painting in oils. To ensure the transitions, they juxtaposed different yarns while very often creating zones of hachures analogous everywhere. As they were satisfied with a rather limited number of colours, the same shades appeared in many places, judging from arrangements often much studied and very lively. There are also these uniform backgrounds that cover large stretches, these figures of persons, animals or plants whose size is quite as equal or whimsically variable from one end to the other of the tapestry, these things which are expressed with a same concern for concrete detail. All that contradicts a few of the fundamental points of the perception in perspective by the normal human eye. And they used more systematically than ever the very medieval habit of inscriptions to identify the personages or the action in the panels, in order to record patrons of the arts, in order also to have the tapestry discerned as a simple support for the writing, valid in its very materiality.

Tapestry found a most surprising place in society. For its manufacture, it involved very many men. They were scholars or princes who commanded special orders, like the Duke of Burgundy who wished to celebrate his victory in the *Battle of Rozenburg*, a lost tapestry which, all in one piece, was larger than thirty-nine metres (one hundred thirty feet). Elsewhere, businessmen ran considerable risks in causing luxurious tapestries to be produced in the most varied workshops and in undertaking later to sell them to the princes, the cities and the churches of the whole West. This can resemble a certain industrial production, and yet we find in it very little of the atmosphere of a modern capitalist enterprise where the men are all assembled under one employer and work as much for the reputation of the enterprise as for the quality of the products. Initiatives came from everywhere, men enlisted everywhere. The chief initiators were certainly the princes, the churches or those big commercial contractors. For the most original and the most carefully produced tapestries, they had to find a good painter to design the composition of the whole. A cartoon artist transposed these compositions to the monumental dimension of the tapestry, section by section. The craftsmen, the warpers as they were called, had to interpret these cartoons right through the weaving, very faithfully when it was a matter of low-warp where the tapestry was produced horizontally with the cartoons themselves, quite freely when it was a question of high-warp, where the tapestry in work was arranged vertically between rollers placed on the floor and the ceiling of the workshop and where the cartoons had to be redesigned in outline on the wool, the strong threads of the base of the fabrics covered by wool. In many cases, the workshops themselves took the initiative in production before selling it as best they could. They then made maximum use of the cartoons already available for a certain figure or a certain scene, to avoid expense. They reversed them when necessary, they freely juxtaposed personages of different sizes. Cleverly distributed colours, totally covering backgrounds of flowers allowed them to achieve the most convincing results with the simplest means. In several respects, this production employed numerous communities.

In this context, the origin of tapestries is very difficult to establish. We can imagine an extreme theoretical case where the painter would be from Paris, the cartoon artist from Arras, the workshop in Brussels, the contractor or the patron from Burgundy. The artisans and the artists moved often, and tapestries went through many vicissitudes. However, Paris was undoubtedly at the origin of monumental tapestry with the important works of the *Apocalypse* of Angers or the *Nine Worthies* of New York, about 1380, both at the exhibition. Arras succeeded quite quickly, as did many other Brabantine and Flemish cities. Brussels was the chief centre of great luxury after 1475. This city lived on the tradition of the best painters of the North and, notably, on Rogier van der Weyden, whose pupils designed several of the most sumptuous panels of tapestry.

The use of tapestry was also very diversified socially. On account of its vast dimensions, tapestry was intended directly for crowds of men gathered in huge halls, those of cathedrals or parochial churches, those of castles. But these men were no longer guided toward a total and collective ideal. It involved a crowd less than a community which was identified by privileged ties to a local prince and his family, to a saint all of whose life and deeds were known, deeds which were still going on. It was also a matter of the inhabitants of a city or of a section whose streets were bordered with tapestries for the solemn entrance of a prince, for local festivals, as extension to the dramas and mystery plays that were acted in the open air for several days. Tapestry was used expressly to impress with the importance of these social ties. Because princes travelled with their precious fabrics. In this way they could dazzle their circle, even their circle of a day or a few days, and better make their departure felt when the hangings were rolled up, then carried farther away.

Very substantially, the tapestries were wonderfully adapted to their use. Because tapestries are attractive to all kinds of people. The guests of a moment could fully enjoy discoveries of details: preciousness of material, ingenious precision of concrete observation of things. Botanists in New York were able to identify definitely a hundred and one different plants in the panels of the *Hunt of the Unicorn*. Elsewhere, there is the delightful and so natural movement of a little rabbit frisking about among the flowers, and of a small dog peering through the hair falling in front of his eyes.

It was truly on another level, by leaping over middle foregrounds completely absent in most of the tapestries, that they admired the elegance of some great persons, the transforming of their movements in a world where there was nothing but flowers and springtime. The very use of cartoons ready in advance gave the opportunity of going straight to this essential effect, of more or less dissociating individuals and things. In the best examples, it was the large figures that set the rhythm of the composition. They made use of their limbs or their bodies to hide the difficult linkings between small objects (see the *Winged Deers* of Rouen). They adapted their gestures to the movements of the whole of the scene. In battles and in narrative scenes, dense crowds of superimposed persons created the strong impression of a global movement which stirs everything.

Men living in a constant intimacy with these tapestries had to carry their discoveries still further, discoveries in iconography. If several *millefleurs* conjure up very simple moments in the daily life of the nobles, most of the tapestries go deeply into two often combined iconographic veins, detailed narrative cycles, objects

and figures with multiple symbolic meanings. Who knew all the details of the life of Saint Stephen, of Alexander or of Esther? Elsewhere, the unicorn was the symbol of speed (used by the Le Vistes, the patrons of the *Lady with the Unicorn*, in Paris), of nobleness (it served as standard-bearer), of virtue (only a virgin could tame it), of miracles (narwhal horns taken for the horn of a unicorn were preserved at St. Denis, in Rome, . . .) In these cases, much knowledge and many experiments, apart from the simple vision of the works, were necessary. In this way, the best informed continued to join the scenes together, to set iconography face to face with forms. At all levels, these panels guarded intriguing secrets, always attractive and charming. They still keep some.

The exhibition is notable in its proportions. If we were to put all the panels displayed side by side, we would cover more than three hundred fifty metres (about one thousand one hundred seventy-five feet) of surface on an average height of approximately three metres fifty (eleven and a half feet). This is very little in relationship to the production of three centuries, since we would cover a bit more than one third of a kilometre, almost a quarter of a mile, relatively little, on the two sides of a city street. But it is already astonishingly big, even for our contemporaries, more and more accustomed to paintings of great size. The largest piece is also the oldest. It is a single one of the seven original panels of the *Apocalypse* of Louis I of Anjou, almost all saved and preserved at Angers. It actually measures eighteen metres fifty (about sixty feet) in length by a height of four metres (thirteen feet).

The exhibition is also of a very high quality. In eighty-nine panels, the most significant trends are covered. The origins of monumental tapestry in Paris with the *Apocalypse* of Angers, the *Presentation in the Temple* of Brussels, the *Nine Worthies* of New York (the human figures in these are few, well divided into meaningful groups, for a calm, clear understanding from far; in the detail, the silhouettes are vibrating, the feelings unfathomable, between restless sky and earth; we enter immediately into the large movements which are suggested, even at a distance, by the very carefully done alternations of reds and blues in the tranquillity of the composition). A few of the best fabrics of Arras, filled with freshness and intense life, sparkling with crystals and beads in the greenery and the pearly light (approximately seven panels dated between 1420 and 1460). About twenty large narrative panels, with dense mobile crowds, probably woven at Tournai after 1460. About twenty millefleurs panels particularly associated with France between 1460 and 1520 and with the *Lady with the Unicorn*, from the Museum of Cluny, in Paris (one must especially insist, here, on the learned composition of the panel *Sight* in this last cycle). The lady and the unicorn form an eminently dynamic triangle, in which the long arm of the lady on the back of the unicorn forms the pendant of the animal's horn. This side of the triangle joins small animals at the lower right and upper left corners, along a diagonal passing through the standard. But the lady's right leg stretches out immediately in the direction of the lion, whose look goes out of the tapestry. Everywhere there is mobility of the eyes, a theme of this panel already contained in the irregular triangle of the heads of the lady, the unicorn and the image in the mirror. But the predominant symmetry of the composition, of the lady between the two trees, the reappearance of the rose and the green of the backgrounds, then of the white of the animals and the faces in all the plants and all the flowers of the panel, bring us back to the

very surface of the fabric. About twenty of the most luxurious panels from Brussels in about 1500 (here we think of the *Hunt of the Unicorn* of New York, related to the *Lady with the Unicorn*, but in which the luxury and the expression of life are inexhaustible and the huge size counts for less. We think of the *Mazarin Tapestry* of Washington, where threads of gold give an over-all impression of filigree work and gather into one whole delicately modeled heads, draperies, in restrained and warm colours. We think of the cycle of the *Redemption of Man*, represented by two large panels, the *Creation of the World* of Narbonne and the *Last Judgment* of the Louvre Museum, where the eye continually slides over rapid and disconcerting changes of colour and makes itself a party to an action that is everywhere dramatic).

The exhibition comes to an end with the advent of italianate styles and perspectives. Tapestry was then plunged into another adventure, just as long, closely linked this time to royal power itself.

1. Paris, The Grand-Palais, October 26, 1973 to January 7, 1974; New York, Metropolitan Museum, February 8 to April 22, 1974.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

TAPESTRY — THE SEVEN DAYS FERNAND LEDUC

By Normand BIRON

The image becomes clear gradually as seven flowers which turn into stars . . . The two upper stars are of blood; they represent the sun and the moon; the five lowest, alternately yellow and blue like sap, are the other planets known in the older days.

(André Breton, *Arcane 17*.)

If we are well acquainted with a Fernand Leduc, painter, who participates in the showings of Groupe Automatiste, also the one who founded the Association of Non-Figurative Artists of Montreal (1956), we are often unaware that he works magnificently as well in tapestry. But why should we not meet him at his studio in Paris?

As I walk toward his place of work, there arise before me, at the heart of this ancient city, buildings of glass and aluminium or else lifeless towers of greyish concrete with facades without ornamentation, in dreary, vulgar polychromies. What shall be said, then, of our schools, our airports? When will their tediousness and gratuitousness be exposed? Instead of getting lost in an aesthetic of industrial designers and window-dressers, should not contemporary architecture, taking note of the new demands of our sciences and of the development of our techniques, tend more toward an integration of the arts in the modern city? In this spirit, we will remember that in 1966 Fernand Leduc conceived six modules in aluminium with anodized silver, gold and dull black, to decorate the international departure corridors of Dorval Airport. The space that separates the modules creates another coloured element, which serves as background to this ensemble of one hundred twenty feet in length. Besides this admirable production, the artist produced, at the Pierre-Dupuy Polyvalent School in Montreal (on Parthenais St.), a mural composed of sixteen different panels of polyurethane. It was the first time, in 1971, that an artist used this process of the pouring of thermoplastic resins to accomplish a work of art of this dimension.

The trip was a bit long, but there we were at Regnault St. where Fernand Leduc's studio is located. Before knocking at his door, perhaps we should recall that in 1957, at the Artistic Competition of the Province of Quebec, Leduc won first prize for a tapestry he had produced with Mariette Rousseau-Vermette. At that time, abstract painting was considered distressing and cold; that was why a tapestry in long threads, woven with a thick pile with undulating forms and curved elements, better answered the taste of the public. Ah! the door is being opened!

One of the first questions I asked Fernand Leduc was this: how, in 1973, had he come back to tapestry? Briefly: M. Pinton, of the Maison Pinton-Felletin, of Aubusson, interested in the recent silk-screens of the painter, requested him to prepare a few models for him. Enchanted by the artist's work, he chose seven cartoons which subsequently became tapestries. But exactly what is Maison Pinton? One of the oldest Aubusson tapestry firms. Having known all the phases of renewal since the post-war period, this company desires to rid itself of the idea of *seventeenth century* that the public has of tapestry. Turning up its nose at all academism, in the narrow sense of the word, the famous house receives such artists as Sonia Delaunay, Calder, Vasarely, . . . in its studios.

How did Fernand Leduc work out his cartoons? He worked in flat tints with very definite designs, using at the same time relationships of colours very close to each other, vinyl rather than acrylic colours, thus obtaining warmer and deeper tones. In this way, he left almost no latitude of interpretation to the artisans. The weavers therefore had to use the simplest classic stitch, the closest in order to achieve a flat surface, although tapestry is never a taut flat surface. It always has a vibration, a modulation.

Having established that the forms of a tapestry cartoon must be inscribed in a precise graphism, the different zones of colour clearly defined, the passages of tones and interpretation of shades indicated by hachures or sawteeth which the weaver will translate by *strokes*, the artist will have to create a working model for each cartoon — here one metre sixty square. Very fortunately, the present processes permit the obtaining of photographic enlargements sufficiently clear to be used as tapestry cartoons.

Following this, the dyeing of the primary materials, in the present case wool, is of the greatest importance. The success of the passage of the painted work to the woven work depends completely on the conformity of the dyed yarns with the colours shown on the cartoon. For Leduc's tapestries it was necessary to create twenty-eight special colours. Then, with scraper, fluting tools, boxwood sleeking comb or stiletto in hand, the low-warp weaver, properly speaking, undertakes the execution of the work. One metre of tapestry demands a month of work for the craftsman.

How did you choose *Les 7 jours Fernand Leduc* for the title of your exhibition? "The child is born, we find a name for him afterward", he told me. "My interest caught by the symbolism of numbers, I remembered the seven Egyptian genii, as well as their correspondence with the planets and their colour":

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 - SUROTH | ○ - green (Venus) |
| 2 - PI-RHE | ○ - white-yellow (Sun) |
| 3 - PI-ZEOUS | ♃ - indigo-violet (Jupiter) |
| 4 - PI-HERMES | ♃ - polychromatic (Mercury) |
| 5 - REMPHA | ♄ - dark black (Saturn) |
| 6 - PI-IOH | ♃ - blue-indigo (Moon) |
| 7 - ERTOSI | ♃ - red (Mars) |

When we take a first visual reading of the woven work, we recognize three or four shades in the obvious writing. But the ensemble of the tapestry brings us face to face with a feeling of total light in dominating yellow, blue, red, . . . This sensation that the amateur experiences is no stranger to the pictorial preoccupations of the artist who seems to be proceeding in his present research toward microchromes.

What shall be thought of this phrase of Le Corbusier: "Tapestry is the mural of the nomad"? "That is true! You roll it under your arm, you leave for the country, you put it on a wall of stone, of wood, . . . Immediately, it is a garment, it warms. Wool belongs to the earth, to sheep. Tapestry is quite another thing than a picture, a canvas: you feel it, you touch it, you wash it, . . . Besides, present-day architecture demands that its walls be warmed."

But I must leave! And if I had to conclude in three words, they would certainly be: Beauty, Warmth, Light. Bravo, Fernand Leduc! Your tapestries are a complete success¹. May there be many more of this kind. To others, I cry out: architects and plasticians of all countries, unite in order that our new cities will no longer resemble dreary cemeteries but gardens of the land of milk and honey where shine the sun and life.

1. On the fourteenth of last June, I had a long-rambling conversation with Fernand Leduc on the artistic evolution of his painting and, more particularly, on the tapestries he had just completed in the Aubusson studios. I am going to try, in this brief article, to give you — doubtlessly very awkwardly — the general idea of this conversation.
2. This ensemble of tapestries was exhibited at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, from May 3 to June 14, 1973.
3. In Montreal, we shall be able to view *Les 7 jours Fernand Leduc* at Galerie III, Bonaventure Building in the Spring '74.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

ART IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

By Ghislain CLERMONT

For a good many tourists who go in summer to Prince Edward Island, the Commemorative Centre of the Fathers of Confederation has more than one surprise. Situated in the heart of Charlottetown, right beside the provincial Parliament, this national monument, erected in honour of the founders of Canada, comprises a commemorative hall, a theatre, a lecture hall, an art gallery and museum, a provincial library, a little restaurant and some studios. Thanks to the hospitality it offered in 1864 to those who were dreaming of establishing a new North American nation from one ocean to the other, Charlottetown merits, a hundred years later, the generosity of the country. It is in this way that the one hundred twelve thousand inhabitants of the smallest Canadian province and the half-million visitors who visit there each year benefit from a cultural centre among the best in Canada. Inaugurated by Queen Elizabeth II on October 6, 1964, it measures more than one hundred thousand feet in area, and its programs deal with music, theatre, fine arts, ballet and dance, cinema . . .

This complex edifice combines well with the more dilapidated buildings that surround it and does not dominate them in a disproportionate manner, thanks to an architectural conception which partakes greatly of the nature of sculpture. Dimitri Dimakopoulos, of the Montreal firm of Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold & Sise, arranged four rectangular blocks on a concrete esplanade, being careful to leave varied free spaces for walks, lawns, plants,

flowers and a fountain. The Centre cost six million dollars and its annual budget amounts to a million and a quarter. It employs sixty-five persons and almost as many are added on a temporary basis at different times in the year. A very active committee composed of volunteers assists the administrators of the Centre by supplying guides for exhibitions, hosts and hostesses for special activities and by managing a sales counter at the entrance to the Gallery, a rental and sales service of works of art and a loan service of works to the schools of the Island.

At the time of the construction of the Centre, the architect received three mural paintings as a gift from patrons of the arts. These were: *The Flag Mural* by Jack Shadbolt of Vancouver (donated by the Molson family); *The Quebec Conference* by John Fox of Montreal (donated by the Montreal Star); and *Charlottetown Revisited* by Jean-Paul Lemieux of Quebec (donated by Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bronfman). In 1967 Ronald Bloore of Toronto produced *White on White*, a large mural twelve feet by twelve, which he gave to the Centre, hoping that his gesture would inspire other Canadian artists to do likewise. One year later, the Gallery hung on the ceiling of the commemorative hall-entrance corridor of the Centre twelve banners, each measuring seven feet by three, conceived by as many artists chosen from across the country. They had complete freedom as to theme, techniques and materials. These banners, all produced by hand from cartoons by Michael Morris, Douglas Morton, Takao Tanabe, Brian Fisher, Tib Beament, Kenneth Lochhead, Gerald McAdam, Jack Bush, Peter Bell, Roy Kiyooka, Richard Lacroix and Duncan de Kergommeaux, add a warm note in this hall of marble, glass and acrylic. Takao Tanabe also created the smaller banners which decorate the entrance to the theatre.

The Confederation Art Gallery has at its disposal four exhibition halls, two interior courts, different premises for offices, the library and the photographic library, a seminary hall, studios and storage rooms². Moncrieff Williamson, a Scotsman from Edinburgh who spent a few years in the United States and in British Columbia, became, in 1964, the first director of the Gallery. Seven persons assist him each year in the presentation of some thirty exhibitions and in the preparation of two or three travelling exhibitions, in the maintenance of a permanent collection of more than six hundred works as well as a smaller collection of contemporary Canadian crafts comprising about a hundred pieces, in the cataloging and the conservation of the fifteen hundred works of painter and portraitist Robert Harris, one of the Canadian masters of the end of the nineteenth century, who spent a large part of his life in Charlottetown. Further, the Gallery organizes various art courses, activities of artistic order for the young, and a nursery school for the very young. During the summer it employs students who act as guides. Although a large number of non-Canadian artists are presented to the public, the Gallery neither buys nor accepts any but works of Canadian artists for its permanent collection³.

In 1965 the Robert Harris Foundation asked the Gallery to take permanent and exclusive charge of the works it owned in a small institution located on the very spot where the building of the Fathers of Confederation had been constructed. In 1967 and 1973 Moncrieff Williamson organized two big exhibitions of Harris' works and in 1970 he published an exhaustive biography of the only important artist the Island had ever known⁴.

Prince Edward Island boasts no school of art.

Only Holland College, a school of applied arts and technology, offers training in commercial art. There, drawing, colour, graphics, photography, design, . . . are taught. The students, after spending two or three years there, are able to work in advertising, layout, illustration, decoration . . . The University of Prince Edward Island offers a few courses in the history of art and cinema and an introductory course to fine arts. The kind of instruction at Holland College is very liberal. Under the direction of an instructor the students decide the program of their education, according to their interests and their personal needs. They work individually, following the rhythm of their own evolution, and they evaluate themselves before receiving the final appraisal of their instructor.

Since their arrival in Charlottetown four years ago, artist Hilda Woolnough and her husband, Reshard Gool, poet, editor and professor of political science at UPEI, have shown a keen interest in the traditional crafts which are still practised in the villages of the Island. The idea came to them of helping the young people to continue and to improve what had become a minimized pastime, of even making a profitable enterprise of it. Thanks to their efforts and tenacity, in May, 1972, twelve artists founded the Phoenix Galleries, the first and only craftsmen's cooperative in the Atlantic provinces. They constructed a sufficiently large building, connected to the home of the Gool-Woolnough couple, very close to the downtown area, on the avenue which leads to the Centre of Confederation and Parliament at the University⁵. Located there are an exhibition hall in the basement, a shop on the ground floor, studios on the other two storeys. The group has grown since then and the shop abounds in articles: pottery, weaving, bags and belts of leather, jewellery, batik and macramé, tapestries, wooden toys . . .

There are very few artists in Prince Edward Island, and almost all of them live in Charlottetown. Hilda Woolnough⁶ has been doing engraving for almost twenty years. Influenced at first by European trends, she brought back a taste for the fantastic and for warm colours from Mexico. Drawing inspiration from Indian and Acadian folklore, she conceives totems in abstract forms, not wicked at all, and fabulous personages, often ugly and mis-shapen, taken from an ancient mythology. She prints with vigour cardboards glued on engraving paper with the aim of achieving an accentuated relief. Her drawings in ink are related to anthropomorphic surrealism. She creates jewellery in baroque shapes, fairly heavy, often set with stones, for the Phoenix Galleries, of which she is the directress. She also designs sketches for quilting which an old lady stitches during the winter. The landscapes, the plants and the animals of the Island supply her with an abundance of subjects, quite as many as the traditional motifs which the artists of the past used to repeat.

Richard Whitlock⁷ did a little painting, then he took up silk-screening, three years ago. Drawing inspiration from the minimalists and the plasticians, he seeks effects of tension and movement. For some time he has been using photography in order to include fragments of scenery in his geometrical constructions. Floyd Trainor⁸ prefers pop and paints landscapes and persons typical of the Maritimes good-naturedly, bathing them in sunny colours. In 1972 the Confederation Gallery ordered a monumental sculpture from Henry Purdy⁹ of Holland College. The village of Parkdale, on the outskirts of Charlottetown, did likewise last summer, and Purdy erected a sculpture-fountain twelve feet in height. His associates, Peter

Salmon and Russell Stewart, paint a little in their free time. James Little¹, former curator of the Confederation Gallery, also used to do a little painting. His silk-screen, *Charlottetown South*, expresses well the impressionist atmosphere of the winter skies of the Island. Marc Gallant² has a very sensitive approach to photography. For him it is a form of art, a plastic medium, and he feels that the photographer should expose himself in a receptive manner to what surrounds him, in such a way as to have something to say, at the same level as the painter, the poet or the philosopher. His portraits of the centenarians of the Island, his scenes of the fishing ports and the big farms he has known since his childhood, his descriptions of the dilapidated areas of the capital, are so many testimonies which illustrate the pleasant things and the dramas of life.

A few young artists, photographers and film-producers have settled in Prince Edward Island or have returned there during the last two years. Ronald Cameron of Baltic sculpts in wood; Wendy Duggan, an Islander recently graduated from the faculty of art of the University of Mount Allison, lives in Summerside, where she does painting and silk-screening. George Zimble, a photographer in his thirties, has just traded New York for Argyle Shore, and the studios of advertising and magazines with large circulations for the farmhouse and the stable. Several of the Phoenix Galleries' artisans show an original and fruitful spirit of invention: Ontarians Doreen Smith³ and Jennifer Whittlesey, Americans Linda and Janice Outcalt, Mont-realer Ann Drew, Mel O'Brien and Carl Drew of Nova Scotia, Islanders Sandy Beck and Earla Buell⁴ . . .

There is reason to mark the work of cultural animation which brought professor Adrien Arsenault of UPEI to Charlottetown. Born in the Acadian region of Mount Carmel, Adrien Arsenault has been encouraging and stimulating artists and craftsmen of the Island for about fifteen years. From the beginning of his teaching at the former St. Dunstan's University, he has made students and adults sensitive to literature, to fine arts and to cinema, and he organized different exhibitions before the Confederation Gallery, of which he was an ardent promoter, could do better and more often. It is thanks to his efforts, as to those of Moncrieff Williamson and Hilda Woolnough, that there is now a nucleus of artistic life in Prince Edward Island.

School of Art and Design of London, in 1966-1967. In 1972 she spent a few weeks at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, where she learned the fashioning of Jewellery with Orland Larson.

6. Richard Whitlock was born in Charlottetown in 1946. He learned drawing and painting with James Little and graphic arts with Hilda Woolnough. He studied at Holland College in Charlottetown in 1969-1970, then he was assistant curator of the Confederation Gallery in 1970-1971.

7. Floyd B. Trainor was born in Saint John, N.B., in 1946. In 1969 he received his baccalaureate in fine arts from the NSCAD. He works part time as artist-designer for the Radio-Canada Company in Charlottetown.

8. Henry Purdy was born in Wolfville, N.S., in 1937. In 1958 he received his diploma from the NSCAD, worked as artist-designer for the Radio-Canada Company in Charlottetown until 1963, then taught at the Trade School until 1969, when he became director of the department of commercial art at Holland College.

9. James Little comes from Calgary. Curator of the Confederation Gallery from September 1965 to June 1973, he has returned to Calgary.

10. Marc Gallant was born in North Rustico, P.E.I., in 1946. At a very young age he became interested in drawing and painting but, at the age of sixteen, he chose photography, which he studied with professionals in this trade. After working in advertising for five and a half years in Montreal, he is now a freelance photographer and graphist in Charlottetown.

11. Doreen Smith was born in Gravenhurst, Ont., in 1938. She studied ceramics at the Central Technical School in Toronto with Gordon Barnes. She has been living in Charlottetown since 1967 and returned to creating in 1972.

12. Jennifer Whittlesey is a fashion designer and couturière; Linda Outcalt weaves and her sister prints batiks and fabrics; Ann Blair White Drew weaves and her husband works in wood; Mel O'Brien and Sandy Beck make jewellery; Earla Buell is a sculptor. Carl and Ann Drew, as well as O'Brien, studied at the NSCAD.

(The author received a grant from the Research Council of the University of Moncton to complete his documentation.)

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

THE "WESTERN FRONT"

By Bradford R. COLLINS

To the accompaniment of a piano, two men are playing wooden saxophones with kazoos in the mouthpiece when suddenly Mr. Peanut tap dances into the room. This is not a scene from an absurd Planters' Peanut commercial; it is a typical Wednesday night open house at the Western Front Lodge in Vancouver. The lodge, an old grey frame building complete with gymnasium and auditorium, is owned co-operatively by the eight artist-residents. Besides Dr. Brute, the leader of the above-mentioned orchestra, and Mr. Peanut, members include Lady Brute, Flakey Rosehips, Marcel Idea, S. S. Tell, Martin Bartlett, and Mo Van Nostrand.

The adoption by most of the residents of *un nom fictif* calls to mind Marcel Duchamp, who often used the name Rose Sélavy. More than a mere homage to Duchamp and Dada, the use of alternate names is part of the truly Dadaesque spirit at the Western Front. Like their European ancestors, the Vancouver group is deep into absurdity, often for critical purpose. That is to say, their apparently nonsensical acts are actually aimed at revealing the absurdity of some form of accepted behavior. As one might expect, they are especially captious, as their forbears had been, with regard to the realm of art. When I asked Marcel Idea about the origins of their group he responded by inviting me to art's one million and eleventh birthday party which various members of the Front in conjunction with several related groups and individuals are organizing for February of next year at the Elks Hotel in Hollywood. It took me several moments to understand the apparent non sequitur. Marcel's response, like the party itself, effectively points up the art historian's obsession with incidentals like pre-

cise dating. Implied is the stricture that there are more important issues to investigate.

In a similar vein, the members of the Front are involved in plans to stage the 1984 Miss General Idea Pageant. The first pageant was held in 1969 with Miss Paige winning the crown. The affair was held annually until 1971 when Marcel Idea was given the title to hold until 1984. The pageant, of course, is a spoof on the rather absurd custom of beauty contests, but the idea of building a pavilion to house the affair in 1984 strikes much deeper. The idea of progress, of a future characterized by shiny steel cities, material abundance, and contented people is for the members of the Front one of the major myths of the twentieth century. One of its chief vehicles of expression is the world's fair or exposition with its pavilions of the latest developments in material splendor. The choice of the year 1984 for their ridicule of the progress myth is, of course, fairly obvious. In 1984 Orwell forecast a future quite at odds with the prevalent myth. This is not to say the members of the Front are pessimistic about the future; what they reject is both the material basis of "future thought" and the modern preoccupation with it. On both counts the real business of living in the present is denied. Life is a spiritual affair and it is now.

It is a mistake to see the 1984 Pavilion and the birthday party as purely critical exercises. In both there is a gratuitously playful element. This, in fact, is the most striking aspect of life at the Western Front. The opening image of this review is exemplary, as is the Thursday night frolic at the Crystal Pool where members don the Marcel Duchamp Fan Club Sharkskin Bathing Cap. Much of the lives of these artists is, in effect, spent in play. This is not to say they do not have serious pursuits as well. The members would surely object to my last remark since they see no disparity between their "play" and their "work". They would object most strongly, in fact, to the separation of the two in our culture: play is an activity for children, work for adults. Adults may "relax" on the week-end, but they never "play". Play is a special category of non-directed activity which we all outgrow when we reach adulthood and assume serious responsibilities. Responsibilities demand directed activities, that is, actions designed to yield practical results, usually of a material nature. The random, associative behaviour of childhood is supplanted by a more logical one.

The distinction between these two modes of human consciousness and behaviour was the special concern not of Dada but of its offspring, Surrealism. Essentially, the Surrealists contended that man has two antithetical parts of the mind: a conscious, logical part and an unconscious, alogical part. Unfortunately, we allow our conscious mind to dominate and repress its opposite. The irrational urges and inexplicable whims which constantly slip into the thought patterns of us all are denigrated and dismissed by our conscious mind with damning terms like "absurd", "nonsense", and "childish". It is only in dreams, when the conscious mind relaxes control, that this other side of our consciousness is allowed free rein. Man, so their argument runs, has chosen to disregard an entire segment of his natural faculties. What the Surrealists hoped to do was to free this area of man's mind from the chains of reason, to work for, in Breton's words, "the future resolution of the seeming contradiction between the states of dreaming and waking in a kind of absolute reality, a super-reality". Since we all know from Freud the disastrous psychological consequences of repression, the results of this

1. The exhibition halls have eight hundred feet of wall space, by adding a few panels.

2. A brochure published in July 1969 by the Confederation Gallery emphasizes this aspect on page six: "The Art Gallery, forming an integral part of a national monument dedicated to the Fathers of Confederation, certainly realizes that its first loyalty is owed to Canadian artists. Although the works of outside artists are frequently presented to visitors at the Gallery, only works of Canadian artists are bought or accepted for the permanent collection. The works of outside artists are also accepted, but only for the purpose of being studied by amateurs of art; nonetheless, they are sometimes presented to visitors."

3. Williamson, Moncrieff, Robert Harris, 1849-1919. *An Unconventional Biography*. Montreal, McClelland and Stewart, 1970.

4. Moncrieff Williamson wrote in the introduction to the catalogue of *The Phoenix Group* exhibition, which was held in March 1973, at the Confederation Gallery: "Our second exhibition for the P.E.I. Centennial Series 1973 is of work by artists-craftsmen of the Phoenix Gallery on University Avenue, Charlottetown. This group of independent artists formed their own community co-operative two years ago, and have, during the past twelve months, achieved remarkable success, not only on the local level with the production and introduction of new crafts designs for the Island market, but have also been receiving numerous orders from outside the Province."

5. Hilda Mary Woolnough was born in England in 1934. She studied at the Chelsea School of Art in London from 1952 to 1955, emigrated to Canada in 1957, received in 1966 her master's degree (graphic arts) from the Instituto San Miguel de Allende, University of Guanajuato (Mexico), then she studied at the

mental freedom will be, as Magritte said, "a salutary renewal in all the domains of human activity".

The playful activities at the Western Front must be seen in this context. These artists are sensitive to their allogical faculties with the fullest faith that it will enable them to lead a richer, more enjoyable life. It should be remembered that Surrealism, like Dada and Futurism, is a life style. When Breton came to North America after the outbreak of the war in Europe he was discouraged to note Americans saw Surrealism as a painting style. He would have been pleased to visit the Western Front.

In the final analysis, then, the critical dimensions of the Front's activities are aimed at more than specific cultural abuses, they are aimed at the major failing of human conduct, the failure to enjoy life. "What is supernatural is that millions of beings accept living below their own potential in ignorance of the powers they contain."

Not merely content with maximizing their own potential, the artists at the Front are also deeply involved in spreading their gospel, not only locally through the example of their work and behaviour but on an international scale through the network of global contacts of which they are a part. The members of the Front are in constant mail contact with artists and groups not only all over Canada and North America but the world. Besides taking direct part in these mailings the Western Front, through its *Image Bank Directory*, encourages artists and interested parties to conduct their own mail exchanges. The directory lists the names, addresses, and special interests of over two hundred people. The purpose of the Eternal Network, as all these mailings are referred to, is not only to encourage the playful pursuits of others, inspire and sustain people with similar viewpoints, but ultimately, as Marcel Iida states in the invitation to art's birthday party, "to make available a substantial body of work and information that you can actively work with, as we do, changing things by seeing them differently". This marks a return to the notion of art's rôle which was popular between the two world wars. Since about 1945 it has seemed hopelessly naive, however, is art to provide aesthetic pleasure or impetus for social change? It is a good question.

1 OF 4

By Virgil HAMMOCK

"I'll tell you how the owls came about; it's accidental. I don't go around being a bird painter, although because of the fact that I have grown up on this coast, birds are as natural a part of my environmental image as anything else...". This was the way that Jack Shadbolt began to tell me the story behind his owl images. He continued, "... and I am very passionately attached to the kind of feelings that come out of the swamp land, the rock face, the islands, the foliage that we have here, the evergreens and the rest of it and these are my permanent tokens that I work with and all the animal, — vegetable, — and any kind of form that becomes part of that environment." I had asked Jack about the owls during an interview that I was doing for another project because I was intrigued by his use of this bird since I had seen one of his owl paintings in the Winnipeg home of George Swinton some time before. This single example had started me thinking, as I knew that Jack was well

known for this imagery and I had seen works by Swinton on the owl as well. Jean-Paul Riopelle had also titled painting after this bird. What was there about the owl that appealed to artists since the time of the pharaohs? Symbols have always been part of the language of artists: some symbols like the owl are more common than others.

Jack Shadbolt is very much a product of his Canadian environment. He grew up in Victoria, isolation well might be its chief virtue. Anyway Emily Carr country. While the islands might not be typical of the Canadian mainland, its very I think it difficult to call any place in our huge country typical. It is certain, however, that a childhood spent in the Vancouver Islands rather than, say, an art capital like Paris, New York or London likely gives one a different view of life. With Jack it was a love of nature that stuck with him the rest of his life.

The story of Jack's owls goes back to the time when he was working on a mural for the Edmonton International Airport called 'Northward Flight' during the early sixties. He relates how he had spent a great deal of time flying over the northern tundra country, moved, as he said, by "... all these floating images of the pattern from the air, the motifs lying on this dark, forbidding, solemn landscape that went way off to infinity — it's haunting. For me, it was an enormous experience". He worked for months from his own drawings, from aerial photographs "... anything that would feed my sense of the elemental feel of flying over the country". But they didn't come together in a fashion to his liking. Then one day during this period he remembered a large photograph of an owl that Nora Macculough² had sent him, knowing that in the part he had done other kinds of bird inventions. Somehow, this photograph brought it all together. The sensation of flying was that of a bird, an owl, over that wild north country. How much better this indigenous bird must understand and master that harsh land than man the interloper! The solution to the Edmonton mural was literally a bird's-eye view, but what was more important, the idea of the owl opened new vistas of invention to Shadbolt.

Within days of his discovery Jack began working with a frenzy on his newly found image, sometimes painting over old paintings and drawing, introducing the owl. One must understand Jack's working methods. His studio racks are filled with half finished works or works that he is not fully satisfied with and from time to time, as he did in this case, he brings them out and uses them for a basis of a work that he can be satisfied with. Jack is the most demanding critic of his own work. He knows when they work and he knows when they don't. In the period of one weekend he had finished a whole series of owl paintings and very shortly thereafter had a one-man exhibition of these paintings in Vancouver. They were, and remain, an immediate success, so much so that Jack felt compelled to question the success saying "I'm not painting (owls) on demand for anybody", but the image persisted "... because I found this bird would give me the kind of enigmatic invention I needed".

Enigmatic is a word that Jack Shadbolt uses often in conversation and it aptly applies not only to his owl imagery but to his whole body of work. After all, art is a puzzle not easily solved and Jack is not looking for answers as much as he is for questions. Later, looking back on his use of the owl image, Shadbolt remembered that as a child in Victoria there were two owls, a snowy and a great horned, in a cage in Beacon Hill Park and how he would sit for hours fascinated by these birds. He is

sure that this fascination remained in his subconscious only to be later triggered by receiving the photograph from Nora and his subsequent work on the Edmonton mural. Jack has a great ability to absorb and keep images of all kinds in his artistic vocabulary. As he has said, he is not a bird painter, it is only one line of thought that he uses. The latest and perhaps the most dramatic use of the owl theme is the mural that was commissioned and installed in the Opera restaurant at the National Art Centre in Ottawa, but during the same period the Art Bank of the Canada Council purchased *The Chilkoot Experience*, a seventy foot long mural depicting Shadbolt's experience as he retraced the path the gold seekers of '98 took over the Chilkoot to the Yukon.

It was my interest with the owl symbol that made me want to pursue the subject with Jack. Not only have other Canadian artists constantly made reference to this bird, but I would be negligent if I failed to mention its abundant use as a symbol or subject by Canada's native artist, the Eskimo. This might be a good place to say a word or two about our country's best known semi-official symbol, the beaver, happily embossed on the back of our nickel. How beautifully our buck-toothed friend seems to fit our image of ourselves — industrious, frugal, a little dull — colour him gray. Our southern neighbours, on the other hand, have their high flying bird of prey, the bald eagle, whose diet no doubt includes any beavers who might become over eager. This heavy-handed, and off the subject, metaphor is not to suggest that Jack Shadbolt is the latest convert to Canadian nationalism and in a fit of patriotic zeal is trying to find our long lost friend 'Canadian Identity' in the person of the Snowy Owl. But you have to admit one is hard pressed to find serious art done on a beaver theme and if we were to pick a bird for a national symbol, we should remember that the snowy owl is one bird that *doesn't* fly south for the winter.

1. This and all other direct quotes are from a taped interview the author made with Jack Shadbolt in May 1972 for a book in progress on Canadian painting. This research was made possible in part through a grant from the Canada Council.

2. Former Western Liaison Officer with the National Gallery of Canada.

THE FIRST ENGLISH MILITARY TOPOGRAPHERS IN CANADA, FROM 1759 TO 1800

By Nathalie Le GRIS

At the beginning of the eighteenth century England, poor in painters, turned toward the Italian and Flemish schools. No English artist had yet known how to profit from the heritage of Van Dyck, which would develop the English tradition of landscape and genre painting. Nature always attracted the English. For a long time already, portraitists had been using a background of greenery or rustic scenery suitable to the personality of the model. The study of Nature was intensified thanks to water-colour, which allows the more rapid arrangement of a landscape and the creation of an impression of a whole departing from a point of view taken from life.

Before 1750, water-colour was used especially for engraving because it did not occupy a place of prime importance in the domain of the arts, being limited to the tinted drawings of military topographers whose education, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, would

take place in two big schools, the Farnham Military College and, especially, the Military Academy of Woolwich, where Massiot and the Sandbys followed each other between 1744 and 1799. The influence of Paul Sandby (1725-1809) on the topographers who came to Canada seems beyond all question. Formed at his school, they afterwards worked in close collaboration with him: after studying their drawings, he sometimes drew water-colours from them which were then engraved. Not only did he teach his pupils the art of making wash-tints and instil into them the technical principles of topography, but he also gave them a profound, serious and tender feeling for Nature. Imbued with this doctrine, they formed the school of aquarellists, a branch of English landscape painting; they even exhibited at the Royal Academy. Nevertheless, the fame of the topographers rests on the publication of their water-colours; thus it seems difficult to dissociate water-colour from engraving, among the military.

At the end of the eighteenth century London already had numerous publishing houses, such as: Thomas Jefferys, Robert Sayer, Laurie & Whittle, T. Bowles & John Bowles, John Boydell, J. Wells and J. W. Edy, to mention only the best known¹, whose reputation was well established in Europe².

Their professional education allowed naval officers to portray coasts and ports, and army officers to depict topography. Thus it is not surprising that after the conquest in 1760 the officers trained at the Woolwich school saw Canada from a point of view that was peculiar to them: living in barracks and as a closed group, they recreated an atmosphere that reminded them of England. From their water-colours, the English publishers set up pictorial records greatly appreciated by the Europeans.

An incomplete classification of the topographers reminds us that the first ones arrived in about 1759, at the time of the fall of Louisbourg³. Ince, Richard Short, Hervey Smyth, Thomas Davies, G. B. Fisher, George Townshend followed Thomas A. Patten, J. F. W. Des Barres and Henry Hamilton in Nova Scotia. Then, later, came William Peachey, James Hunter and John Webber, to whom we can join Elizabeth Simcoe, the wife of an officer, as well as George Heriot, of whom we shall not speak much because he belongs rather to the nineteenth century.

Richard Short is at the head of this whole group of aquarellist-topographers in Canada. Jefferys published twelve of his water-colours on the capture of Quebec. They were such a great success that they were published again by Boydell. In this way there came into being a new era, as much for aquarellist-topographers as for engravers. Among the latter we can recall the names of Pierre-Charles Canot, Peter Paul Benazech, William Elliott, Charles Grignon, Anthony Walker, James Mason, J. Fougereon, Antoine Benoist, Peter Mazell, Thomas Morris. Indeed, a school of engraving had been founded in London in 1760.

Short served as purser on the *Prince Orange* from 1758 to 1760. After his return to England he became painter to George III, thanks to the success of his engravings. At present we are familiar only with his engravings in colour on Quebec. Short does not seem to have been interested by nature to the same degree as Davies, Peachey or Hervey Smyth. His style is academic and rhetoric. A *View of the Orphan's or Ursuline Nunnery* testifies to this by its construction on three planes. The study of proportions with regard to perspective seems fundamental to him; he makes use of it even to create plays of shadows and lights in buildings.

For example, a *View of the Church of Notre Dame de la Victoire* illustrates this point: the windows of all these roofless houses create a perfect play of shadow which gives relief to this architecture. We find also his fondness for minute detail, precision and exactness on an image where paradoxically nothing should be detailed. These characteristics of Short distinguish him from Hervey Smyth, whose sketches Sandby retouched, especially that of the capture of Quebec and some landscapes. *The Battle of the Plains of Abraham* is perhaps Hervey Smyth's most famous engraving. From it emanates a sense of cartography and a study of the coasts worked in the same manner by Des Barres, Ince and Hunter.

Hervey Smyth created landscapes, among others a *View of Gaspé Bay, in the Gulf of St. Lawrence*, which served Francis Swaine as a model for a famous canvas⁴. He exploited nature, described flora with realism, made the distinction, as Ince had done, between coniferous and other trees. However, the vegetation he depicted is cold compared to that of Davies.

Davies, who spent twenty years in America, was a topographer, an historian and also an ethnologist; few engravings, but many drawings and water-colours in tinted India ink followed. He represented flora in a manner sometimes eccentric⁵. He knew how to paint architecture and even persons. He treated nature and plants in the fashion of a miniaturist. He illuminated some of his water-colours by rays of sunlight which he projected on the greens. This artist is stamped with an exotic character heightened by a sureness of hand and a skill without equal. He was the only one to make use of this exotic quality to depict Canada.

Hunter and Peachey offer several traits in common. Wash-tints, study of the coasts, landscapes, representation of the Indians, but with a severity very different from that of Davies. Peachey placed little importance on composition and expanded domestic details. He painted men and their costumes, cows, fields and a few trees⁶. It seems that he specialized less in topography for its own sake than in people in the sociological sense.

Peachey was a pupil of Paul Sandby, just as Davies was that of Massiot twenty years later. This shows us that the conception of water-colour developed a little in England.

We must wait for Webber, Lady Simcoe and Heriot to have a complete realization of the romantic conception of scenery and native peoples. Indeed, at the height of refinement, Lady Simcoe painted her landscapes on birch-bark, giving in this way a completely naturalistic hue to her works, while Webber, son of a sculptor, somewhat put aside the classical conception of architecture in order to devote himself to personages, especially when he illustrated Cook's *Voyages*. Heriot is the very typical aquarellist of the nineteenth century. He knew how to give the exact touch to represent foliage. Although he was a good topographer, he abandoned the architectural side of the profession to tint his water-colours with a genuine romanticism. He was light and almost sentimental, just as were the great English landscape artists Girtin, Constable and Turner, who led the English artistic world at that time.

Since the beginning of this century, Canada has owned a rather important collection of the works of these topographers. They are to be found chiefly in the Public Archives and in the Library of National Defence in Ottawa, in the Sigmund Museum and in the Public Library in Toronto, in the private collections of W. H. Coverdale and of Peter S. Winkworth, as well as in the McCord Museum at McGill University in Montreal. It is interesting to note in this respect

that it is only in the twentieth century that Canada is inquiring into its art. Indeed, nothing was written before the middle of this century. Nevertheless we must admit that the source of one aspect of art in Canada was born with the conquest and that the English topographers are, in their own country, at the origin of this landscape art which was to produce painters like Paul Kane, for Canada, as well as very great landscape artists in England, who were, besides, the forerunners of Impressionism in France.

1. There were others who engraved the rather queer drawings of the soldiers. See the record of the McCord Museum.
2. It is interesting to note that before the Seven Years' War engraving was not done in Canada and that very few people were interested in this art.
3. Captain Ince has left us a very pretty view of the fortress, engraved in colour by Canot and published by Jefferys in 1762.
4. The McCord Museum owns two engravings, the first in black and white, unfinished, to which the engraver added notes in pencil for retouching; Swaine's canvas is in the Sigmund Samuel Museum of Canadiana in Toronto.
5. We find this same kind of work in Howdell, who spent some time in Virginia, where the vegetation was still more luxuriant.
6. Peachey gave an example of life on a farm in *View of Quebec and the St. Lawrence River, in 1785*.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

THE CHANT OF THE LEGEND OF OZIAS LEDUC

By Jacques de ROUSSAN

Since the magazine *Arts et Pensée* devoted its issue of July-August, 1954¹ to the painter Ozias Leduc, a year before his death at the age of ninety-one, and the National Gallery of Canada organized in 1955-1956 a retrospective of his work comprising oils, charcoals and crayons, no large-scale showing had taken place to establish better the importance of this artist who had been called self-taught and whose symbolism — derived from a questioned era — was related to a certain esoterism, which found its source in a profound sensitivity and a living faith.

Jean-René Ostiguy, director of research in Canadian art at the National Gallery, who had taken part in the organization of the first retrospective and had published in 1971 the interesting *Étude des dessins préparatoires à la décoration du baptistère de l'église Notre-Dame-de-Montréal*², arranged an exhibition of the symbolic and religious works of the master of Saint-Hilaire, to be presented from the first of February to the third of March 1974, at the National Gallery in Ottawa, then in Paris, Brussels, London, Hamilton and Montreal. In all, forty canvases and twenty-five different drawings covering a period of fifty-seven years from *Les trois pommes*, an oil on canvas, of 1887, to *Notre Père, qui êtes aux cieux*, graphite on beige paper, of 1944, the greater part of which has never been shown to the public.

Born in Saint-Hilaire in 1864, and dead in Saint-Hyacinthe in 1955, Ozias Leduc, son of a carpenter, possessed a precocious talent which permitted him to launch out very quickly into easel painting and, as early as 1890, into the decorating of churches, the only form of art at that time which could really allow an artist to earn his living³. His production in the religious domain is impressive: pictures and decorations follow each other with almost no interruption from 1890 until his death, when he was working for the church at Almaville-en-Bas (now Sha-

winiguan South), in the St. Maurice region.

Right through his life Ozias Leduc multiplied the expressions of his thought by recourse to several disciplines. Through writings: he wrote essays; we are particularly familiar with the *Histoire de Saint-Hilaire*⁴ in which he describes in an intimist style the scenery of his natal village and the feelings that bind him to it. He makes of this the "chant of the legend". Through poetry: indeed, the painter expressed in verse — often moving — his metaphysical conception of life and the presence of man. He himself asked no questions on the fundamental concepts from which he derived his own strength, but he endeavoured rather to loose from them the connecting lines to expose them in a perspective whose roots undoubtedly go back to Pascal.

We also know that he was tremendously interested in photography, and from a deeper angle than that of a simple amateur. For him it involved a research parallel to that of painting. There are to be found numerous affinities with the spirit in which he painted some non-religious works, notably *L'Heure mauve*. He pursued this research on the magic instant by photographing rural or city scenes, portraits, details which struck his vision and his thoughts. In this he followed the quest of more than one artist of his time, to whom the discovery of this process of reproduction brought answers which the great painters of the past had sought and which led those of his generation to reconsider the formal problems of art.

Through reflection, Ozias Leduc paid attention to all that concerned human nature. He went very far along his path. We have the proof of this in the incredible quantity of maxims, thoughts, notes that he scribbled all day long. He left hundreds and hundreds of them and, in his voluminous correspondence, we find their development in discussions with his friends and acquaintances. A man who was a little withdrawn and with a taste for a certain solitude, Ozias Leduc loved company nonetheless on condition that it should be of a thoughtful exchange.

In pencil he prepared the development of his paintings and his works. Whether it was on a large sheet — like an architect — or on a miserable bit of paper, he drew incessantly and noted at the same time the characteristics inherent in the work in the process of being created. Rare indeed are those of his drawings that carry no marginal note. As his pictures and major works are rather inaccessible to-day to collectors because they are in museums or are fixtures in the churches for which he created them — whether it is a matter of easel canvases or of mural panels —, it is therefore necessary to seek the expression of his talent in his drawings, which are fortunately numerous: they now adorn more than one public or private collection.

When in March 1972 Miss Gabrielle Messier, Ozias Leduc's secretary for several years and his assistant in the ornamenting of the church at Shawinigan South, offered to the National Library of Quebec a first group of the documents which were in her possession through a legacy, she initiated in fact the creation of a fund of archives⁵ which at the time comprised correspondence, drawings and an important documentation for the history of art.

This gift was followed in April 1973 by the acquisition of other papers belonging to Mr. Gaston Leduc of Montreal: sketches, photographs, drawings, poems, personal notebooks, reproductions of foreign works which might have inspired him. To all of this have recently been added two hundred negatives on glass which the painter had taken himself. As for

Miss Messier, she has just given the preliminary drawings for the baptistry of the Notre-Dame Church to the National Archives of Quebec in Montreal⁶, as well.

All this documentation, henceforth gathered together at the National Archives and accessible to researchers and historians, casts an unprecedented light on the intimate personality of the sage of Saint-Hilaire. Not to consult all these papers is impossible for anyone who wishes to study one facet or another of Ozias Leduc, or, better still, to attempt a synthesis of his work and his thought.

Contrary to Théodule Ribot (1823-1891) and parallel to Odilon Redon (1840-1916), Ozias Leduc, who certainly had knowledge of their works at the time of his sojourn in Paris in 1897, succeeded in transcending the realism — often trite — that photography transposed into painting had brought, that is to say illusion. Even if, in his sketches, he often forgot detail to the advantage of the vision of the whole, it remained no less objective and sometimes even hieratic, especially in his religious compositions which scarcely differ from the general taste in this genre.

If we can consider that church art was for Ozias Leduc like the good work of an engineer or a specialist, we wonder then where lies the true talent of this painter who, however, opened the way to other generations and whom we freely recognize to-day as a major link in the evolution of Canadian painting.

Indeed, by his drawings Ozias Leduc showed us, on the one hand, to what point he was able to be overcast by orders of decorations for churches and that, on the other hand, he felt free in the interpretation of subjects arising from direct observation. Sometimes stiff, his drawings really came alive only when he could give free rein not to facility, because each of his canvases was deeply thought out, but to his inspiration. And the latter pushed him to sketch from life, one might say, and with a nervous stroke a tree, a bird, a landscape whose spontaneity we discover — but well disciplined — in one or other of his easel paintings. Anyone who has not admired some of his trees or his still lifes cannot feel all the poetry which emanates from them and which imbued him on contact with Canadian nature and under the influence of a certain surrealism: two tendencies which we find in force in many of our modern painters.

When all is said and done, it is certainly there that we find the true Ozias Leduc and that we will finally discover his whole depth.

1. *Arts et Pensée*, No. 18, July-August 1954, Montreal. Cf. the articles of Gilles Corbell, Gilles Roux, L.-J. Barcelo, Claude Gauvreau, Mgr. Olivier Maurault, Fernand Leduc, Paul-Émile Borduas, Noël Lajoie, André Lecoutey.
2. *Bulletin* 15, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.
3. Paul-Émile Borduas, his pupil, would not act otherwise at his beginning.
4. Reproduced in *Arts et Pensée*, No. 18, pp. 165-168.
5. *Bulletin* of the National Library of Quebec, Vol. 7, No. 1 (March 1973), Montreal.
6. Since January 1, 1973, the documents of the Ozias Leduc bequest have been transferred to the National Archives of Quebec, in Montreal.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

IVANHOË FORTIER, SCULPTOR

By Jean SOUCY

Ivanhoë Fortier was born at Saint-Louis-de-Courville in December, 1931. He very soon showed an impassioned interest in everything that had reference to the domain of the arts

and, having finished his secondary school studies, he enrolled in the School of Fine Arts in Montreal. This institution awarded him a diploma in 1960; two years later he would obtain a teacher's diploma at the same place.

In a parallel direction to his career as a teacher, Ivanhoë Fortier devoted himself almost entirely to sculpture. Aside from a few attempts at painting, a field which he would never entirely put aside, his deep preoccupation and his true vocation constantly led him back to the problems of form and material. In the catalogue published on the occasion of the exhibition he presented at the Museum of Quebec, the artist explained: "Sculpture created every day offers me a sustained experience in different materials. The substances used having possibilities which cannot be exceeded, each of them is used to solidify the ideas, the images of the unconscious, which are the very essence of life."

In 1962, Ivanhoë Fortier won a prize in sculpture at the Artistic Competition of the Province; the same year, the government of Quebec granted him a scholarship. The success achieved gave the artist the necessary impetus. He worked eagerly, imposed great sacrifices on himself in order to be in a position to continue the research he had undertaken. An optimist by nature, Fortier believed in his resources and confronted difficulties without ever losing the enthusiasm which characterizes him and which excites admiration to a certain point. This enthusiasm is found as well in his works: it is inherent in the very movement of the solid frames that the sculptor fastens to the ground.

From 1962, Fortier's career has been proceeding without interruption: the list of exhibitions in which he has participated is impressive. In Canada, we find him in a great number of group showings, too many to enumerate here. Several of his works have been seen in exhibitions abroad; thus, in 1965, Fortier was invited to the seventeenth International Salon of Sculpture, held at the Rodin Museum in Paris; he was represented in the different group exhibitions organized at the Museum of Modern Art in Milan (1967-1970). The *Panorama de la sculpture au Québec* exhibition, which took place at the Rodin Museum in 1971, includes one of his pieces. It was also in 1971 that the Quebec Museum devoted a retrospective exhibition to Ivanhoë Fortier under the theme *Dix ans de sculpture*.

Fortier has always demonstrated in his work an intense curiosity toward material and texture. In general, he treats the form while taking great care to establish all the relationships he can bring about between the material used and the spirit of the object created, in such a way that all the elements harmonize with the whole and are closely integrated with it. In 1969, the artist set up at Man and His World an environment composed of seven elements of limestone. Thus he carried out a project which had been close to his heart for a long time, but which demanded an especially large amount of work. By the use of adequate techniques, he illustrated the different effects which can be achieved in the finishing of the surfaces of stone. For the artist, this environment represented an important step: he went from the monolithic to the separation of masses, each volume playing an essential rôle in the composition and the balance of the whole. Speaking of this work, critic Normand Thériault said: "This sculpture appears anachronistic, in 1970". At a time when it seemed of prime importance to state a plastic assertion, Fortier wished to respect the inherent qualities of a concept. Forms exist, but matter gives them

their position. What makes the originality of the work is then the explicit universe, not a formal system, peculiar to the author. (Fortier: *La Sculpture à TdH, La Presse*, Saturday, July 4th, 1970.)

We have spoken very often of research of architectural character in the works of Ivanhoë Fortier. Such research, moreover, interests the artist. In an exhibition held at Montreal in 1966, at the Galerie du Gobelet, Fortier presented several pieces carved in wood, the arrangement of whose planes and volumes presented an effort of rationalization connecting the architectural structure.

In the domain of welded iron, the sculptor acquired a technique which he uses with exceptional ease, creating forms with clean, free outlines and on planes where a finely worked texture can be seen.

An artist whose development is marked in all of its stages by a profound honesty toward himself and his craft, Ivanhoë Fortier pursues his research with confidence and determination.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

THE ART OF THE LITTLE PEOPLE

By François GAGNON

We should be grateful for the patient works of J. R. Harper and for the extension services of the National Gallery of Canada for having collected the works shown under the inclusive title of *People's Art: Naïve Art in Canada*¹. Montrealers, whose museum is in the process of expansion, will be able to console themselves for not getting this exhibition by remembering that they were indulged last year with a retrospective of Arthur Villeneuve, the painter-barber. People's Art, as its title indicates, does not intend to deal with the difficult distinctions between *Popular Art, Naïve Art, Primitive Art, Folk Art, Brute Art* and the latest *Insitic Art*. They wish simply to offer us the *Art of the People* or perhaps even the *Art of the Little People*, in the same direct manner in which the works have been produced. Let us do likewise and propose a few psychological reflections in connection with three or four pictures in this collection.

Let us begin with this extraordinary oil on canvas (12 inches by 18½) by Edward R. Jost titled *Ulysses*, dated in the 1860's. Jost was a cabinet-maker who practised his trade in Halifax in 1864, as D. C. Mackay informed historian J. R. Harper. Jost wished to illustrate this passage of the *Odyssey* where Homer tells how Ulysses and his companions, warned by Circe of the treachery of the sirens, passed near steep rocks, somewhere between the Isle of Capri and the coast of Italy, where they had established their lair. Their melodious singing had the power to make those who heard them forget everything, and lure them to their death. The wreck caught on the rock which is seen in the middle of Jost's composition expresses in its own way this detail of the Homeric tale, which described rather the blanched skeletons which were to be seen piled up around their island. The lyres and the harp held by the sirens, clearly illustrating their musical power, are not exact details either. The lyre was rather the instrument of Apollo or Orpheus or else, strictly speaking, of the Muses, but not of the Sirens, whose power lay entirely in their voices. It is known, finally, that it was traditional to show

the sirens as fabulous beings, half woman and half fish. Jost therefore took some liberties with the usual way of treating his subject, creating here and there, perhaps without knowing it, variations due to his ignorance of Greek mythology.

He did, nevertheless, introduce into his composition a completely astonishing element and which does not seem to me of the same order. This is the avifauna in which the painter of the Maritimes believed he must immerse the whole scene. Jost's knowledge is here boundless, and it is with the *Field Guide to Eastern Birds* of R. T. Peterson in hand that we must look at the picture to identify the species represented in it. I suspect Jost of having gone ahead like his great forerunner, Douanier Rousseau who, according to Yann Le Pichon, drew his representations of animals less from his so-called expeditions to Mexico under Napoleon III than from a children's album published by Les Galeries Lafayette at the beginning of the century, under the title *Bêtes sauvages — Environ 200 illustrations amusantes de la vie des animaux avec texte instructif*, which Rousseau had in his library. Therefore it is not necessary to imagine our painter-cabinet-maker perched on a rock in New Brunswick to explain his ornithological knowledge! However it may be, it does not seem to me that this new detail should be placed on the same plane as a simple variant in relationship to tradition, or a simple naïvety. It seems to me, on the contrary, to have a precise functional rôle in the representation, that of acclimatizing the Homeric legend to the mentality of the Canadian viewer.

On account of this element, Jost's composition is torn between two poles: on the one hand, to represent Ulysses' ships among the sirens faithfully enough so that the image may be unequivocal: the rocks are high and steep, the sirens are singing, the mariners are sailing in Greek ships, but on the other hand, to locate the legend in a sufficiently familiar environment so that it can speak to the Canadian viewer, so that it can signify something in his world to him, from whence come our native sea birds. In short, Jost's representation tends to find a compromise between the adapting to the Homeric legend as handed down by tradition and its assimilation with the familiar world of Jost and his peers. Jost's solution is simple: he has juxtaposed both registers of representation, sacrificing one part of objectivity (a few Greek birds) in order to make room for another series of elements (Canadian birds), necessary to assure comprehension of the scene in the mind of the viewer.

Is this not the same bipolar quality we find in the picture titled *Sir John A. Macdonald's House*, unfortunately unsigned, dated about the 1880's and which is in the collection of Mr. Charles E. McFaddin? The house is undoubtedly Victorian. The lacy ornamentation of the gables, the cornice, the chimney stacks, the bow windows, the excessive number of windows on the façade are so many details which corroborate this interpretation. And yet, the house is literally immersed in one of those gardens of which the common people hold the secret. The potted flowers, in hanging vessels, in bird baths, occupy the lawn, creating this impression of accumulation, of abundance, so characteristic of these village gardens. The author seems to have wanted to tame to his world the austere and imposing home of the father of Canadian Confederation. Jost had likewise peopled a Homeric scene with Atlantic birds. In each case, they have sacrificed one part of the objective representation in order to assure the communication of the fundamental idea to the world of the viewer. Perhaps that is

a less naïve attitude than we believe. It reverts to taking one's distances in relationship to objectivity, to refusing to make an absolute value of them, because the communication of a fundamental idea to its user is perceived as equally important. What harm was there in a New Brunswick sailor having felt some fascination for the cries of gannets or for other sea birds seeing himself in Jost's picture as an American Ulysses? Was this not the same manner in which the listeners of Homer heard his story? What harm would there be, on the other hand, if the garden of the father of Canadian Federation were represented by someone who, seeing himself as his child, were to do so in a style similar to his own village garden?

Certainly, other pictures of this collection do not seem to enter so easily into the problematical that we have just outlined. What should we see, if not a simple description, in *Sweethearts* that Mr. and Mrs. W. Bennet of Vancouver went to unearth in Charlevoix County and which are from the brush of a certain Robert Cauchon? The work in question, a water-colour measuring twenty-one and a half inches by thirty, is somewhat related to the paintings on silk by Marie Bouchard, who lived in the same region at the same time (about 1930). Our lovers on snowshoes, the boy leading his girl to the woods, she resisting a little, seem to have no other purpose than to express to us a segment of life. On the other hand, let us note an evident plastic act. The persons were painted first, the landscape afterward. The latter fills the spaces between the figures and frames them on the sides. See how, for instance, the heads and the caps of the persons are surrounded by a kind of white halo produced by the spaces left in the dappled spots forming the mountains in the background. From this results a curious disproportion between the scale of the persons and that of the landscape, giving them the same size as the fir-trees on the left and reducing that of the tree on the right. There again, the objectivity of the representation has been sacrificed to a value of communication. In the mental universe of Robert Cauchon, the landscape is subordinate to the lovers and not the contrary. In this he agrees with Jost, who although much taken with the laws of perspective in the depicting of landscapes, had treated his sirens in flat tints, without relief, while also giving them huge proportions. That is, besides, a conviction found in several naïve painters, as also witnessed by *Father and Son Walking (The Blind Man)*, by Alfred Deschênes (1930's, Dominion Gallery, Montreal), at the same exhibition.

An Alberta painter, William Panko (1892-1948), painted, in about 1940, *Rodeo*, a water-colour (14½ inches by 30) preserved at the McCord Museum in Montreal, which comprises in the treatment of space the fantasies which we have seen others use in the depicting of persons. His picture first makes use of a sort of plunging view that distributes in tiered registers the different moments of the rodeo, one above the other. At the interior of this very free frame, Panko goes by instinct to the most efficient solution to tell what he has to say. The figures of the lower part are on a radial axis and, by reason of this, subordinate to the horse race, which is seen in profile. On the central surface, plunging views border on full-face and profile views, or even back views, creating a great animation in a scene having so many diversified points of view. Finally, the background is tiered, partitioned and less animated. There again the values of communication have prevailed over those of objective representation.

It is difficult to draw a conclusion from so

small a number of examples with a general trait of the art called *naïve*. What we would have wished to suggest is that instead of approaching naïve art as an unskilful form of realist art, it would perhaps be more profitable to tackle it as evidence of another system of values, as a culture within culture, marginal if you wish, but coherent like the other, at the interior of its own limits. It would cause us to think that there exists parallel with a dominant and hierarchical culture witnessed by great art, a class culture partly escaping it: that of the little people. We do not wish to suggest that the latter is better than the former. We believe that we would have gained something if we perceived them as different and if we were to forego applying the same standards of measure to all manifestations of art.

1. This exhibition is to be held successively in Ottawa from November 30, 1973 to January 6, 1974; at the Royal Museum of Ontario in Toronto from February 1 to March 3; at the Vancouver Gallery of Art from April 3 to May 5.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

TOUR DE DAVID

By Virginia NIXON

As everyone knows, in the past decade Quebec's churches have been emptying at a rate no one would have thought possible twenty-five years ago. It is also well known that in the past few years there has been a resurgence of interest in Christianity among young people, especially in the United States and English Canada.

More recently the phenomenon appeared in Quebec. And while the English version, because of a strong Protestant Fundamentalist influence, tended to be anti-intellectual and suspicious of "culture" (and also anti-Catholic), this has been much less so with the French-Canadian variety.

In fact, one of the pioneers among the new lay communities here, the Catholic Centre Communautaire Tour de David at St-Basile-le-Grand, has become known for its artistic production, though, as its members will tell you, art for them is not an end in itself.

Essentially, what they are trying to do is set up a context where people — single people and families — can live "normal Christian lives of work, sharing, contemplation and recreation".

Comprising about 40 members including half a dozen children and two priests, the group lives a communal life in a large former convent on the outskirts of St. Basile. Almost all the members are involved either in the fine arts or in handicrafts. Best known are the visual artists, Pierre Tétréault, Réal Lauzon, Richard Rousseau, René Belley, Pierre Denault, Gérard Gosselin, Marcel Dupont and Jacques Dubuc. Many of them studied at the old École des Beaux-Arts, as did also Normand Décary, the community's 27-year-old founder, who, however, turned from sculpture to poetry.

It was his poems which accompanied Pierre Tétréault silkscreen album "Lumière" exhibited at Boutique Soleil in the summer of 1972, in an attempt to share the artist's inspirations with the viewer.

"J'ai ouvert le livre de mon coeur
et j'y ai découvert un paysage merveilleux
qui ne demandait qu'à naître."

In the silkscreens the circular symbol as flower or sun hangs over an expanse of waves or an endless plain of rocks, the latter a very personal and characteristic image with the artist. Within these landscapes the attention is led to the succession of smaller, more specific images: stars, the boat of the pilgrim, the tree of life, the face of Christ, the cross, the triangle. The style is unique, melding influences from pop, Japanese woodcuts and ornate 19th-century decorative design, into something joyous and magical. In Tétréault hands the mystical experience becomes an adventure. The colors are intense and brilliant: golden beams radiating against skies of deep blue broken by the pure whiteness of clouds; golds, yellows, pinks and scarlets combining like flowers in the rock fields.

Tétréault has had one-man shows in this province and in Hong Kong and has been in numerous group exhibitions. He and other members of the community showed in the Under 35 show last year, and at Media Gallery this Fall he showed silkscreens on the theme of "The New Creation" with texts from Genesis, the Gospels, the Apocalypse, the Upanishads and other sacred writings. For this he received a Quebec government Service de l'Aide à la Création grant. (These works were still in the planning stage when this article was written, as were the sculptures Réal Lauzon was preparing for his show at the same gallery in December.)

Lauzon's work will be familiar from the Montreal Plus or Minus show of two years ago. He did the fascinating but cryptic pop-style objects, the most striking of which was the velvet-lined chest which opened and closed to the sound of bird-like twitterings, and which contained a glowing, jewelled heart with the biblical quotation "Where your treasure is there will your heart be".

Lauzon's present work is among the funniest being done in Quebec today. The style is pop — the bright colors, the comic book lines and the imagery based on everyday objects — but all this is only a taking-off point for visual statements which are both delightfully funny and imaginative and full of significance and provocation. Lauzon's work stimulates the viewer to stop taking the everyday world for granted.

In a drawing depicting the Fall of Babylon shown at the UQAM Appariteurs exhibition in spring, 1973, he presents the world as a monstrous bathroom. Crashing into the sea are the taps, toy boats, flying saucers, the soap container with its Lux, and a glass of false teeth — vampire ones.

"You try to make it nice and clean but it's still full of excrement", comments the artist on the image.

Typical of Lauzon's sculptures is the bed shown in Under 35. From a distance it's simply a brightly colored bed with someone sleeping in it — unexpected in an art exhibition, but a bed all the same. However, up close you discover that between the headboards instead of a mattress there is a chair on which the sleeper sits, his blanket tucked under his chin.

Richard Rousseau paints joyful, windblown scenes of landscapes and country churches which have a hint of Marc-Aurèle Fortin as well as a share of the pop-influenced group style which can be discerned among most of the artists at the Tour de David.

A little different is René Belley, whose style is more abstract. Belley also did the tabernacle in the chapel, an illuminated plexiglass sculpture in the form of a tower.

The chapel illustrates another characteristic of the Tour de David, the pleasing blending of old and new, of the natural and the man-made

in its decor. Here for instance the tower and other contemporary works co-exist harmoniously not only with lace altar cloths and plaster statues of the old style, but with live birds and tropical fish. (The birds sing when the worshippers pray.)

Time in the community follows a regular pattern. Up at 5:30, prayers, mass, then breakfast followed by periods of work and prayer. Evenings, Sundays and some Saturday afternoons there is free time. The community is run by an elder and a council of seven, the present elder being founder Décary, but future elders and councils to be elected. Decisions go to group assemblies for approval.

Some members work outside, others in the community. This summer they sharecropped 40 acres of vegetables with a nearby farmer as well as looking after their own eight acres.

The group has been at St-Basile since May 1972 but the community itself began three years ago.

Not all the members have similar backgrounds but 26 year old Pierre Tétréault's story throws light on some common experiences. After a happy, normal childhood in Granby, a B.A. at the Franciscan College in Longueuil and the beginnings of researches in poetry and art, he began at the École des Beaux-Arts, but quit four months later after the "Contestation" of 1968. The same year he started doing silkscreens at the Guilde Graphique and was happily surprised when they asked him to do an album — Gimmick One. Around this time he was becoming increasingly interested in oriental and occult studies and as well he became adept at using marijuana to help his artistic expression.

The crucial event was his meeting with Décary and their common desire for a new lifestyle. After that — a small community of four, an idyllic summer on the Isle Bonaventure, a return to Montreal, and a surprise. Décary, who had been reading the Bible, stunned his friends by going further and accepting its presentation of Jesus as the son of God and redeemer of a suffering humanity, and then going from there to accepting the Roman Catholic Church.

(It should be mentioned that though they are interested in other religions there is no question of religious syncretism, pantheism, etc., at the Tour de David. In their acceptance of Catholic doctrine and the hierarchy they are orthodox, and in some practices quite traditional, though their approach is characteristically new and unexpected.)

Tétréault, who had abandoned his uncritical childhood faith, was confused but impressed with the change in his friend. A gradual struggle or process of interior dialectic was thus initiated in him which culminated three months later, in December 1970, in his own conversion.

At this point he severed himself completely from his past, art included. And when Décary, a year and a half later, asked him to start drawing again, his initial reaction was depression. He didn't think he could do it any more. But he did and was surprised at the result.

"It was what I had always been dreaming of drawing before. And I was surprised to find that I could do it better this way than with drugs. I was going deeper and doing it more naturally."

Now Tétréault sees his work as a catalyst for aiding others see themselves and recognize "the light within them". (He cautioned though, that not everything that shines contains light.)

Continuing on the subject of the artist, he says he is "discovering the sacred function of art, that it needs to be prepared for with medita-

tion, prayer and the gift of oneself to others. The mystical life and the ordinary life should be close . . . What I paint is really the image of what I do".

"Art is a teaching with the spirit, not with words or images", Normand Décarý said, expressing a similar idea.

But the artists are not an elite at the Tour de David. Although Tétréault is a dedicated artist with a thoroughly professional approach he insists that the job of the artist is not intrinsically superior to that of the cook or the accountant — but rather that each is called to make art of his life.

"If we make things when we are in love, the things we make will teach that", Décarý had said, referring to art, but the thought is equally applicable to the wider approach at the Tour de David.

JACQUE-ADRIEN TREMBLÉ

By Claude-Lyse GAGNON

Eros (with circumflex accent) is a little planet (No. 433) discovered by Witt in Berlin in 1898. Its average distance from the sun measures 1.46.

Eros (without the circumflex accent) is the Greek god of love, as everyone knows, supposedly the son of Hermes and Aphrodite. Eros whom we call love. And who also brings perfumes to mind, and who, like them, is sometimes mild and seductive, sometimes licentious, sometimes sickening, but, most of the time, roaming, flowing, lewd and mad, working on one's feelings and unsettling one's heart.

A faraway planet, a strange god, perhaps it is both that Jacques Tremblé is pursuing as one runs after an indescribable something. When he does not feel defeatist. Because he paints love a great deal. All sorts of love. One of his biggest canvases has the title *Érotisme au Québec*. He is also a sculptor.

Let us speak first of his painting and of eroticism. It is odd how almost everyone defines eroticism in a different way. For instance, when I was studying I had a delightful professor of literature who loved women, who, in a time closed and scrupulous with reference to everything that touched closely or far from life, love and eroticism, used to lend me on the sly the works of Gide, Apollinaire, Giono, Louÿs. One day, he asked me if I knew what eroticism was. Very timid at the time and not at all involved in love, I did not answer. But I have never forgotten what he told me: "Eroticism is to desire, to caress a breast in silence, doing nothing. It is something terribly secret." I adored that definition!

Before writing this article I asked a few friends, male and female, their thoughts on the subject. "It is a refinement in the imagination in the face of beautiful curves." From an architect . . . "It is to live in a state of wonderful sexuality." From a woman journalist . . . "It is to make love with taste, taking one's time and trembling." From a woman writer . . . "It is to love it without end but not too often." From a doctor! Ah! those divine friends.

Jacques Tremblé gives no definition. He shows you his pictures which, roughly speak-

ing, I would place in three classes: dreamed eroticism. Eroticism of death. Male eroticism.

It is a very sweet world that his canvases of the first inspiration offer and it is in these that he is the most luminarist. He dreams of young women, of several at a time, no, to tell the truth, not of young women but of strange blond and bright red teenagers, slim, with androgynous bodies, born of romantic and sparse songs. There is never only one of them. Sometimes they multiply to infinity. It is delirium for Lolitas not at all depraved and skilful. Slender silky girls to be taken in his arms, to caress their hair, to breathe their faces and mouths, to rock on his lap, these evenings in the style of Loti. Not like children, because the atmosphere is sensual. Desire wanders. It troubles the water. The waves of this water have no whitecaps but they are not less insinuating. Bewitching.

On the other hand, there is the eroticism of death where everything is painful. A bull-fight, for instance, brings death with it but there is a fight and not necessarily a defeat. Tremblé is sad, indeed morbid, in this vein. It is the rape of love, chastisement or sordid brothel. Love that is made without passion, without tenderness. Still less with mutual pleasure. There love does not bring a challenge to death but turns into agony in the cataclysms of the universe or the swamps of a shabby daily occurrence. It is nightmarish surrealism. So the painter uses the grays of anthracite, the browns of mine pits, coagulated reds. He must live through very agonizing anguishes to descend into these depths!

He comes back up to the surface, however, through his male eroticism where man gives forth his cock's crow. He makes love. He is at his climax. Here is the triumph of virility in itself, as the Latins understand virility, and not only the Latins! There we find carnival reds with cobalt blues and sunflower yellows with full-blooded oranges. Men greatly appreciate this facet of Tremblé!

Born in Montreal, he spent his childhood and the summers of his adolescence on Ile Perrot. First tragedy: the refusal of his parents to allow him to become a sculptor. The trouble was deep and he would have to travel a long road before living as he wished. At first he loved the wood that he studied and worked, solitary and inventive. From a plank, he made continuous chains; from trees, he built boats, he sculpted forms with tender curves.

Now his sculptures resemble our world of industrialization, with hydraulic, electric, sonorous applications. They run, light up, shout, move. Using a primary material (wood, plastic, cement, etc.), he makes them come alive as if he were building a whole. I know one that was a revenge. Yet it is magnificent. It is titled: *A la mémoire des érables*.

It sprang out from him after a revolt. He was living at the time beside the Richelieu River in the shade of five hundred-year-old maples, streaming in springtime, in full beauty in autumn. One fine morning, for no reason, the owner decided to have them cut down. Jacques wept over it. He ran to find the mutilated maples, felled to the ground. Then he set up his sculpture, part of which was a strident siren. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, the siren cried out the sin against nature. The owner lost sleep because of it, but art and beauty embraced each other madly. Divinely.

May the little star of Berlin and the great Greek god bring it about that the seasons never halt you in your excessiveness, Jacques Tremblé, who loves life so much.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

THE AMBIGUITY OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC LIFE IN QUEBEC

By Gilles MARSOLAIS

After spending a year in the capacity of guest professor at the University of Nanterre-Paris X, Gilles Marsolais, cinema critic and historian, has been professor in charge of Cinema Studies at the University of Montreal since 1971. A graduate of a school of cinema (IDHEC) and a D. Litt. (History of Cinema), he is president of the Quebec Association of Cinema Critics (QACC). We are indebted to him for several articles and studies in depth on our cinema: *Le Cinéma canadien*¹, Michel Brault², *Cinéma d'icP*, as well as an important work published by Seghers, *L'Aventure du cinéma direct*³, several texts and volumes of poetry⁴, among which is *La Caravelle incendiée*. Although he is also publishing director of *Théâtre et Télévision*⁵, we must not confuse him with his namesake, who devotes himself exclusively to the theatre.

I have never ceased being intensely interested in the evolution of our cinema, while investing much time, work and affection in it. Let me therefore be permitted to begin this regular contribution to *Vie des Arts* by an article which takes stock of the present condition, which raises all possible ambiguity, but without any controversial idea, by basing myself on three events which have more particularly held the attention of lovers of the cinema: the holding of the Canadian Film Awards, in Montreal; the International 16 mm. Film Festival; the reaction to a certain look directed at Quebec society.

1. The Canadian Film Awards, at Montreal

Those responsible for the CFA 73 thought they were doing right by coming to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this organization in Montreal. The unanimous refusal to participate by the Quebec Association of Cinema Critics (QACC) and the Association of Film Producers (AFP) together with the Quebec producers involved in this honours list served to remind the public at large of facts which it is unhealthy to try to ignore. There certainly exist two distinct cinemas: a Canadian cinema and a Quebec cinema. This statement I made several years ago already⁷ caused a chorus of approval at the time, as well as an outcry of protests not free from fierce bias. In time, however, the facts confirmed the justice of this statement based more on an intuition, indeed on a desire than on a close reasoning of the proposals immediately possible of verification. While supporting this intuition, the agitation caused by the coming of the CFA to Montreal appears as the logical outcome of a disordered situation, known to all who are interested in the cinematographic matter.

It is not a question of dwelling on the attitudes taken and the respective declarations of the different parties involved in this conflict which has caused the demise of the CFA, for all practical purposes. But it is important to define clearly the interests of each.

Working in shadow and on the fringe for more than twenty years while taking an interest in very special and none the less marginal areas of the cinema industry and while wholly neglecting the creative aspect, the CFA, after taking on a pseudo-democratic look following the dispute between the Torontonians film producers in its own fortress of the Queen City, had, in 1971, the characteristics of genius and/or the clumsiness of laying claim to *Mon oncle Antoine* by Claude Jutra, while allowing him that

year to carry off trophies (Etrogs). As Claude Jutra has maliciously said, the CFA benefitted more from l'oncle Antoine than the latter benefitted from the CFA. Indeed, had it not been for this unexpected and, to say the least, laughable welcome on the part of this body (at which the profession looked with amusement) and especially had it not been for its desire to try a bold stroke by storming the Quebec stronghold in 1973, the CFA would probably have continued on its happy way until attaining the age of one hundred, in its fief at Toronto.

The second part of the manoeuvre was really too gross to escape the vigilance of the Quebecers. Until very recently the latter had no other choice than to come to terms with those in power, than to bet on a certain climate of ambiguity in order to assure the expression of their own culture, while remaining aware of the threshold not to be crossed in the domain of compromise. Discovering late that this manoeuvre aimed more at forcing their hand and that it was clearly a matter of a decisive and concerted attack (with the support of the SDCCI) against their cultural fortress, the Quebec Film producers and critics, through the voice of the AFPQ and the WACC, were able at the last moment to offer an effective common front, and it was sick at heart that King Etrog returned to his country, in the Kingdom of Orange . . .

It is naïve to think (and demagogic to make an electoral argument of it) that a coherent cultural policy can be established and developed without holding political power (and which, further, is without even somewhat controlling the economy). That is why Quebecers have no other choice in the near future but to continue exercising a rôle of vigilance with regard to any manifestation that could threaten their collective cultural survival and, in a more immediate way, contribute to stifling any form of authentic expression of this culture.

It is not by copying the American cinematographic ways of exhibition/production/broadcasting that our cinema will find out how to show itself in the most authentic manner. Film producers and critics have understood this. The SDCCI will therefore have to reorientate its activities. Failing to readjust its aim, it will have at the very least to choose another charger but the CFA, this shoddy horse, to act efficiently.

2. The International 16 mm. Film Festival at Montreal

Since its founding in 1971, the people of the profession and the cinema lovers have been rebellious against the International 16 mm. Film Festival, set up by Dimitri Eipides of the Independent Film Producers Co-operative with the help of co-ordinator Claude Chamberland. This boycott, conscious or unconscious according to the individuals, is explained by the main reason that it is a question, there too, of a manifestation founded on false representation.

After three years of existence, the IFF-16 has succeeded in clearly defining neither its status, nor its orientation, nor its goals.

It presents itself as a manifestation centred on the cinema using 16 mm. (which, let it be said in passing, does not make it a *genus*, as Eipides asserted in his presentation of 1972). Well, the rare films of value shown in 1972 were all by the German, Werner Herzog, who has the strange peculiarity of shooting his films in . . . 35 mm! In this year of 1973, we simply had the choice between works filmed in 35, in 16 and in . . . 8 mm!

In another connection, the IFF-16 claims to present to the Canadian public works of young film producers who are distinguished especially by their originality, at the the levels of *creation*

and/or their *social content*. Well, it suffices to attend a few of the European festivals to evaluate the warmed-over aspect of the offerings of this Canadian showing: to have it accepted better, they pad it with a bit of fairly stale *revolutionary cinema*, they season it with *formal audacity* (terribly academic), and they crown the whole with a touch of *daring sex* (enough to make you blush with self-satisfaction). A wretched performance, where neither sex, nor art, nor revolution profit by it. Indeed, the IFF-16 has got into the habit of presenting to us a cinema of the young who are already pot-bellied: sad sex without daring, defused revolutionary concepts, a conformist view (art) drowned in the familiar. Having failed in the *daring soirée* of 1973 devoted to *sexy movies*, I easily console myself by remembering that the memorable *It is not the homosexual who is depraved, it is the society in which he lives*, presented in 1972, at least had the advantage of accomplished ridicule . . . Certainly, some good films always end up participating in this annual showing, but as if unknown to the organizers, who seem very simply to fall back on the rare films that are available to them; or else they have not the slightest sense of criticism.

More than the choice of films, whose estimation can be subject to a certain amount of subjectivity, it is the very organization of the IFF-16 which is in question here. Indeed, revealing its inadmissible amateur spirit, it has always left much to be desired. This amateurism shows through, besides, in black on white just in reading the official program and the notices sent out by those responsible who are apparently concerned over *bilingualism*. Mistakes in French (vocabulary/punctuation/syntax/grammar), enough to make any Quebecer jowalising paw the ground, are the usual thing in these texts of a trivial and sometimes even incoherent conception. Apart from the title and the calendar of the exhibition which are incorrect, the description of the film is worth reading. There we learn, among a thousand examples, that the women of *Willow Springs* "kill whoever dares to penetrate their solitude", that the characters in *Cobra One* "discuss the best ways of achieving complete sexual satisfaction and go so far as to *perform* explicitly real erotic scenes before the camera without neglecting any intimate and realistic detail", that, if *The Jail* concerns itself especially with imprisoned transvestites, it *investigates* the guards as well; etc. Here it is not a matter of maniacal remarks: these details, as well as the place reserved for the French language in the level of the very presentation of the films, indicate very well the low level of the showing prepared in a sloppy manner.

Organized by the Co-operative of Independent Film Producers, the IFF-16 receives "the support and the collaboration of the Canadian Bureau of Festivals of the Office of the Secretary of State, the Arts Council of the metropolitan region of Montreal, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs (oh yes!) and the National Film Board of Canada". We cannot understand that the Co-operative benefits each year from grants and subsidies to maintain a presentation of such wretched quality and that its organization has never been able to free itself from its atrocious mold of amateurism. It is all the more inadmissible since the Montreal public has, so to speak, no access to the young *cinema of freedom* of high quality.

3. A Certain Glance at Quebec Society

The method of exhibition/production/broadcasting that they try to force on us, the rickety festivals that painfully attempt to take root in

Quebec, the look that some foreigners cast on us, none of these is of a nature to give us pleasure. The violent reactions provoked by the *Journal du Québec*, by Jean-Marie Drot (a series of six films of fifty-six minutes each produced for the French Television account), are the proof of this negative unanimity . . . completely justified. This is a matter of a fundamentally dishonest enterprise and conveying a particularly alienating view of Quebec, which it is important to denounce.

To facilitate their work, Drot and Jacques Godbout, the latter acting as "artistic advisor" and as guide to the former, have chosen to interview friends: which can be acceptable to a certain degree, provided that the undertaking is not taken for anything else but what it actually is. Well, with the help of publicity, this series has been presented and perceived as reflecting the present Quebec (!), when it is a matter of a *certain* Quebec seen by an "internal exile" and by a Frenchman (a specialist in French painting). In this connection, we can only state that most of the *friends* chosen by Drot-Godbout seem to have lived through none of the major events of our Quebec life of the last ten years, when they are not totally ethereal beings. It is the choice and especially the use which is made of most of the people filmed that renders this enterprise fundamentally dishonest: through its poorly representative sampling of present-day Quebec, through the way in which interviews are conducted, in truth slanted, through the inadmissible work at the level of editing, which exploits in a shameful fashion and directs in a constant way the fragments of evidence retained in the line of the alienating vision of the producers, aiming to provoke ridicule with a bias of evident spitefulness and with the intention of disguising the truth rather than revealing certain realities. Defiling the screen by their unbearable self-complacency, Drot and Godbout use people for dishonest purposes, with the evident goal of producing a folkloric and caricatural image of Quebec. This disloyal undertaking, centred on individuals and not on our collective future, deserves only this kind of personalized criticism. It is already to grant too much importance to it when we devote these few lines to it.

Drot stormed out of Quebec while bawling at us to go ahead and make our own films on Quebec. Because he was badly *advised*, he undoubtedly did not know that this work is nonetheless already very well begun: by some film producers, to the degree to which their hands are not tied; by some critics, as the series *Cinéma d'ici*, among others, has proved, composed of eleven films of one hour each, dealing with Quebec cinema. We will recall that this series, broadcast on the French network of Radio-Canada in 1972, then repeated in 1973, gave rise to a positive . . . unanimity. Having contributed directly and with intensity to this series, I keep silent while simply expressing the wish that it may finally be shown in our institutions of teaching for which it was conceived, accompanied by the book of the same title published by Leméac/Radio-Canada in April 1973, to be made an instrument of useful work.

After having allowed itself to be carried away during these last years by a strong inflationary current, tossed about between demagoguery and self-seeking views, to find itself finally in the trough of the wave, the Quebec cinematographic life is now founded on a completely justified distrust, accompanied by a constant vigilance.
(For footnotes, see French text.)

(Translation by Mildred Grand)