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TRANSLATIONS / TRADUCTIONS

a lively debate in bordeaux

BY ANDREE PARADIS

The topic of these animated discussions was "Art and Television", the theme of this year's annual assembly of the International Society of Art Critics which met in Bordeaux from September 5th to 15th. (1) Four addresses were delivered by representatives of France, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Yugoslavia, that stated the motivating principles or related the decisive experiments of these countries. Some rather unconvincing films were also shown. Fortunately the debate that ensued established the need for art critics to enter a truly active phase, that is to say, to participate by becoming the advisors to the leading art programmes or else to animate by assuming the direction of the programmes in a spirit of cultural renewal.

If the art-television marriage has been a rather strained one in most countries, it can however be noted that many attempts are being made so that art televising can become a reality and so that it can fulfill the role in which it has been cast in public education. In a general way, pre-existent technical problems remain unresolved; moreover, art televising must be assured a position that is at least equivalent to that granted the televising of music, theatre, and films, and it must be given absolute freedom.

At the present time the exclusive nature of the art shown on television in ever decreasing amounts is being censured. Repeatedly it is being emphasized that this art is meaningless for most of the viewers, that it leaves the masses indifferent, and that it arouses suspicion beyond the circle of initiates. It is misstating the problems to blame the subject matter, to make it the scapegoat for all the inadequacies, when in truth the culprit is the unimaginative methods of presentation; it is equally important that habits be changed and that new attitudes be adopted.

In this area, Sweden has followed an interesting course. Kristian Romare reports that his country has established coordination between certain television programmes and the distribution of reproductions of the works of art. Profiting by a state subsidy, a television art critic and a graphic arts editor undertook the venture. Known by the name of Multikonst-Art Multi, it convened about sixty Swedish artists chosen by a jury that invited them to create objects, prints, and paintings in sets of from 50 to 100 copies.

The idea of the sets was first of all to multiply the exhibitions which were opened simultaneously in about 100 Swedish cities, from Northern Lapland to Southern Scandanavia. The televised opening was followed by two weeks of exhibitions during which programmes relating to the exhibits were presented on radio and television.

The programmes especially sought to change certain outmoded ideas, to make the meeting with art and the artist less solemn. Their goal was to interest the public by seeking its participation in contests and as a studio audience to the programmes. If we add that this multiplication of media immediately aroused a great deal of attention in the press and in periodicals, the impact of the experiment can be easily evaluated.

Besides, later on the project was the object of sociological studies which allowed the character of the public to be analyzed. It became apparent that Art Multi increased the interest of the public, but the social composition of this public remained about the same. The process of democratization requires more thought and patience than can be supposed in the beginning stages. Consequently, in 1969, the exhibition will no longer be presented in museums but in 3,000 Swedish schools at the same time. It is hoped that this method will integrate the exhibition into modern school instruction with the help of audio-visual methods.

Yugoslavia shares Sweden's ideas on the relations between art and television and considers that the problem must be studied from the point of view of the function of art, of communication, and of medium. Does current art surpass its pure phenomenological level, that is to say its proper nature? Are we conscious of the new environment which the electronic age is creating? In spite of the laborious (no doubt attributable to difficulties of translation) account of the Yugoslavian representative, Matko Mestrovic, it remains that this thinking favours the theories of Marshall Mc Luhan whose audacious comprehension of the medium in the unlimited understanding of the direct and indirect implications on human behaviour, it accepts. But the assembly did not convene a very ardent group of "Mc Luhanists" . . . the rather skeptical attitude especially sought clear ideas.

France and the Netherlands were especially interested in methodology concerning art and television. Dutch radio-television according to the report of H. J. Jaffé presents two kinds of programmes devoted to the arts. Destined for different publics, they are each planned in an appropriate spirit. One is a series of televised conferences which proposes to familiarize the general public with established values; the series aims at acquainting the still uninitiated masses with the language and world of the arts.

The other series under the title of "national heritage" especially tries to concentrate the attention of a more restricted but sufficiently large public on the treasures of painting, sculpture, graphic arts, and applied arts which exist in great numbers in the state museums and in public collections dependent on municipalities and institutions throughtout the entire country.

The first series concerns the understanding of works of art. M. Pierre Jansen, author and director of the programme believes that in a world flooded, and to a certain extent actualized by pictures, one must return to origins. Thus he approaches the works of art, as directly as possible, especially the works known by the public at large, only as objects and not at all in their nature as a work of art! He is especially attempting to show that picture contains a series of associations, and analogies, that it should be created anew each time by the viewer and that it can be as exciting to decipher the contents of a painting, as to read an adventure novel. The great pitfall to be avoided in such programmes is oppressive historianism. This can be done by combining the historical background of the works and their present significance, with the importance they have for today's viewer without impoverishing their initial message.

The other series of programmes pursues a different goal — it is a programme of information which proposes to increase knowledge of the works kept in public museums. Several commentators and experts participate in it. This series aims at the strictest objectivity. The spoken texts and the reproductions of works are sent to subscribers on request. This joint action has encouraged visits to museums; it is a first step towards a new kind of education.

The speech by Madeleine Hours won universal approval because of its very positive nature. Head of the laboratory of the French Museums, Madeleine Hours puts science at the service of art, her duties lead her to regularily make an evaluation of what the nation is thinking. To reach French television viewers, who are her audience, she uses the two great methods of history and poetic perception. But the problems of the producer seem of a practical nature to her: the necessity to adjust to the programme and schedule that are given to him. The requirements of a school programme differ from those of a late evening show that can allow itself avant-garde attempts — a faster rhythm, references to unusual pictures. Moreover, programmes meant for general broadcasting impose certain efforts of popularization which in no case, however, imply easy solutions. The rhythm of the image in this case must be slow. The commentary profits by being simple and should refer to historical or technical ideas that are accessible to the general public, rather than aesthetic commentaries.

The problem of the assimilation of the image by the public should concern art criticism which is responsible not only for the choice of images shown on the screen, but also the integration of the television viewer with the present art situation — in the form of a discreet invitation to dialogue.

Moreover, the matter of safety must be taken into account to assure the protection of cultural treasures, and technical solutions to problems arising from the moving of objects, their handling at different stages, their degree of lighting of temperature and hygrometrical variations must be found.

The Bordeaux conference marked only the beginning of discussions that must be resumed locally, keeping in mind a future plenary meeting of the A.I.C.A. The stake is considerable since it is aquestion of the relations of art and communications, as well as the influence of the televised image on our means of perception. Art cannot stand aside in such a decisive debate.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

(1) Madame André Paradis was a delegate to the assembly of the A.I.C.A. due to the courtesy of the Quebec Ministery of Cultural Affairs.

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hippie trimmings for christmas

BY CLAUDE-LYSE GAGNON

Christmas was red and green at first glance. With something gilt-edged, a tuft, and a fringe.

Now it has become orange, mauve, blue, yellow, a rainbow of colours reaching even the smallest detail. Amidst the reflections, the eye discovers the colours. Just as a necklace makes a man's neck look

smarter, there are large paper flowers which give a tropical touch to winter. The hippies have already travelled this path. Artists have taken an interest in gifts and have begun to sign butterfly bows, wrapping paper, and toys, embellishing the ephemeral. They have joined in the festive spirit and even the modest Christmas card, address book, and scented candle have changed. Now they are poems. And this is a good thing.

To notice this, one only has to go into a shop like "Focus", in Westmount Square, or "Mille et un papiers", or other such shops located here and there throughout Montreal. As a matter of fact, these are colourful and fanciful little shops where one can make a lucky find of some little treasure, some beautiful and whimsical decoration that borders on being a minor masterpiece.

The proprietor of "Focus", Mr. Alfredo Haddad, displays a child's awe when he shows you a funny little wind-up man from Japan, a poster signed Victorio, a bow signed Jan Pienkowski, a greeting card in the spirit of 1925. One might wonder if he has not chosen all of this for himself, if he will not keep everything. For instance, these very beautiful Mexican dolls made by Gemma Taccogna, which are becoming increasingly scarce, for the artist, who was living in Mexico a few years ago, is now living in California, and because of the cost of labour can no longer sell them at the same price (however, as regards these Mexican dolls, carefully check the signature, for other such dolls are copies, the secret of the artist's skill having been borrowed).

As for the shop "Mille et un papiers", let us mention that it is owned by the Grands Ballets Canadiens, the staff is composed of volunteer workers whose charitable attitude extends to helping their customers choose articles that delight them, and that help the Grands Ballets. There is stationery of a marvelous labyrinthine design, very beautiful gift boxes from Sweden, very pretty paper bags that were never meant to be thrown away, matches that sparkle, wool of all colours to tie gift packages. Yes, the surroundings of Christmas have changed. Everything can be a gift. It is a time to be carefree, to pamper other people. The artists of Scandanavia, Japan, the United States, Canada, and England, have become involved with this, and have beautified inexpensive objects. It is all worthwhile, for Christmas Eve is a very special night. It is unique and unbounded. People behave in a very special manner then too, they are more agreable, more attentive, and more vulnerable. Of course, in 1968, many people spend Christmas in the south, many do not take long holidays, but people still pause for Christmas, and that is very important. Thus, when everything around us, even small things, becomes more beautiful, when artists fashion ephemeral objects, the celebration is magnificent. And I do not know exactly why this reply of Madame de Maintenon comes to mind:

— Are you beseeching the heavens, Madame?

— No, Your Majesty, I am merely looking at the ceiling.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

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art at the university of montreal with the new works of jacques de tonnancour

BY JACQUES FOLCH-RIBAS

The architectural group composed of the buildings of the Social Sciences and Law faculties is situated on the west side of Mount Royal, at the foot of the University of Montreal. They are massive and solemn buildings whose colour is rather reminiscent of cork or earth — muted and calm, with the blue-tinged grey of the pilings and the great concrete forms marking the location of the amphitheatres on the facades.

At the foot of this group, in the wing common to the two faculties and visible from the entrance, a very warm and vivid brick-red shade arises from three panels that seem to float suspended between the ceiling and the floor. Handsomely framed by two pillars of rough concrete, picking up the shade of the floor tiles that they highlight, they also echo the beauty of these tiles with the extreme complexity and subtlety of their composition.

They are three eye-catching collage paintings that invite closer inspection, so that one discovers the movements created by little pieces of paper, bit of thread, fishnet, round lozenges coated with paint, and gradually all these accidents take on an order become one and work together; from panel to panel they communicate, to such an extent that the entire wall — the mural — is slowly covered by their squirming, and the viewer steps back to look again at the glowing ensemble. It is never still, a ballet of comings and goings begins, the viewer leaves the painting feeling that it is a mystery that is unexplained, and that will be encountered again later, when it will be still more involved, and endless.

A little farther on, at a turn in the hallway, in the dining-room crammed with students and professors, an immense mural is enthroned above their heads. It unfolds in vertical sequences subdivided into squares and rectangles, with a pattern repeated in each of them; four wheels (or four plates, if one considers the location?) that are white on an ochre background, and this design hovers exactly above the heads of the diners.

This time the attraction is strong, almost without shades of suggestion. The artist has kept in mind the immense space that this mural will occupy, the impossibility of a lengthy contemplation, and the uselessness of an anecdote. His language is clear, his movement sustained, and slow, without flourishes. To achieve this "plasticism", this geometrism, he had the panels done in laminated plastic (1) glued while hot to plywood or pressed wood, and separated from one another by a line of felt (that is about as thick as the stroke of a drawing-pen full of ink) to allow for dilation. He separated each band of colours by a groove of galvanized aluminium (in extrusion). The technique is flawless. What is called "hard-edge" finds its durable architectural materials properly applied here, and the whole work is mechanically made. The artist becomes the programmer, he handles the subconscious stages, of a "manual" model, he proceeds, by the intermediary of industry, to a mural that he has not himself touched. He is working like an architect.

He uses this technique in a work closely akin to the one in the dining-room, in the entrance hall to the library, with another mural of the same workmanship, if not the same spirit. The architectural problem posed here was indeed quite different: elevators situated facing the mural, doors bordering it on each side, a very poor perspective, a very rapid, and (it must be admitted) distracting traffic-flow. From this comes a composition that is syncopated and especially clearly directed to the right, following the logical movement of the students who come out of the reading room and make their way towards the elevators. The cold shades of the blues and whites work with certain reds in the play of colour-on-colour, without taking into account the values, and this is done in a desired and clearly expressed manner. The forms hold together in the simplicity of the elementary geometrics (circle, square, band, rectangle) in order to attract only a cursory glance. Another example of understanding the dictates of function.

In the students' entrance hall, on the ground floor, and as though to indicate the infinite possibilities of these plastic panels, the artist has placed three paintings executed in the same manner on a pale ochre wall facing the doors. This time it is a question of object-paintings that can be hung, and moved. Each one of them contains a composition that is complete in itself, they can be separately viewed although it is obvious that their creator made them together, to be placed side by side. The triptych with panels of irregular sizes (to compensate for the different sizes of the two beams which adjoin them) begins to the right on a geometric theme (the two circles) and develops by passing through the middle beneath a black panel fluted with two converging lines, that opens out to the left and subdivides, indicating there again the general movement of the students and their dispersion.

In my opinion this work is unique. It is very seldom that an artist is asked to do all the works that are to be integrated into a project of this scale. It is an attitude that opposes the concept of the collection as it does that of the single work (in which the entire available budget has been invested) to a sounder view — a unified plastic ensemble that allows an architecture to be accentuated by a harmonious grouping conceived by the sensitivity of the same artist, along its walls, its passageways, its areas. In this way we can begin to speak of a veritable integration: juxtaposition of art and architecture, or segregation of certain areas with respect to others that are too well favoured. It is an attitude which has permitted architecture to consult the artist on details of shuttering the walls of amphitheatres, for example, in which signs in the concrete show outside the same signs that are to be found inside the building. It is an attitude which also allows a building to be marked by the work of an artist working and achieving a certain completion during the very time of construction. Finally it is an attitude for which the University of Montreal should be congratulated and in particular the Vice-Rector, M. Lucien Piché, whose sustained efforts have borne results.

Here then is a conception of an artistic commission destined to a building (or a group of buildings) that forces the artist so commissioned to the greatest severity, to the greatest contingency; without an understanding of the endeavours of the architecture, without a precise and subtle vision of the presence of the materials, he has his back to the wall. He is alone. On the other hand, exhibiting several aspects of his sensitivity all throughout the areas he can express much more.

Moreover, that is what happened here: with a sculpture, perhaps the first that is known to exist by this artist, and which the hall of the Law faculty commissioned. He courageously attacked the problem,

creating at the same time a totally new kind of work. A cylindrical support holds up two arms, all in stainless steel; a plate of frosted glass an inch thick, vertically pierced with twelve holes, that contain and interlock twelve grooved tubes, supporting from a fair distance six plates of grey transparent glass a half-inch thick. Light reflects in this new type of sculpture that required an extraordinary care (for example, the manufacture of a special screw-driver with a plastic tip that would not ruin the grooves of the screw heads, which were also important in the ensemble). In this sculpture the two converging lines, the circle, elements that would seem to belong to the vocabulary of the whole of the works can be discerned, as can the mechanical character and the finely-carafted materials which seem to indicate a new direction for the art of Jacques de Tonnancour.

The ensemble destined for the Social Sciences and Law faculties was prepared by the architects Beauvais and Lusignan, in collaboration with the University architectural consulting committee. The setting of the mural in the diningroom was done by the Blier Co. Inc., the others by Scandia Furniture, the glass is by Pilkington, the fixings by André de Tonnancour, the artist's brother. The artistic work took about one year to be completed. The photographs are by Hugh Frankel.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

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jacob jordeans

BY LUCILE OUIMET

The Canadian National Gallery is currently organizing a major exhibition of the work of Jacob Jordeans. This exhibition which will open in Ottawa on November 29th, 1968 is under the direction of the English scholar, Mr. Michael Jaffé who, for this occasion, edited a well-documented and illustrated catalogue which will be issued in both French and English editions. Almost 300 of the artist's paintings, tapestries, drawings, and prints have been gathered directly from the great collections of Europe and America. This will be the first exhibition of Jordean's work in a North American museum, and the most important exhibition of Jordeans ever held anywhere.

Jacob Jordeans who was born in Anvers in 1593 was the son of a woolen-blanket merchant. He did not receive the education which the great artists of his time such as Rubens and Van Dyke secured. When he was 23, he married Catherine Van Noert, the lovely daughter of his atelier master; she bore him three children. His family life was happy, laborious, and gay; good cheer and songs were no small part of his home. His early marriage prevented him from following the example of the great masters of his time and taking a trip to Italy. Instead of travelling, he studied the paintings of the Italian masters who were in Flanders. In 1646 Jordeans, troubled by religious problems, ended up by abjuring Catholicism and turning to Protestantism as his wife had done. He died in 1678 at the age of 85 and was buried in the Protestant cemetery in Putte, Holland. The recognition he won when he was still young brought him many commissions. His production was rich and varied. His earliest known painting, *Christ on the Cross* was painted in about 1617. The following year, in a painting of *The Adoration of the Magi*, the characteristics which were to remain present in the extent of his career, in particular the contrast of light and shadow, first appeared. The Adoration was one of his preferred subjects and he often returned to it. Among the other religious subjects treated by Jordeans let us mention: *The Betrothal of Saint Catherine*, towards 1641, *The Temporation of Christ by Satan*, "le Denier de Saint-Pierre" (Peter's Pence), *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, *Saint Yves*, patron saint of lawyers, *Jesus Among The Doctors*, *The Four Evangelists*.

However, his verve is better suited to scenes of mythology and carousal, such as The Proverbs and expecially The Banquets. In the latter subject he illustrates the old Flemish custom of the Epiphany bean, and shows the lavish meals which accompanied the celebration of Epiphany. In the anecdote entitled The Satyr and The Farmer illustrated in five scenes, of which twelve copies exist, the artist reproduces an old fable. In many of his paintings he used his family as models; his wife, his mother, his father, his children and himself all appear. A painting in a very different vein, *The Huntsman and his Dog*, reveals that Jordeans is also an excellent animalist.

Jordeans did not like to paint portraits, for this style inhibited the freedom of his imagination and fancy. However he did execute some portraits of which that of Admiral Ruyter is the best known.

Towards 1665, Jordeans did three ceiling paintings (Anvers) for the Corporation of painters: these works show his decline; because his life was long Jordeans survived baroque and knew the period of classical reaction.

Jordeans' lengthy artistic career was most productive. Next to Rubens who influenced him, he stands as the greatest Flemish painter of his time. He embodies the style of this rich and fertile Flemish race, their plump women, their hearty characters. His lively and sensual colours are brimming with life and his entire work reveals the wealth of the Flemish spirit.

We trust that this important exhibition for which the National Gallery must be congratulated, and which offers us an unparalleled opportunity for enrichment, will not be an isolated or unusual occurence.

Let us hope that our major Canadian art institutions will take steps as positive as the one described here, for the benefit of all of us.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

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charles gagnon

BY NORMAND THERIAULT

"Why do I paint? I have never understood this very well. There is secrecy. The sound of the tennis ball in the last scene of "Blow-Up", and the entire mood of the film. A need to explore, to discover. There is also zen: "If two hands which are struck together make a sound, what sound does one hand make?" In that lies all my searching."

When Charles Gagnon is speaking of his paintings, he invariably leaves a few mysterious ideas unexplained in the same way. And at a given moment he is certain to say: "My paintings are religious." But at the same time, as he has already said in the past: "I have put aside intellectualism in order to discover real men who go on picnics, eat hot-dogs, chew gum, and go to the barbershop. This is amazing and I feel wonderful." (article by Claude Jasmin, in Canadian Art, no. 78.)

In his painting there is an apparent ambiguity: on one side his concern for questioning which drew him closer to eastern mysticism, on the opposite side his desire to communicate the most common or banal occurrences of daily life.

The twofold motivation of his pictorial research has lead him to produce works that are typically American. When he symbolizes reality after a lengthy reflection, he proceeds from an approach that is characteristic of contemporary art (naturally this is not a pure pictorial vision, as with Mondrian), but when he tries to integrate into these images elements which make them so, he is then nearing the pop type of painting characteristic of American art.

Besides, it is natural that this parallel be drawn. From 1955 to 1960 he lived in the United States and was a student at New York University and the New York School of Design. He decided to stay in the American metropolis after reading an article about art in the United States in "Time" magazine: the works of Robert Motherwell that had been reproduced there had greatly impressed and excited him.

In his exhibition at the Artek Gallery in the beginning of 1959 he displayed some of his New York work. His canvasses had something in common with the art of Sam Francis in these backgrounds where his stroke touched every part of the canvass. At this time the "New York School" was getting a great deal of attention, especially in view of its method of applying paint to the canvass. But the critics, regretting the school's "effects", nevertheless sensed its value and realized that this area could be explored by a painter.

Gagnon specified it in the exhibitions he held in 1960 and 1961 at Denyse Delrue's. Then he was trying to represent reality. And it can even be said that he was figurative: a painting like "Valley" is a traditional landscape, for in the canvass a house, trees, and the horizon line can be distinguished in the top part of the picture. All of these paintings were landscapes as understood in the general sense this time.

Nature was violently depicted, made forceful by bands of colour (either contrasting with the rest of the painting when they were static, or animating it with a structure suitable to creating movement, as in "Waterfield", where they are in the shape of chevrons.) And in several of the canvasses of this collection are black amorphous shapes that are the focal points of the paintings. They make us understand the great role that the image plays, or better yet, the direct allusion to reality, when we know that they represent the foetus; his wife was pregnant at the time and the entire life of the young couple was transformed because of it.

Even his symbolism can use consecrated formulas. "Shooting Gallery" hand reproduces symbols of writing, with an "s" and a "2". These are reminiscent of collages. As early as 1960, "Landscape Collage" included written letters and texts. He often called on the techniques of collage: in beginning his first works he based his paintings on squares of pure colour, and made a collage and a composition

based on a reproduction of the tomb that Michael Angelo made for the Medici family.

But the highpoint of his use of collage and ready-made objects was on the occasion of the exhibition at the Galerie XII of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in 1962. Then he displayed composition-sculptures in which were heaped up preserve jars, buttons, corks, pages of advertising, toothpaste tubes, mirrors, etc. His works contained the idea of the discovered object which had been spread by the attempts in this area of Braque and Duchamp.

However the intention was transformed: it was no longer a question of "taking hold" of cherished or admired objects, or even of causing art to return to an everyday world. By the use he made of window boxes (they could be called little drugstores with windows) Gagnon wanted to indicate his attachment to the everyday objects in which he found even beauty. By placing these derisive objects behind window panes he wanted to force the viewer to "admire" the current productions of the contemporary world, in the same way that the viewer admires "treasures" of past cultures, as when he visits the Egyptian or Chinese department of any museum.

His approach was different for the radio set he exhibited, of which only the interior was visible. From a distance the viewer had the illusion of some kind of sculpture, an illusion that was accentuated by the reflections caused by a layer of gold paint. But when he approached it, he discovered the visible superficiality. However the surprise was not complete: for an internal recording system gave forth at intervals with music befitting any good set.

Thus he wanted to force the viewer to think about the objects which are a part of his life and show him how reality is worth being explored for itself. Gagnon's creative approach was not inspired by a plastic knowledge but by a deep study of the actual environment.

This research took another form in the works he exhibited in 1964 at the Galerie Camille Hébert. They were strongly of the "tachiste" abstract style and more than ever allowed a great role to gesture. Moreover the colouring was lively and the famous "Gagnon green" for the most part dominated the canvasses.

A radical change might be indicated here, but it is sufficient to hear Gagnon speak of "precipice" indicating the thinner band of colours which steal into and completely dissect the green mass as in "The Gap". The structure of the picture can still perhaps evoke a landscape, but always with a high horizon line where nature has become savage and as hard as stone.

However his paintings were more than ever based on "the need to cling to a corner of the canvass", as Jean Cathelin had already mentioned to him as far back as 1960. From this corner rose in a pyramid alternating light and dark coloured bands.

There also appeared the main principle of composition which is found again in his most recent canvasses: the band of colour, often black, which surrounds the inner form and encloses the picture. However, as early as 1959, Jacques Folch ("Vie des Arts", printemps 1959) mentioned this "window-picture" in speaking of "Nude in a Haunted Bed".

Charles Gagnon easily explains this idea of closing the canvass by a band which is usually never put on more than three sides: "I have always been intrigued by a closed window. It allows us to remain outside the world and at the same time invites us to plunge into it. This is like the call of the precipice: the final but exciting moment of the fall whose sensation no one can explain or make us feel.

Besides, the evocation of vertigo is really present in the canvasses of 1967 or 1968 which he displayed either at the Musée d'Art Contemporain, or at the Biennial, or at "Canada 101". The viewer does not feel a movement that could be made on the surface of the painting, but it is the viewer himself who moves by seeing beneath the almost white surface that is shown him.

Gagnon has always been faithful to his solicitude to depict reality. But there has been a change: at the present time, he no longer aims at a mere transfer. His art is related to the very movement which creates life, and what the canvass offers is an experience that is similar, but condensed, of a possible reflection on the world.

The viewer is invited not only to look at the painter's thought: he is not asked to participate, but to find for himself his own interpretation of the picture. No universal way has been previously laid out for him to follow, for the canvass, like the world, leaves the individual with the freedom that he naturally has. But different from daily life, he here encounters a privileged world, where he enters into direct contact with movement: it is then possible for him to take the same approach as the painter.

The viewer can also pause in his search at any given place in the picture and remain for as long as he wants: with movement he also finds again its counterpart, which is the attachment to a still object. And the rhythm already established by the previous step is retained, with the difference that the results are no longer obvious in a gesture exterior to the man. It is the man himself who is finally searched, and the painting is a means of accomplishing the search.

And so we can speak of contemplation, or at least a contemplative attitude. All of Gagnon's painting follows this direction. The beginning of awareness occurs when the painter applies the first touches of colour. His medium, oil, has been chosen for the very reason that it allows a prolonged contact between the painter and the canvass. For Gagnon, executing a painting is "living with it" for two or three weeks. This does not include the time when the picture was being planned by drawings, collages, or by the final study.

This long dialogue between the work and the creator gives the picture its originality and makes it unique. "A painting cannot be done again, because the gesture that created it was particular to the moment of inspiration" says Gagnon.

This necessity for personal contact with the object to be made is sufficient to explain why, of the other mediums which he recently approached, he greatly enjoyed films, but found he had little taste for silk-screening.

With films, he enters directly in contact with objects that make up the environment and he must continually be present. For each picture must be chosen, framed, filmed, without counting the lengthy period when the work is taking form during the development and setting.

Today he does not have much to say about his best known film, "The Eighth Day", conceived especially for the Christian pavilion at Expo '67; "This film especially attempted to show people that all the wars of this century have been the same, that the causes and misfortunes of these wars are known by all of us, and that in spite of all this, we are still unable to avoid them. The idea behind the editing was to emphasize time, which decisively, is never noticed. People were astonished to see that, each year that covers the interval from the war of 1914 to the Vietnam war had been dealt with. However was this not the way to measure the time that had elapsed?"

He still is uncertain that he will finish his last film, which is still in the process of being edited: "It seems to me that I have learned all I had to learn from this". Does it not remain to communicate this knowledge?

But he is still quite excited by films. Which is not always true for silk-screening. A series of plates is to be displayed this winter at the Galerie Godard-Lefort. It was planned so that the viewer-work dialogue can be achieved when the viewer turns the pages in looking through the album. The viewer can see an evolution that is conducive to an increasingly direct relationship between associated forms.

Each silk-screen print, taken on its own, is especially meritorious for its plastic qualities obtained by dabs of colour applied equally all over the surface. But Gagnon will no longer work in this medium: "It is too cold". The relationship with the viewer is established only by plastic qualities "This is fine, but something is missing", says Gagnon. However, his silk-screens are dependent on a universe that is different from the one we find in his paintings.

There is a strong temptation to locate and integrate within the history of art this contemplative univers of physical and sensual dialogue which the viewer establishes with the work.

Gagnon himself will say of his painting that it is "surrealistic". But of the Surrealist painters he cares only for Magritte. This affirmation is however natural, for Surrealism takes on the meaning of "awareness of another's truth". This conception is very near the ones held by Action Painting or Automatism, but clearly different from the one which explained the art of Tanguy or Dali, where the painting is the expression of a thought or an image that is antecedent to it.

In Gagnon's work the painting could be the dedication of a given moment (as the 1964 canvasses entitled "The Third Day", and August 6, p.m. II testify.) But this moment embodied and captured will give the painter and the viewer the occasion to grasp new realities, to see new interpretations. His last works especially, justify this assertion. In a categorical sense, they seem related to the Montreal "plasticism". Yet they differ in several respects from this style of painting.

The relationship between the substance and the form of the picture, created by the black band that surrounds the canvass, recalls this same double association that is characteristic of Molinari's canvasses: but in their choice of colours the two artists stand completely free. Essentially Gagnon proceeds from a choice of black and white, whereas Molinari first experiments with the possibilities of colours.

This maximum reduction of the possibilities of the scale of colours draws him closer to Gaucher, with his last canvasses, monochromatic, and whose backgrounds are identical to the figures, the thin white bands. But in these canvasses as in those of Molinari, the viewer looks into a space that is situated before the canvass. As for Gagnon, on the other hand, space is inside, and behind the canvass. This painting could thus appear traditional. But above all it is a symbolization of the world that lets us plunge into reality and live in it.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

painting in france

BY HENRI BARRAS

A truly exceptional exhibition, "Painting in France" was held at the Musée d'art contemporain from September 14th to October 20th, 1968. It was ambitious in the monumental proportions of most of the works presented, and in the exceptional quality of the latter, and in the aim towards which the exhibition aspired: to represent painting that was done in France from 1900 to 1967.

The International Exhibitions Foundation of Washington which sponsored the exhibition and directed the tour it made of the main museums in the United States, entrusted a most difficult mission to France. At a time when a certain rivalry opposes New York and Paris, and knowing that public and private collections in the United States contain most of the master-works of 20th century French art, it would have been a simple matter for the organizers to make a colossal failure of the display. The organizers were the Musée national d'art moderne de Paris, in charge of the first section of the exhibit which gathered in 44 works what is commonly called the Masters, as compared with the artists of the period from after the Second World War to the present who were selected by the directors of the Centre national d'art contemporain de Paris. There was no question of having yet another display of the Ecole de Paris, for as M. Bernard Anthonioz notes in the introduction to the catalogue of the exhibition, "it is time to abandon this restrictive notion repeatedly claimed by the most widely opposed aesthetics", and rather instead to "perhaps allow to be evidenced the artistic permanence and vitality of France". If, moreover, the organizers rejecting the method of classification and choice by schools, movements, or tendencies, in order to "remain with individualities", achieved a brilliant demonstration of the high quality and diversity of forms of art that France developed; the exhibition "Painting in France 1900 to 1967" clearly and precisely showed that France has been the crucible and the stepping-stone of the adventure of abstract art on one hand, and that it is the forerunner on the other hand, of most of the aesthetic trends which stand out as landmarks in the young history of the evolution of modern and contemporary art. To begin with it must be admitted that the principle of this exhibition gathered not only French-born artists, but also "those who chose to live in France". But the decision of choosing individuals independently of their belonging to one or another group, and selecting the works in terms of quality alone, gives the opportunity on the other hand to show the plastic discoveries which originated in France, even if this method poses problems on the level of presentation, history, or chronology. It also allows us to discover certain aspects of an artist's art which easily escape our attention when the choice is made in terms of illustrating a movement or a school. However if the forms of expression differ on the level of the individuals, they identify all the same with some other aesthetics and the final result is that movements exist by affinities, and therefore, choosing a work is also identifying a movement. Now, without wanting to criticize the excellent choice made by the organizers, which is no doubt the best possible choice, it would have been interesting perhaps to choose the work in terms of the manner of expression with which the artist is automatically identified, and I am thinking of Jean Arp in particular, who could have been favourably represented by a surrealist or better yet, a dadaist work. Moreover, I would have wished that beside Tanguy, Ernst, Miro, Masson, Brauner, Lam, Matta, Picabia, there might have been added the works of Dali, Magritte, Chirico, Duchamp, Man Ray. In this way surrealism which, in my opinion, is one of the great events of the history of painting in France would have held the position in the heart of the exhibition, that it deserved. Perhaps this seems to contradict the attitude of the organizers which I praised in the beginning of this article. But it is further stating the problem of setting up any exhibition which is dependent on a number of factors totally foreign to the guiding principles, such as the availibility of the works, their fragility or their state of preservation, to name only a few, and not the least negligible ones. It must be pointed out that if the Musée National d'art moderne did not fear sending a few of its masterpieces, overseas the Centre national d'art contemporain could count on the intimate collaboration of most of the artists who offered works painted especially for the occasion with the result that, although all are known by a large public, and that specialists have been studying their manner of expression for some time, the exhibition appeared to contain paintings that had never been seen.

Besides, it was elating to visit because no effort to make the exhibition the vehicle of some manifesto or didactic presided at its preparation, and because each of the works contained such an emotional and awe-inspiring impact, that the attentive viewer went from painting to painting with the same delight that a child can feel in looking at a fireworks display. Because, even if in my opinion, I would have liked to see other representatives of the surrealist movement appear, and if abstract expressionism formed, properly speaking the major part of the exhibition perhaps also to the detriment of the geometric abstract and pop art movements, the entire exhibition admirably testified to "the artistic permanence and vitality of France".

The 150 works on display should all receive individual comments, but a few among them must receive special notice here. In the first part of the exhibition there were works that all came from the permanent collection of the Musée National d'art moderne de Paris, these key works whose reproductions at least, are familiar to everyone, which regularly serve as pocket book covers and that every historian chooses to illustrate his articles. But there were also a few like "The Montmagny Garden" painted by Maurice Utrillo near 1909 which I think is one of the master-works of the artist. A painter of the streets of Montmarte, of great white compositions, these works too often resemble pretty postcards. But in this painting, the nervous and gloomy touch of the half-stripped trees, the treatment of the great facade by strokes that are quick, but painted by a full brush set in motion by the dark openings, the side wall without any relief other than that given by the light of a bright white recalls the glorious hours of impressionism and already indicates the colourless style of the haunted compositions of the end of his life. "The Dancer" by Van Dongen painted around 1907, stands proud, arrogant, mocking, vulgar. "The Groom" by Soutine with its deformed face and hands, in a vivid red uniform that stands out against a bluish background, forcefully expresses the intense emotion of a low-born child, forced to work, but the front view of the subject which fills the entire canvass brings out a majesty that glorifies the condition of these creatures forced to serve other human beings. The "Double Portrait with Wine-glass" painted in 1917 by Marc Chagall must be mentioned. This painting which was done when he returned to Russia, on the occasion of a wedding anniversary is a portrait of the artist and his wife, Bella. It is the most masterful example of the Chagall fantasy and dream. It contains all of the particular components of the artist's expression: fantasy, humour, light, unreality, and popular imagery.

In this first section of the exhibition, the "Theatre Curtain for a Parade" by Picasso, the "Panneau de l'entrée du Hall des Réseaux" by Robert Delaunay, the "Composition with Two Parrots" by Fernand Léger must also be noted. These monumentally important works deserve to be described at length; the historical importance in terms of form and plastic values of each one of them should be pointed out. I will simply stress the fact along with M. Antonioz that "modern art attempts to shatter psychological as well as material limits that impede the artist; it wants to adhere to the world, to architecture as well as town-planning; it dreams of the scientific and cosmic universe." Is this not the desire of present artists and that towards which art is being oriented?

I have already mentioned that abstract expressionism constituted the major part of the exhibition. This underscores the importance of the movement which began in France in the years 1940-1948 with the works of Hartung, Wels, Klein, Soulages, Mathieu, and Rioppelle, and spread in all of Europe, and in the United States, gave birth to "action painting". No doubt the exhibition was to bear evidence of this fact and also to mark the persistance of the movement in France, when in North America especially it has somewhat receded from the present scene to give way to geometric, pop, and op art.

"Painting in France", at the request of Mrs. John A. Pope the president of the International Exhibitions Foundation of Washington, was prepared for the leading museums of the United States. It was to have been presented in the five following institutions: National Gallery of Art, Washington; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Art Institute of Chicago; The Detroit Institute of Arts. However, thanks to the efficacious collaboration between the Services culturels du Consulat général in Quebec and the Service de la Coopération avec l'extérieur du Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Quebec, the Musée d'art contemporain was able to present to the public of Montreal, and Quebec city, this exhibition which is no doubt the most important French display ever to be held in Canada. It also gives the Musée d'art contemporain the occasion, as soon as it opens in its marvellous permanent buildings at Cité du Havre, to visit with the most famous museums of the United States. This is not only a title to fame, but it is a terrible responsibility.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

bruno bobak

PAR LUKE ROMBOUT

Le mouvement de l'art actuel nous absorbe à un point tel qu'il est devenu difficile, sinon impossible, à un grand nombre d'entre nous, spectateurs, critiques d'art, conservateurs de musées et marchands de tableaux, de nous maintenir à la page dans tous les aspects des arts plastiques, les reflets, les sons, la lumière, éléments qui donnent à l'art contemporain ces qualités de vibration et de dynamisme que nous connaissons.

L'agitation de l'art moderne demande une présence exigeante et souvent bousculée, de sorte qu'il devient difficile de prendre un certain recul permettant de jeter un coup d'œil en arrière. Cependant, quand d'aventure il nous arrive de faire une telle pause, il est possible d'apprécier dans une mise au point plus claire de la réalité le travail de quelques très bons peintres qui se tiennent à l'extérieur du courant actuel. La vision romantique à la fois lyrique et détendue de Bruno Bobak est une expression visuelle qui, au Canada du moins, semble peu appréciée et peu prise au sérieux. Il semble absurde qu'un critique d'art doive se défendre d'écrire au sujet d'un artiste qui connaît bien son métier, qui traduit visuellement notre société d'une façon significative, qui a une conception très juste de cette société et dont l'intégrité sur le plan de l'art est indiscutable. En face des exigences des diverses formes de l'art contemporain dont à peu près toutes lui étaient contraires, il n'a pas cru bon de dévier de sa propre conception de l'art et de sa façon de voir les problèmes. Je pense que sa ténacité, sa façon d'être fidèle à lui-même, se reflètent de différentes manières tout le long de sa carrière.

"L'expression" est la clé de son œuvre. La distorsion et l'exagération, la qualité émotive des couleurs sont des éléments de l'expressionnisme en peinture. Dans ce sens, il s'agit d'une formule connue qui explique, ainsi que j'ai été à même de le constater à Londres récemment, le rappel de l'anathème dont fut frappé Kokoschka.

Ce que fait Bobak au moyen du style expressionniste pose un problème différent. Sa conception de la vie est complexe et très intensément ressentie; il raconte la plupart du temps des expériences personnelles qu'il transpose en accords oscillant entre la dépression et la tristesse ou l'enchantement et le charme avec, entre ces deux modes et en sourdine, quelques intermèdes sensuels. Actuellement, cette qualité de tristesse et de désenchantement donne à son graphisme une forte agressivité; je dis bien "actuellement" parce que l'intérêt qu'il a porté antérieurement au paysage s'est peu à peu déplacé pour se porter vers la figure. Cette coïncidence est peut-être significative en un temps où la figure, surtout au Canada, redevient un mode d'expression valable en peinture. Les figures de Bobak vivent pour une large part dans un monde existentiel — personnages seuls à la recherche de leur identité. Ses peintures, cependant, ne comportent aucun message ni aucune réponse emphatique, alors même qu'il en observe les personnages (hommes ou femmes) avec sympathie. Sa compassion, même si ce mot dépasse un peu la pensée, est faite d'une perception aiguë du réel et de l'analyse — d'une vision claire — plus que de sentimentalité.

Son œuvre est de tendance romantique en dépit d'un style abondant, d'une utilisation particulière des couleurs et d'un coup de pinceau à la fois puissant et doux. En somme, ses personnages sont solitaires et désespérés cependant que, dans une tout autre veine, il glorifie des amoureux à l'intérieur d'un paysage ou un enfant portant des fleurs. A cause du contenu autobiographique de ses tableaux (s'étendant des amoureux aux scènes de suicide) une image exacte de l'artiste lui-même se reflète dans toutes ses peintures. Son registre visuel donne une idée exacte de l'homme qu'il est ou de celui qu'il voudrait être. Il se voit avec une sorte de mépris; ainsi quand il se peint lui-même sous les traits d'un amoureux, ses tableaux ne sont pas dépourvus d'un certain cynisme.

Les divers éléments de ses compositions picturales sont conventionnels et ordonnés. J'ai découvert avec surprise qu'Antoine Watteau est un des peintres favoris de Bobak; de même, ai-je été surpris d'apprendre par Iain Baxter qu'il a été et qu'il est peut-être encore fortement influencé par Morandi, qui lui a fourni les principaux éléments de ses compositions. Bien que les peintures de Bobak donnent l'impression d'un travail rapide et direct, il prend en réalité des mois à terminer un tableau, superposant lentement couches après couches de peinture. Au cours de ce long processus, il en transforme souvent complètement les éléments figuratifs. Bobak est très fort en art graphique, ses dessins, surtout ses bois, le classent très près de l'école des expressionnistes allemands. Peu d'artistes au Canada emploient la discipline de la gravure sur bois et parmi ceux qui se servent de ce medium les rivaux de Bobak, s'il s'en trouve, sont peu nombreux. Il travaille en larges dimensions, il grave avec précision et force ses images figuratives qui prennent souvent un aspect sculptural. Ses qualités de dessinateur à la fois dans ses peintures et dans son œuvre graphique sont faites de connaissances précises. Sa façon de manier les figures dessinées avec économie de lignes et d'expressions est toujours positive. La forte présence de ces figures suggère souvent le procédé de la troisième dimension.

On a souvent l'impression que, dans les Maritimes, on continue à s'intéresser au régionalisme. A mon avis, quelques cas seulement peuvent motiver une telle impression. Dans le cas de Bobak, il serait absurde de penser que cet artiste peint ce qu'il peint parce qu'il vit au Nouveau-Brunswick. Qu'il travaille à Londres, à l'île de Majorque ou en Grèce, endroits où il a beaucoup peint ces dernières années, sa conception de l'art reste la même. Il voyage beaucoup et il a tenu avec succès des expositions en Angleterre et en Scandinavie. Il considère que le calme de Fredericton est propice à son travail parce que là seulement il peut travailler dans le calme et sans crainte d'être dérangé. Pour les canadiens qui observent de loin les Maritimes, la vie ici peut sembler sclérosée; l'œuvre de Bobak, entre autres, prouve qu'il n'en est pas ainsi.

Traduction: Lucile Ouimet

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le coeur de london

PAR GEOFFREY JAMES

La ville de London, en Ontario, ainsi que ses alentours quelque peu somnolents sont devenus un centre du non-conformisme. A Saint-Thomas, un fermier nommé Dan Patterson a construit un oratoire avec des boîtes de lait Carnation bien avant la découverte des boîtes de soupe Campbell par André Warhol. A Goderich, un autre fermier du nom de George Laithwaite a exécuté dans la pierre et le ciment des statues de la reine de Saba, d'Hitler et de Mussolini. A London même, la femme d'un ministre protestant a exposé des portraits-miniature sur ivoire dans une veine traditionnelle, d'une perfection qui laisse perplexes les professionnels de l'art. Cependant, London ne semble pas apprécier à sa juste valeur cet art original. La Colonie d'artistes qui vivote dans cette ville et aussi les étrangers se rendent vite compte de l'indifférence et même, en certains cas, de l'hostilité que manifeste la population envers les éléments créateurs de cette communauté. En relisant d'anciens éditoriaux publiés dans le Free Press (un journal qui illustre parfaitement le dicton voulant qu'aucun groupement canadien ne puisse réussir à être aussi ennuyeux que les journaux qu'il lit) on a l'impression que le seul fait de manier un pinceau devient en quelque sorte un acte subversif. La London Public Library and Art Gallery n'aide pas à changer les choses. La politique du comité des achats de cette respectable et sérieuse institution ne semble gouvernée que par la devise "toujours la politesse". Il est toutefois étonnant qu'un des groupes artistiques les plus intéressants du Canada arrive à trouver refuge dans cette ville de 15,000 habitants. La Galerie Nationale du Canada a reconnu ce fait lorsqu'elle a organisé une exposition intinérante de onze artistes intitulée: "The Heart of London" qui se déplacera de London même à Kingston, Victoria, Edmonton et Charlottetown.

William Seitz, de Brandeis University, qui a voyagé à travers le Canada à la recherche de tableaux pour la 7eme Biennale de la Galerie Nationale du Canada, a reconnu "la nécessité de préserver les expériences régionales afin qu'elles ne soient pas perdues dans le grand courant de l'interdépendance croissante des nouveaux médium de communication instantanée". Cela ne veut pas dire qu'il existe quelque chose comme un "style London" même si ces artistes ont beaucoup de choses en commun et forment un petit groupe très uni. Presque tous les lundis soirs, par exemple, au moins la moitié des artistes qui exposent se réunissent dans le salon "Ladies and Escorts" du York Hotel pour une manifestation hebdomadaire du groupe "London Nihilist Spasm Band". Là, au milieu des papiers peints en rose, des lierres de matière plastique, d'une murale de Venise, le peintre Greg Curnoe dirige un orchestre au moyen de son "Kazoo" perfectionné, électrifié et multicolore. Cette musique à haut décibel, cousine du "New Thing Jazz" devient du bruit pur à valeur thérapeutique; c'est une invective jetée à la face de London. Curnoe est aussi un des nombreux présidents du "Nihilist Party of London," le seul parti qui prend au sérieux le mot parti. Une fois par année, les membres organisent un pique-nique; rien ne manque: lutte, courses, discours.

Pierre Théberge, assistant-conservateur de l'art canadien à la Galerie Nationale du Canada et organisateur de l'exposition, assistait au dernier pique-nique *"où j'ai fait un discours en français à la façon de Charles de Gaulle qui fut bien reçu, fort bien reçu."* A part ces manifestations néo-Dada, ces artistes font partie de la Galerie 20/20 où *"nous ne faisons pas d'argent mais qui nous permet d'exposer"*, dit Murray Favro. Le groupe s'exprime aussi sur le plan littéraire dans la revue mensuelle 20 Cents Magazine (25 cents au Canada, gratuite ailleurs).

Malgré leur sens profond de la fraternité, ces artistes demeurent autonomes sur le plan de l'art. Trois de ceux qui exposent sont dans

la trentaine, les autres sont dans la vingtaine et, bien entendu, le plus âgé est le chef de groupe. Curnoe est le gourou incontesté du cénacle. C'est un charmant anarchiste qui témoigne beaucoup d'intérêt à ses amis artistes. Il est le fondateur du "Spasm Band" et de l'association et semble porter le poids du mépris que "l'Establishment" de London porte à ce groupe. L'œuvre de Curnoe a trois tendances, ainsi qu'on peut le constater à l'exposition. Dans ses collages, il utilise les déchets de London — additions de bars, tickets d'autobus, bulletins de vote de l'élection de l'évêque du diocèse de Huron — ces éléments sont encadrés dans des formes de têtes humaines. Curnoe se rapproche du Pop art quand il décore ses tableaux de textes écrits sur London, ses amis et ses passe-temps. C'est un amateur de boxe, il est aussi membre de la "Wing foot Lighter-than-Air Society, "une société consacrée aux joies de l'aéronautique et surtout du dirigeable." Plus récemment, Curnoe a fait des "word-paintings", descriptions imagées et pittoresques de ses impressions, de ses sentiments ou d'un paysage au moyen de lettres calquées sur une toile de couleurs. Lors d'une récente exposition à Edimbourg ces œuvres ne furent considérées qu'à titre de jolis objets. Curnoe aurait préféré que ces œuvres eussent été lues.

Jack Chambers comme Curnoe est né à London, bien qu'il fasse de longs séjours en Espagne. On peut souvent voir les merveilleux dessins de Chambers chez les artistes; ce sont de discrets paysages exécutés au crayon au moyen de la délicate technique du pointillisme dans lesquels aucune ligne n'est perceptible. A l'exposition, Chambers a abandonné ses nostalgiques tableaux néo-édouardiens à la sépia pour la technique négatifs-positifs; ces œuvres ressemblent à de grands daguerréotypes couleur argent. "The Hart of London" est une huile comprenant une série de dessins au crayon placés au bas de la toile sur un côté. Comme plusieurs autres œuvres de Chambers faites d'après des photographies, cette toile évoque la capture d'un cerf échappé du bois et qui erre à travers London. Deux femmes montrent l'animal du doigt tandis qu'un homme court avec une corde — sujet simple si l'on veut, mais ce tableau est obsédant, symbolique et quelque peu troublant. Comme plusieurs artistes, Chambers a fait des expériences avec le film et il a tourné une section de film d'après des poses fixes prises dans son jardin; il expose quelques pieds tous les jours afin de montrer le changement constant de l'environnement.

Curnoe veut absolument faire un film sur Chambers. "Je veux le photographier dans son studio, de l'autre côté de la rue" dit Curnoe. "On le verra ainsi qu'une ombre. Je peux même le photographier à travers la fenêtre alors qu'il n'est pas là".

Tony Urquhart, le troisième des artistes de trente ans, professeur à la Western Onati Ontario University, a vécu confortablement pendant des années du produit de ses paysages inspirés. Ses ventes ont considérablement diminué récemment alors qu'il s'est mis à exécuter d'abord des tableaux agressifs aux larges dimensions et ensuite des peintures en "trois-dimensions" ainsi, qu'il les appelle. Ces derniers tableaux représentent des objets noirs-noirs dans tous les sens du mot. "*Nostalgia Toy, The Black Game*" est un caillou acrylique parsemé de clous et recouvert de petites images de guerre; Two Hills 1966 possède le même pouvoir de répulsion; c'est une colonne noire à texture caillouteuse qui évoque les suites d'une explosion nucléaire.

Le groupe des artistes plus jeunes représente un vigoureux mélange de fantaisie et de talent. Le seul autodidacte du groupe, John Boyle, couvre de peinture des personnages sur pied qu'il a découpés — c'est du Pop brut et non transposé. Londonien paisible, Murray Favro est un bricoleur invétéré. Au cours des trois dernières années, il a construit un Sabrejet F-86 demi-grandeur; c'est une passion de jeunesse qu'il a toujours conservée. Il présente à l'exposition une guitare électrique qu'il fabrique pour le "spasm band" ainsi que deux tableaux: *Clunk* et *Sproing* exécutés sur des formes en masonite qui évoquent une leçon de Pop Art à la manière aérodynamique. "Elles sont amusantes à regarder, dit Favro, mais elles proviennent d'un rêve que j'ai fait alors que j'étudiais la physique." Bev Kelly, originaire de l'Ouest canadien et qui est retourné dans les Prairies, construit de fantaisistes fenêtres, complètes avec cadres, stores et, naturellement, le paysage. Ron Martin, le plus éclectique du groupe, semble un peu illuminé en ce moment. Coloriste de talent, il poursuit des expériences au moyen d'un éventail de couleurs de forme triangulaire qu'il peint par couples pour des raisons purement métaphysiques. Les sculpteurs de London forment aussi des couples. David et Royden Rabinowitch sont deux réfugiés de 25 ans venant de la banlieue de Toronto et que les studios de London loués à $30.00 par mois ont attirés. David expose une seule pièce, une espèce de gros tank aux bords arrondis, une composition tout à fait équivoque que ses amis, en blaguant, ont pris pour un gros appareil électrique. Royden se sert aussi du métal, mais il le transforme dans des ateliers de soudure en des formes élégantes, souples et extensibles. Les frères Rabinowitch, comme la plupart des artistes de London, ont beaucoup d'énergie et de dynamisme, après l'ouverture de l'exposition, le couple s'est rendu à Waterloo University où on lui avait commandé un magnifique et inutile amoncellement de 2,500 blocs de neige reliés par des clôtures de neige et surmontés de bandes de métal à la Möbius. Walter Redinger et Ed Zelenak travaillent ensemble, même si leurs directions sont différentes. Les deux hommes et leurs femmes ont financé eux-mêmes une construction monumentale en cultivant le tabac; ils ont aussi bâti leurs ateliers de 1,600 pieds carrés qu'ils ont placés dos à dos avec, attenant à ces ateliers, leur maison d'habitation, le tout situé au milieu du bois de West Lorne. Ils travaillent tous deux avec une énergie féroce, Redinger au moyen de la fibre de verre exécute des formes manifestement sexuelles, Zelenak travaille sur de grandes structures de contre-plaqué brut. Contrairement aux citoyens de London, ces deux sculpteurs sont obsédés par le temps qui passe et la nécessité de créer et en même temps d'éliminer. "Nous avons l'impression de vivre à même un temps qui nous est prêté", dit Redinger qui, comme Zelenak, est âgé de 28 ans. Curnoe, ainsi que plusieurs autres artistes ont cette impression. La plupart des artistes de London pensent la même chose: l'époque où l'artiste pouvait vivre de sa peinture est à peu près révolue. Quelques-uns arrivent à vivre grâce à l'enseignement et tous, sauf un, ont reçu l'an dernier, des bourses du Conseil des Arts du Canada. Il y a peu d'espoir que la ville de London ne subventionne le groupe — la ville est reconnue pour avoir 200 millionnaires, mais peu d'entre eux daignent même jeter les yeux sur les artistes locaux. Il est également dommage que cette exposition, *The Heart of London*, ne soit pas montrée dans les grandes villes du Canada. Un excellent substitut est cependant offert à ceux qui ne pourront voir l'exposition, c'est un catalogue conçu à la façon de bandes dessinées qui réussit jusqu'à un certain point à capter l'extraordinaire vitalité et l'enthousiasme de onze artistes perdus dans un milieu qui les refuse.

Traduction: Lucile Ouimet

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andré lhote

BY CLAUDE-LYSE GAGNON

Painting and writing....a consuming passion.
André Lhote 1885-1962.
Excerpt from "LES INVARIANTS PLASTIQUES" by André Lhote presented by Jean Cassou.
"This is painting, a mental thing, a mental realm. And the manner in which it defined itself at a certain time in its history, the time of cubism, did assert more authoritatively, completely, and finally than did the words of Leonardo da Vinci, that painting is an exercise of the mind." (J. Cassou)

André Lhote lived the adventure of cubism completely — He saw it mainly as a technique to regenerate form — thus something quite different from the "pessimistic refusal of reality". His retrospective in October-November at the Waddington-Bonaventure, captures the frantic pace of modern life, and leaves us the memory of a still very eloquent plea for colour — colour which becomes rhythm and form.

"His two dearest, and perhaps his oldest friends were Jacques Rivière and Alain Fournier. One day I shall publish their letters. . .", muses Mme Simone André Lhote as she speaks with us. We are in the Waddington Gallery at Place Bonaventure, strolling by the canvasses of this painter who also achieved distinction as a theoretician and a professor. Her stylishly short hair that is turning to grey, her clear, blue eyes suggest that when she met the artist in 1929, 1930, she must have been a remarkably beautiful woman. She is still quite slim, holds her head high, and has a nimble step.

"He stopped writing to Jacques Rivière when M. Rivière rented accommodations in the same house in which we were living in Paris. At that time, they saw one another every day and their conversations were very lively. When André was not working, he was very entertaining. He was found of playing tricks and joking. He loved his friends and was very loyal to them, every Thursday when he entertained them was a holiday."

Leaning over some photographs, letters, and books on display at the gallery, Mme Lhote points out to me a letter from Jean Cocteau. "They were very good friends until about 1930. They corresponded regularly. But, about that time, Jean Cocteau became very popular. He moved in all the fashionable circles, and attended all the society parties. André was not a society man. They grew apart. His friends at this time included André Salmon, Jacques Superville, Braque. . . The most extensive correspondance that he engaged in however, was with Jean Paulhan. They became acquainted with one another at the Nouvelle Revue française. Jean

Paulhan was the editor and André was an unfailing contributor to it from 1917 to the second World War. He discussed his articles and his criticisms at great length with Jean Paulhan. They did not always agree and that pleased them for it meant that they would then engage in further such endless discussions.

As we pass by such and such a canvass, she recalls that it was painted near Mirmande, on a summer day, and that another was done at Gordes after the war, when he founded an art centre there. A third painting reminds her of a trip they made to Brazil. . .

"He had a passion for old houses, that all painters feel, and we had four of them. My favourite one is the house in Mirmande, in the department of Drôme, the region is so lovely. I have sold the one in Gordes now, and when I am not traveling I always live in Paris."

More intimately, she confides, "he used to work constantly. Either he was painting, teaching, or writing. And I always had to be at his side. If I went out he thought that I had been too long in getting back. When I went to do some shopping, he always asked me at what time I would return. Basically he was an anguished person. He needed people around him. I think that is why he loved teaching so much, although he often repeated that he was orienting his students without forcing them in one direction rather than another.

Among his numerous pupils, who studied with him either at his academy in Paris, or at Gordes, let us point out a very well-known Montrealer, Agnès Lefort. I visited her in her little house in St. Eustache, where in several of her canvasses one can distinguish the influence of André Lhote.

"In the summer of 1948 I studied with André Lhote. I spent the season at Gordes, near Avignon. At that time he was living in an old house that he had restored on the hillside. I lived in the village and several times a week I went to see him to show him my work. You had to be serious about painting to take lessons from him. . . He was a rather slight man, warm but not coy. He never gave undeserved compliments, however we felt that he was devoted and attentive.

Showing me a dedication he inscribed, she continued; "He said that no one can claim mastery without geometry. Let us say that my nature draws me to something more flexible than geometry, but when I studied with him, I willingly yielded to his influence in order to really learn. I keep a memory of a great Frenchman, a wonderful painter, an exacting professor. He always had the right word: It was extraordinary to hear him. He was a learned man. I wonder if I would have opened my gallery without his instruction.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

At the Musée des Arts Décoratifs
300 chairs tell the story of modern art

BY PAQUERETTE VILLENEUVE

"LES ASSISES DU SIEGE CONTEMPORAIN" (THE SITTINGS OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHAIR): 300 chairs exhibited for four months in one of the greatest museums in Paris, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs which, as its name does not indicate, is the most turbulent of French museums. The idea of making a survey of the evolution of our taste since the first World War with the help of 300 chairs is certainly unusual. This audacious exhibition really gave one an outline of the panorama of contemporary trends in interior decoration, it also allows one to understand to what point an object as common-place as a chair is dependent upon the great artistic currents of the period in which it was made.

The chair: this single object tells us a great deal about our present psychology. We say "sit down" to a guest when we want to offer our hospitality. The chair is a reflection of the home, of the design of the way of life.

In his presentation, François Mathey, the curator of the museum, writes, "Faithful to the program to which it is devoted — the propagation and promotion of art in its differing expressions, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs offers under the title "les assises du siege contemporain" a review of the international conditions in this domain. The title of the display, in the measure of the programme, is ambitious, but as well, the humour to which it testifies is a form of modesty which is suitable to great undertakings."

Indeed it is quite an undertaking to make chairs provide information. What can we learn from them? A long, sometimes sad, sometimes marvelous story of our evolution seen and interpreted by creative men. Retracing their steps we return to about 1920 with the simplified line, dear to the Bauhaus school, with its present extensions, then we go from Max Bill and Marcel Breuer to Charles Eames and Harry Bertoia and Alvar Aalto, who were all inspired by functionalism, to the present, to inflatable furniture, the latest style in furnishings, and the fur couch of Marc de Rosny, and the bizarre, soft compositions of the sculptor César. Is sitting a function or a pleasure? From the rationalism of the period between the wars to the baroque romanticism of our society of abundance, we find a range of creations which sought to answer one or another requirement of this question.

The feeling which takes hold of the visitors in front of these hundreds of armchairs that are round, square, shaped like an egg or a spoon, an ant, or an elephant, short or high-backed, narrow, with a deep or small seat, with long or very short legs, scarcely fits in with the respect due the surroundings. These seats provoke an irresistible desire to try them all out, in a word to sit down. From this arises the humour and the truth of the title: LES ASSISES (THE SITTINGS) . . . ! What sensation does one experience in the Astronef by Narenta and Olivier Marc, a sort of bathtub with a television set placed on the edge, or in the inflatable armchairs or cardboard chair by Don Bartlett that is set up like a child's game, or in the egg-shaped armchair of Eero Aarnio, this half-shell in which one sinks comfortably and which presents the exterior world to us like a show from which we are separated by a layer of insulation on the interior wall, creating a light and very pleasant sound-proofing?

In the course of our visit, we recognize a few works that were shown in Montreal during Expo '67. At first there were the aluminium structured armchairs by Walter Pichler, and then the chairs that Olivier Mourgue exhibited in the French pavilion whose curves were designed to follow the gracious lines of the human body.

The list of materials used says a great deal about the spirit of research of the designers. The materials range from simple varnished wood to inflatable polyvinyl coverings and includes rattan, wire, lacquered cardboard, plexiglass, stainless steel, aluminium, plywood, and all the range of plastics with mysterious names — polyurethane foam, polyester resin, acrinolibristirol, etc. Everyone has participated here, painters, sculptors, architects, designers, and even engineers, in the exhibition we find the armchairs of Ngyen Quasar who participated in the construction of the Manicouagan Dam. There are entries from Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Germany, France, the United States, England, and Italy, which prove how rich and varied is the effort expended to provide the house of the XXth century with objects that complement it.

The excellent introduction to the catalogue, due to Madame Yvette Amic, also praises the manufacturers and distributors who, because they believed in the new forms, had the daring to distribute these armchairs to the public. Let us give honour where honour is due, and mention the name of Florence Knoll first, Knoll is synonymous with the best modern classicism, Knoll spread the good word of the Bauhaus school: function before everything.

The modern adventure begins with the growth of functionalism, this school of thought which as far back as 1920 effected the union of the research of the German Bauhaus school, the Dutch Stijil, and the New Spirit illiustrated by Le Corbusier. The paintings of Piet Mondrian (one of the leading proponents of Stijil) are the first to determine the form and colour of furnishings in the XXth century. Reacting against the very feminine and curved style which had prevailed in the decorative arts since 1900 under the influence of the French, the Italians, and the Belgians, the architects and researchers of the more industrialized northern countries sought the triumph of the severity of the purity of line, of the magnification of the function of the object; *a chair should be a chair*, function became imperative, the role of the object was of utmost importance and should be the first concern of the designer, the *notion* of the original purpose becomes the source of the style.

Another factor arises. As a reaction to the too costly and decorative wealth of the workmanship, a product is sought that can be mass-manufactured according to the laws of the contemporary economy.

This movement was very dynamic and today it still greatly influences the style of furnishings.

In Helsinki, Alvar Aalto, the architect whose individuality bears no little resemblance to the great masters of the Italian Renaissance, beginning in 1930 created furniture that remained simple, but he used warmer materials. Imbued in all his work is the landscape of his native Finland with its great lake areas, whose shores are bordered by tall shivering birch trees whose leaves reflect in the water; he imagines chairs and foot stools of this birch wood that reflect light with an infinite softness. The use of birch lets the form sing for this very supple wood can turn its curving laminations to good

account, it can be worked to wed the form of the body. The success obtained by the creations of Aalto at the Paris exhibition in 1937 were to mark the beginning of the infatuation with Scandinavian furniture. This furniture is erroneously lumped together under the term "Swedish"; two of its main creators were Finlanders; the difference between the two is that Finland has for a long time been under the administration of Sweden and after all, it is only fair to do justice to its originality.

As versatile as Aalto's approach was it did not remain any less a tributary of Functionalism whose rigidity could not be everlasting, the rupture with the past, with the curve, the free decorative element, had existed since the time of the Bauhaus; with imaginations overflowing the designers finally felt inclined to explore new paths. Then there appeared unprecedented forms and profound conceptions. Can elegance be obtained only with straight lines, rectangles, and squares? No. This masculine era of the leather armchair, of the armchair that isn't "chatty" was beaten down in a few years. Hippie chairs are still not being made, but interiors where a soft delirium is added to the comfort and pleasure of the room are being designed. The desire for new things proper to the consumer society is a blessing for the artist tempted by the baroque.

In any case one no longer sits down in the same manner. The development of industrial labour has forced people to change their secular habits, and the particular weariness it causes requires norms of comfort superior to those previously required. The armchair should be a place of relaxation; the back muscles, the small of the back, the knee joints, the weight of the legs are more important today. Therefore, that multiplies the functions which designers must bear in mind, the needs they must satisfy.

Curiously enough, it is not necessarily the client who can define these requirements. One does grow accustomed to a certain kind of comfort, this is not an innate thing. Formerly comfort was often born of a feeling for familiar objects; a new object, due to one of the whims of human atavism arousing more often a feeling of fear than pleasure. But the style of modern life has permitted us to more and more easily pass through the intermediary steps, and today the idea of sitting on an ensemble of polyurethane foam balls called Relaxaire does not frighten anyone.

Having reached this point in the article, the reader can easily realize that the exhibition presented by François Mathey is more than an ordinary artistic display; it is a thought-provoking confrontation between an object to which we usually grant only a very relative importance, and the real meaning which this object has in our life.

The last word in furnishing is inflatable furniture, of course. One of the French designers, M. Jean Aubert, an architect who helped to organize the exhibition of inflatable structures which took place last year at the Musée d'Art Moderne of Paris, showed me an inflatable pouf in his rue d'Arsonval workshop. When one needs an extra piece of furniture, one inflates what appears to be a plastic envelope that has been stored flat in a drawer, and behold, the matter is settled. After your guest has left, simply deflate and store it again.

In all likelihood, the armchairs and poufs which Jean Aubert designed in collaboration with Jean Paul Jungmann and Antoine Stinco will be distributed this winter by Dunlop. For the time being, an armchair is selling for 250F but the designers consider that the prices should go down to as low as 150F, that is to say $30 for a huge armchair in plastic material partly covered by fluffy nylon, a kind of imitation velvet which is more pleasing to the touch. The poufs are selling at 40F (8 dollars) but it is understood that the Prisunic chain stores will bring them out at half the price.

If one should happen to burn an inflatable armchair with a cigarette, or if some malevolent friend should stick a pin in it, there is no problem: a piece of scotch tape is sufficient to stop the air leak. The most original aspect of this furniture is emphasized by M. Aubert: "this chair is related to the psychology of people" he says kicking at the prototype that is in his workshop. "You can make a game of it and throw it around if you like. You also can get some very pretty luminous effects from it. However, whatever the future of this discovery, it cannot detract from the preceding works in their plastic qualities. The inflatable armchair should not replace everything". M. Aubert insists. The furniture which we are creating has a new look but a chair by Bertoia distributed by Knoll, because of its beauty of line, is considered by criteria which remain perfectly valid.

It would be desirable for an exhibition of this kind to be adapted for a Canadian museum since it emphasizes one of the original and not necessarily one of the best known aspects of contemporary creativity.

In her catalogue Madame Amic writes, "In France, the situation is alas very different and it is not exaggerated to say that with a very few exceptions the work of the most original designers who were in their prime between 1940 and 1960 has practically disappeared, or has not even been produced. Is not the most convincing document in the case the project of the chair of moulded plywood that was drawn as far back as 1944 by Dumond and Sognot, but reamined a cardboard model since no manufacturer even wanted to examine it."

Today the initiative of Canada Design, which awards a label of quality to designers and manufacturers, permits the recognition of the work done in the country. Moreover the distribution by C.I.L. of polyurethane for the construction of elegant and functional furniture at competitive prices allows people of average incomes to have access to a contemporary style that for a long time was reserved to the great foyers of hotels, to the offices of businessmen, or to the homes of industrials who chose "style" furnishings.

What remains is the encouragement of the development of an art that would not merely be dependent on exterior influences; the information of the public seems the best way to provide such encouragement and an exhibition like the one at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, the most stimulating example.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

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interview with henri chopin

BY MARIE-FRANCE O'LEARY

Q. — What made you decide to leave France permanently?

A. — That is extremely simple. As you know, I publish a magazine whose characteristic feature is the individual's complete freedom of language, of opinion, and of imagination. Now, when the events of May-June occurred, these events, encompassing the "salary demands", the "political parties, groups, and other organizations", yielded even more to a new spirit — to poetry created by everyone, to the transformation of life (we would do well to recall here the names of Rimbaud, Lautréamont, Apollinaire, etc . . .) rather than to our politicians, and political and social structures. This revolution, which is not exclusively French has characteristics going well beyond the "consumer societies" and it surpasses the "unitary socialisms" whose inevitable failures are known today.

In short, this revolution aspires to a new way of living rather than to the established states which channel life towards the eternal salary demand which always equates exploitation by labour; it leaves far from it the almost racist categories of workers, intellectuals etc., to discover nothing but the individual; this revolution seeks to free itself from the eternal submissions to the centralized authorities of states, and it challenges the latter which have fostered wars, murders, and emotional, moral, and real prisons which WE NO LONGER UNDERSTAND. In plain language, this revolution no longer accepts the Mussolinis, Hitlers, Stalins, Brejnevs, de Gaulles, Francos, Salazars, Johnsons, and so many others who are only outgrowths of ideological or capitalistic systems, and not at all men. Finally, in actual fact, this revolution, if it is one, is a recognition that everyone's life is extraordinary and immensely important, and so the slogans proclaim: "Let's put imagination in power", "It is forbidden to forbid", and affirm "We don't give a hang about borders". These are mottos which are subordinated to the futurist and dadaist affirmations and to the even more recent ones which are expressed by the new languages of which we shall speak later. All these reasons combine to oblige me, as the editor of a completely free magazine, to take my distance from the small minded repressions which France is experiencing today.

Q. — Why did you choose London?

A. — Because England is an island, it has protected itself to this day from continental fascisms, and this situation will last for some time to come unless the shaky economy of capitalist systems. . . .?

Besides, this choice is temporary. To be honest I find it difficult to believe that one European country alone can respond to the vast breath of planetary creation which animates us, and furthermore, I believe in countries whose horizon is broad. Let us say that this choice affords me a respite and is presently under study. One repercussion finally: my wife who has been a French citizen since 1952, had her French citizenship withdrawn without apparent reason in this last year, she is once again British.

Q. — Tell us about the origins of the magazine *OU* and its evolution, findings, and goals.

A. — In 1958 after lengthy personal considerations disputing the values of a humanist world, and no doubt influenced by the impact

made by Mallarmé, the Zutists, the dadaists, and Antonin Artaud, questioning speech itself, and its classifications, questioning moreover the value of accepted societies (Before publishing the magazine, I had lived in the Soviet Union, in capitalist countries, and countries of the Third-World), refusing the "one true God" of monotheistic systems, and the religious, moral, social, and political authorities from whatever source they may come, I agreed to accept the editorship of the magazine *Cinquième Saison* which was then quite small.

I liked its title, a season beyond the others, and its subtitle: a review of evolutional poetry, to which I added: a review of experimental poetry. In this magazine then, I compared the two worlds of art and poetry. The first, the world of poetry of consummation (sic) the one that concerned the official edition was embodied by the work of des Guillevic, Jean Rousselot, Alain Bosquet, etc. The second, the world of true poetry, which seeks, and naturally finds, and seeks again, was furthered by both older and younger poets. Let us mention: Jean Arp, Pierre-Albert-Birot, Man Ray, Raoul Hausmann, Michel Seuphor, Arthur Petronio, among the older poets, including the works of poets no longer living like Schwitters, whose work I presented in galleries in 1960, which was unusual at that time, and also Morgenstern, Scheerbart, and the Polish futurist Anatol Stern a little later. The younger poets were at first Bernard Heidseick, Brian Gysin, Paul de Vree, Mimmo Rotella, François Dufrêne, Gil J Wolman, Claude Pélieu, Gianni Bertini, Yaacow Agam, John Furnical, E. Alleyn, etc. . . .

The poetry of "consummation" no longer resisted to experimental poetry. It seemed old and powerless compared with the works of the beginning of the century, and that was in 1960. As far as we were concerned, it no longer existed. In fact, the first group was using a horse-drawn carriage for space travel, while we had the more effective rockets at our disposal. It was in 1964 after the theoretical preparations for *Cinquième Saison* that I started the record-magazine *OU* which began to specialize at once in the research of vocal poetry.

What was it all about? At first we gathered forgotten phonetic poems, these literal phonetic poems, which by 1918 through the the efforts of Pierre Albert-Birot, Hugo Ball, Raoul Hausmann, then Kurt Schwitters, Michel Seuphor, and Camille Bryen, were experiencing and avant-lettrisme that was at once aggressive, ludicrous, humourous, and powerful. Then *OU* gathered authors who worked directly with electronics and tape recorders, which meant that with electronics we discovered that spoken and written speech expressed only a rather limited part of the vocal power of every human. In fact, through a very sensitive microphone we noticed that a voice was a veritable orchestra, possessing distinct and hierarchically systemitized sounds, and also imponderable voiced consonants which allowed the voice these qualities: *virtual*, *possible*, *mime*, *play*, movement, all that had been merely described and understood in ancient times and not at all exploited. In sum, the poet became the orchestra, he became plural by himself, he was infinite in his very resources, and not limited by a speech which made him static instead of active.

If you like, *OU*, in that time the first and only anthology of the voice alone, to the exclusion of all sound-effects and purely electronic values, proclaimed the complexity of the creative potential of a single person, and that was the first observation.

The second is that naturally the timbres of each author had an individual quality. To the contrary of electronic music whose resonant values are set by the very machine in closely related tonalities; the voice demonstrated its particular resources and its various qualities. No voice is like another and here we have a very rich field to observe.

The third remark is that naturally the individual values also individualize the authors. We could distinguish the authors who remained faithful to comprehension like Bernard Heidsieck, Brian Gysin, Paul de Vree, to name the main ones, as well as those authors who wanted to free themselves and discover either only lyrism, like François Dufrêne, or breath power, like Gil J. Wolman, or orchestral multiplicity like Jean-Louis Brau, or like myself who sought to discover the physical and labial force of vocal tone.

Finally, and to give an even wider meaning to our research, all these authors did not limit themselves solely to vocal results. The theatre was affected by the "dream-machines" of Brian Gysin, audio-poetry became dance, films, and "sound and light" theatre, etc. We have a poem of the "voice and speech in the street", a request that I published in *Cinquième Saison* no. 5 in 1959.

Q. — What is the importance of the group to Paris?

A. — The collaborators of *OU* being of all nationalities, and *OU* appearing everywhere in the world, it certainly must be established that Paris does not realize the importance of it. Besides, did Paris realize the importance of Futurism, Dadaism, Cubism, Surrealism, the Abstract, which all developed there! No. *OU* shares this fate. Paris is two cities, the first Paris is a minority which acts and gives its inspiration to the other Paris, but the second Paris ignores it, for its sole love and interest is itself. Do we not see today French nationalism obtaining a majority when everything tells us that our ELECTION DISTRICT IS PLANETARY. In short, Paris was only a residence, where we, who were of all origins, had gathered for art.

Q. — Are foreign groups numerous and do they have permanent contracts with each other? Are there meeting points where the different groups can compare their research and disseminate this information?

A. — There are groups in Tokyo, Prague, Stockholm, Anvers, London, Stuttgart, Sao Paulo, Modena, Turin, Lisbon, Madrid, Brescia, and all are in close contact with each other. Let us note, however, that these groups are graphic and have a common denominator; their interest in concrete poetry and related matters. As for vocal poetry, the only group is in Paris and one has begun in Stockholm. There are isolated authors in Germany, Italy, The United States, England, and Japan. The meeting places are numerous but the most important are in England, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, and Italy, and there are also radio contacts serving these countries.

Q. — Is spoken poetry such as you define it the only language of tomorrow?

A. — No, it is not (not yet), and I do not define it. It presents the idea of vocal quality. Decades of research will still be needed to find the unchanging elements of the voice which will serve the birth of new languages. For the time being vocal poetry is to be considered primarily as a breakthrough, and is interdependent on the written poetry of yesterday which is gradually becoming a dead language.

Q. — Can this poetry be accessible to the general public everywhere in a universal way?

A. — Yes. Because its expression, speech, is physical, it surpasses the intelligible, and the particularism of languages. As for the public, they are compliant in their acceptance of it. Vocal and thus physical poetry gives sensory states similar to a certain transcendance of the being which according to many enthusiasts replaces all artificiality like drugs for example. One must relax on hearing it, and no longer say "what does it mean?"

Q. — What are your immediate plans?

A. — My plans are to again publish a new series of the review *OU*. It will likely be called "*OU+JE*", the "je" personifying men from every corner of this world of anonymity. *OU+JE* will extend to the theatre, will increase vocal poetry, will research graphism, will increase typographical research. And finally it will continue its freedom by saying very clearly what it thinks of old platitudes which are oppressing nations. Finally it will permit itself to research collaborations of Law, Mathematics, and the social sciences, etc. . . . I foresee trips to America and naturally trips to Canada, not out of sentimentality, but because I believe in countries whose horizon is very broad. I believe in new countries, those who are moving forward into the future, which is the only thing that matters to me.

The interview was accomplished by correspondence.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson.

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toys of yesterday in quebec

BY ROBERT-LIONEL SEGUIN

The origin of toys is lost in the mists of time. As far back as the stone age, mothers could have felt the need to calm down a child that was too noisy by giving him some polished pebbles, shells, and primitive dolls. Excavations carried out in caverns in Central Europe brought the discovery of flint statuettes which might very well have been dolls.

Then again, children in Egypt, Greece, and Rome knew games similar to those played today. Archeological research that has been carried in the last twenty years in Mesopotamia and Iran has brought to light toys dating from three thousand years before the Christian era. The presence of toys is similarily indicated on monuments decorated with figures and on ancient bas-reliefs.

In ancient times, it was proper to consecrate playthings to the gods. In Rome these offerings were made to Jupiter, Mercury, and Diane, as soon as the child reached puberty. If death claimed an infant, his toys were also presented to the divinities. This pagan custom was later observed among Christian peoples, notably the Italians. In Sardinia, toys are offered to the Virgin instead of votive offerings.

Toy-making did not escape the industrial revolution of the 19th century. In the course of the last hundred years children have receive an ever-increasing variety of playthings. These objects enter six main categories: infants' toys, outdoor toys, games of skill, toys for girls, for boys, and animated toys. Let us examine the first kind.

Babies are interested in playthings that make a noise. The slightest sound that is out of the ordinary disturbs and enthrals their young years. Little children in every age have shaken rattles. In the Middle Ages several of these toys became veritable luxury items. At the end of the 14th century the French goldsmith Jean du Vivier engraved a silver rattle for the royal children. Later, ivory, crystal, silver, and even gold rattles were generally made.

In the 17th and 18th centuries rattles were so costly that they were handed down as part of the family heritage from one generation to another. Some persons, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau protested against such a custom alleging that it leads a child to idleness and extravagence. The philosopher is not completely wrong. But let us avoid generalizations. When Lavoisier was a child he played with a magnificent silver and coral rattle that did not prevent him from becoming one of the most brilliant minds of his time. This toy is preserved in the History of Education museum.

This vogue of costly toys reached New France. Near the end of the 17th century there is mention of two or three silver rattles in Montreal. On December 15, 1684 the lawyer Bénigne Basset pays a call to the home of the widow of Antoine La Frenaye de Brucy, née Hélène Picoté de Belestre, where he finds a silver rattle valued at ten francs. (As the chief lieutenant of governor Perrot, De Brucy devoted his energies to the fur trade.)

All parents do not give such lavish playthings to their children. Usually they are satisfied with the bone rattles. Towards mid-June 1703 there are eight such rattles in the shop of Jacques Douaire de Bondy. They can be bought for five pennies each. The Montreal merchant, who is of Auxerrian descent, is the husband of Madeleine Gatineau-Duplessis.

The absence of dolls is amazing. However, at the end of October 1703, the writings of Antoine Adhémar mention the existence of a doll's cloak cut from muslin fabric. This small garment is in the home of Claude Coron, a Montreal colonist.

Are outdoor toys current? The odd mentions of skates discovered in legal archives affirm so. Let us specify that skating is reserved for adults. Skates are usually owned by habitants who live along the St. Lawrence or smaller rivers. What is more natural, since bodies of water are the only ice-rinks of the time. However a few children do manage to put on a pair of skates.

As early as 1669, Basset reports the existence of a pair of skates at the home of Etienne Banchaud, in Montreal. During the winter of 1746 legal documents mention other skates belonging to Urbain Richard of Pointe-aux-Trembles. At this time skating is especially popular in the Chambly region, where a good many habitants have skates. If we follow the accounts of the lawyer Grisé, the cost of these items varies greatly. In January 1759 the skates of Michel Boileau were worth roughly ten francs. On the other hand, those of Jacques Bourbonnière were valued at two francs.

Toys were no less sought after in the second half of the 18th century. Wooden horses which are the delight of little boys are skillfully carved by fathers, uncles, or grandfathers. The simple craftsmanship of these objects ranks them as so many examples of a veritable primitive art. Those which escaped the indifference of children and adults are now delighting collectors. Most of these horses are set on small wheels, others are mounted on swings, or rockers.

This preference for wooden horses should not be in the least surprising. The habitant has always shown a great deal of interest in the equine species, even to the detriment of raising cattle. This is true to the extent that the interest becomes prejudicial to the proper agricultural development of New France. On June 13, 1709, the intendent Antoine-Denis Raudo is to decree that each tenant farmer can no longer keep more than two horses or mares and one foal; the others must be destroyed.

All wooden horses are not of primitive workmanship. In Quebec city a few are even carved by a sculptor as heralded as François Baillargé, a former pupil of the Royal Academy of Paris and one of the leading sculptors in Quebec. These playthings are commissioned by well-to-do patrons. A first mention of this is made on January 15, 1796, when the artist agrees to "make a medium-sized wooden horse mounted on two moving wheels set well apart for greater strength." The bargain is struck for the sume of three guineas.

Doll Furniture is especially varied and interesting in the middle of the 19th century. This furniture is often a faithful reproduction of the family furnishings which are made of pine. Double sideboards,poster beds and also poster cradles are arranged side by side with two door wardrobes.

For her part, mother is not indifferent to the leisure of her little girls. Doll clothes were made as early as the second half of the 19th century. These tiny garments cut from rich fabrics are usually lavishly trimmed. More unusual, but no less charming are the tiny doll-bed quilts. Carefully preserved, this doll and doll-bed clothing served in the play of two, even three generations.

Moreover, let us take note of the lack of toys which were however popular in other countries. Such as the lead soldiers that amused so many French children. It is true that the construction of these toys implies the presence of highly skilled craftsmen. But the same is not true of the comparatively simple construction of Noah's arks. How then, can the absence of these little arks in Quebec be explained?

Knuckle-bones and marbles are the games of skill that schoolboys play most. In the spring every little boy has a bag full of glass or clay marbles, commonly designated by the adopted English expressions: "allées" and "marbres". The glass marble was the most coveted of the two kinds.

The industrial era definitely deals the death blow to home crafted toys. Serial production is already flooding the market by the end of the 19th century. These toys are generally made of iron. They are either in one piece or have several parts joined together by shanks.

Sheet-metal toys soon replace iron ones. Afterwards animated toys follow. As early as the end of the first war they appear in the windows or on the counters of all the stores in Quebec. The German firm, Lehmann, practically holds a monopoly on their production. For the most part these toys illustrate methods of transportation. Miniature horse-drawn buses, panhards, and tilbury carriages are under every Christmas tree.

The primitively crafted toys of Quebec remain a true folk-art. Wooden horses and doll furniture testify to the skill and dexterity of our rural artisans. In 1963 a display of old toys held in the setting of the Salon de l'Artisanat shed light on this previously ingnored area and on the ingenuity and skill of our forefathers. As M. Laurent Simard explicitly states: "This display makes us realize that today, with the exception of dolls, no craftsman makes toys."

This is a timely thought which deserves our attention. Why do our craftsmen not make toys that reflect the spirit of Quebec? These toys would encourage children to look for beauty which, consequently, would allow them to better appreciate the things which surround them. In short, it would be entirely to our advantage to replace the present rubbish with toys made by craftsmen.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

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gallery hunt

BY JULES ARBEC

As is customary in the art world, autumn marked a return to activities. Getting off to an arrow-swift start, the numerous exhibitions stressed the opening of the artistic season and did not fail to draw the attention of the critics and the public at large. Unquestionably, the highlight of the season was the official opening of the Musée d'Art Contemporain, with its exhibition "Painting in France, 1900-1967".

The special appeal of the year's first quarter is the search for the dominating notes which should characterize the artistic production of the year. In keeping with the works exhibited, this production promises to be as impressive in its variety as its originality, despite the weakness of certain pieces that were shown. One undertaking which did not fail to arouse curiosity was the exhibition "The Museum In The Factory" which was conjointly organized by the Musée des Beaux-Arts and the Peter Stuyvesant Company. It would be more accurate to speak of a factory in a museum, since it was a question of the reconstruction of a manufacturing shop of the Turmac Tobacco Company, which transformed one part of its buildings into a gallery integrated into the factory surroundings.

It will be said that the effects of such an experiment may be debatable in several respects, but it is certain that the presence of works of art in a given context perceptibly modify the mental environment (perhaps even influence the output of labour). This undertaking affords a daily contact with art to people who have likely never set foot in a museum, and therefore, it assumes social significance. The reconstitution of a factory in the halls of the Musée des Beaux-Arts is achieved by large posters, representing the machinery, accompanied by all the usual sounds of a factory; all this against a background of the paintings of Tousignant, Molignari, Hurtubise, and a few others. Let us note that although the idea is original in itself, it is no less true that the atmosphere which prevails is rather contrived and artificial. Let us mention in passing that the decor and the sound produced distracted the visitor from the works of art of the Stuyvesant collection. However there can be no doubt that the format was worth trying and that it leaves ample room for further experiments.

Thus, gradually, year by year, the presence of the work of art is becoming increasingly deep-rooted in our environment through the intermediary of the museums certainly, but also due to the participation of the art galleries. Among the latter, the work that has been

done by the Agnès Lefort Gallery in the last 17 years, must be stressed. In order to carry on with its work more satisfactorily, the gallery has moved to new buildings; The Godard-Lefort Galleries, and it sought to mark its opening in a special way, by presenting an exhibition which pays hommage to the latest work of some of our best painters.

The large painting by McEwen held our attention with its immense surface of an almost monochromatic orange whose light execution and modulated shades express a certain refinement of the painter in the very treatment of his material. As for Albers, he approached the problem of colour by fitting within each other three squares of different shades of green and in this composition, succeeded in creating a certain volume and a third dimension, by a contrast of shades rather than by form.

There was also a painting by John Nesbitt, done in very pronounced colours, to which was added a very strong and well designed geometric construction; there was also a canvas by Tonnancour whose treatment reflected the sobriety and equilibrium which this painter always exploits so successfully. A painting by Rioppelle again paid hommage to a palette which literally explodes with colour. The presence of Faucher, Claude Vermette, and Fisher heightened the atmosphere of this exhibition, as did the work of Dassary who very ably represented one of the tendencies of art in France. Finally, a sculpture by Ulysse Comtois and another by Claude Tousignan added a three dimensional note to this exhibition.

From one gallery to another is evidenced the theme of "social commitment", the title which Louis Belzile gave to his last exhibition. In several respects, it impressed me. At first I took pleasure in observing how, and in what manner artists like Belzile are able to assume their social role by the intermediary of their creative work, independently from their message. The role of art is certainly not to transmit a social conception as such, but creative work does address itself to society. Thus it is by understanding the nature and the orientation or the extent of its effects that we will be in a position to promote the total integration of art into this society, an integration which is overdue. The aspect of Belzile's work that I liked the most was no doubt its simplicity, the supple lines which simplify the tableau and retain only the essential. This painter still finds in figuration a means of expression which he successfully exploits. The paintings by Belzile which I saw at the Galerie Libre are two dimensional; but, the restraint with which he uses his colours accentuates the inflated forms and makes a certain life emerge in these paintings; therefore, the atmosphere which these pictures have is charged with a symbolism which the viewer quickly discovers. In the most recent paintings one can equally sense an erotic element rendered almost imperceptible by its manner of expression, an area in which Belzile would no doubt do well to furthur his research.

In the area of jewellery, let us call attention to the exhibition at the Galerie des Artisans, of the work of Bernard Chaudron. In 1965 he was granted a scholarship by the Canada Council, then later on he was appointed to the Centrale d'Artisanat du Québec. M. Bernard Chaudron constantly pursues a deeper and deeper research into this field and has returned to techniques which seem to give very good results. At least that is what we established upon examining the various pieces which appeared in his exhibition. Among other items, we noticed a gold ring of an exceptional finish and a remarkable originality, some copper necklaces whose massive size did not detract from their elegance and good taste, some flower pots in bronze and a chalice whose style was strinkingly simple. But what unquestionably marked this exhibition was the bronze tabernacle cast in a single piece. For such work, M. Chaudron uses a technique involving melted wax, a very old method of craftsmanship that gives the artist the possibility of creating models of an exceptional beauty and delicacy. We have tried to explain this technique with photos and diagrams showing the modelling of pieces, their firing, and glazing. It is due to such activities that Bernard Chaudron is becoming more and more established in an area that we are still largely unacquainted with in Quebec.

The effervescence of our environment and the dynamism of our artists are no doubt two intimately related elements. The result of this is an artistic diffusion which widely extends beyond our surroundings. Pierre Ayot, one of our young engravers testified to this last October at the time of his first exhibition at the Pascal gallery, in Toronto, and during a second travelling exhibition which began at Allison University and went on to the university and cultural centres of New Brunswick. Pierre Ayot is a professor at the Beaux-Arts, but this position has not prevented him from being very prolific; furthermore he is the main founder of an engraving workshop which he has been directing for two years. At present he is working in the company of artists such as Yvon Dufour, Lise Bissonnette, Chantal Dupont and several other collaborators.

The art of Ayot arises directly from Pop art, even if it differs from it in several respects, and in the very personal touch which the artist gives it. Ayot takes his subjects from everyday life. His prints done in the vogue of advertising are appealing and very fanciful.

In his work we sense an attention to minute detail, a skill which makes us perceive in a completely new way the subjects he treats. That, no doubt, is one of the artist's main qualities, besides his discerning choice of colours which gives a certain perspective to the prints, although they are always set in flat tint.

A parallel can easily be drawn between the prints of Ayot and certain advertising posters, but the manner of display here takes quite a different approach. It would be desirable for advertising agencies to be inspired by this parallel and even call on artists like Ayot to design advertising that would please the eye while pursuing the goal which it has set itself. Pictoral and optic research is even more evident in Ayot's large pictures. This is the case in the picture which represents a reclining woman, and which is formed of two panels set at right angles, to which is added a row of bands completing a triangle whose shadow fragments the subject represented. This concept permits the viewer to see different aspects of the picture according to his position and thus creates a very interesting type of relief.

The artist pursues his research with a view to exploiting a method which is derived equally from Op and Pop art. But in my opinion, what makes his art valuable is no doubt the fact that it is completely embodied in daily life and thus allows us to persevere in it more easily.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

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the use and abuse of time: the maeght foundation

BY JACQUES LEPAGE

Psychedelic environments, and happenings. César, de Soto, Hanich. The zeal of lovers rekindled at the bosom of a Nana by Saint-Phalle. The horrifying: Bettencourt, Dada. The horror: Genoves. A woman greets the works of Christo: "They didn't have time to unpack that." Neon: Kowalski. Silence: Kelly. A brilliant fleeting beauty: "Billes", sculpture by Fredrikson. Schoeffer exposed as having lost his illumination. But Tinguely sprinkles the lawns overrun by cool-art, while Raynaud unceremoniously affronts the surroundings: the pine forest of southern France.

The 246 works are done by 210 men who for the most part, are famous. What does this enormous avalanche open to all (or almost all) experimentation and research mean? Proliferation here, like the "white food" by Malval is eye-catching. The dust has been removed. Things have been scoured clean. Time has devastated what ten years ago would have covered the cyma. What a struggle. We can still see a stele by Dubuffet, a Degottex, an Ubac, but what has become of the others? Poliakoff seems stricken by the same leukaemia as Chagall or Messagier. Geometry triumphs. Mathematics reigns. With flows of baroque, congealing blood, semen, lava, and feigned foolishness.

The thousands of visitors who had come for an "opening" do not know whether they are laughing, crying, getting dizzy, or breathing their last, if they are playing, or playthings in a descent to hell. That is where the happening really is, rather than with César, who assisted by Farhi, is sawing up his purple and yellow cakes and distributing them, consecrated bread, at the noon mass. A fight breaks out. The accumulation of brace bits by Arman binds the scrap-iron less than César's signature does the visitors' skin. Who will emerge from the maze?

Le Clézio thinks "that to hold a happening is to make a fact emerge from context . . . to become aware that the world is a spectacular show inside of which one is oneself a spectacular show". The MAEGHT Foundation with *Art Vivant* 1965-1968, thoroughly explores the intricacies of this syllogism. The main room is occupied by the "visual research group". The hanging nickelplated V-type tubes which the public goes through into the racket of clashing metal; signals by Takis; the environment by Soto into which few visitors dare venture, they are so many debunking machines, properly constructed to make art emerge from the cultural zoo.

Temporality is authoritatively installed there. Passing from the works for meditation to those which require incessantly changing reactions makes you feel that you are being torn apart. We can only hope and wish that the exhibit holds discoveries for the crowd of visitors, 100,00-strong in 1967, for that is its interest and importance. We are beyond pedagogy, we are reintroducing existential communication between art and man, by means of the accidental. The dusting was done with vitriol. It looks good.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson