

L'art québécois contemporain au Musée Quebec Contemporary Art in the Museum

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L'art québécois contemporain au Musée

Germain Lefebvre

En octobre 1940, l'Art Association of Montreal, devenue depuis le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, présente une importante exposition des travaux d'Alfred Pellán, récemment rentré au pays, après un séjour de quatorze ans à Paris. Le Musée assure, par ce geste qui aura l'effet d'une bombe auprès de la critique et des amateurs d'art montréalais, une reconnaissance officielle au renouveau artistique déjà amorcé, en milieu québécois, par la fondation de la Société d'Art Contemporain, l'année précédente, à l'instigation de John Lyman.

Le souci de conserver un lien étroit avec l'activité créatrice contemporaine n'est pas un phénomène inédit au Musée où, chaque année, à l'occasion du Salon de Printemps, on accueille les œuvres les plus récentes des peintres, sculpteurs et artistes graphiques. Vers la fin des années trente et précédant même le choc pellanien, on voit déjà apparaître au catalogue des Salons, les noms de plusieurs artistes qui vont bientôt participer à l'émancipation d'un art orienté vers la recherche de nouvelles valeurs esthétiques, tels Goodridge Roberts, Fritz Brandtner, Marian Scott, Jean-Paul Lemieux et Paul-Émile Borduas.

Un an après la parution du *Refus global*, qui vaudra à son auteur la réprobation et l'anathème des autorités et des gens bien pensants, le jury du soixante-sixième Salon de Printemps, tenu du 20 avril au 15 mai 1949, ose admettre les œuvres de Marcel Barbeau, Pierre Gauvreau, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Jean-Paul Riopelle, tous cosignataires du manifeste, et couronne son audace en attribuant le prix de peinture à Paul-Émile Borduas. Il est intéressant de noter que cette exposition réunit également des envois de Léon Bellefleur, Anne Kahane, Jean McEwen, Alfred Pellán, Jacques de Tonnancour, Albert Dumouchel, Louis Archambault et Robert Roussil.

Outre ces manifestations collectives, le Musée tient, au début de 1949, des expositions particulières jumelées d'artistes contemporains, où figureront, à leur début, des jeunes créateurs qui ont atteint depuis la célébrité. Ainsi la programmation de l'année 1956 comporte les noms de Jean-Paul Riopelle, Louis Belzile, Fernand Toupin, Pierre Clerk. En 1960, on y fait place à Micheline Beauchemin, Jean Goguen, Betty Goodwin, Jacques Hurtubise, Guido Molinari et Claude Tousingant, parmi les mieux connus aujourd'hui. Plus près de nous, les expositions des Jeunes Associés, à la Galerie de l'Étable, ont poursuivi cet intérêt pour l'art en gestation. D'importantes rétrospectives ont consacré, par ailleurs, dans les grandes galeries du Musée, l'œuvre des principaux maîtres québécois: Paul-Émile Borduas, en 1962, Jean-Paul Riopelle, en 1963, Jean-Paul Lemieux, en 1967 et, peu avant la fermeture temporaire du Musée, Alfred Pellán, en 1972.

Le besoin impératif, ressenti par les autorités du Musée, de témoigner de la vitalité de l'art québécois se traduit d'autre part dans les

politiques d'acquisition et permet de constituer au cours des ans une collection qui, tant par son étendue que par la qualité des œuvres qu'elle rassemble, marque la valeur des développements artistiques en notre province. Dès 1942, le Musée se porte acquéreur d'une petite nature morte de Paul-Émile Borduas exécutée au cours de l'année précédente et première œuvre de cet artiste à être acquise par une institution publique.

Les conservateurs des collections tentent de suivre de près l'évolution des diverses tendances et s'efforcent de retenir, au moment où elles apparaissent, les œuvres les plus significatives: un tableau de Marian Scott peint en 1942, un autre de Maurice Raymond daté de 1943, une toile de Fernand Leduc de 1954, ou une sculpture d'Ulysse Comtois de 1969, par exemple, sont acquis dans les quelques mois qui suivent leur réalisation. Lorsque, avec le recul des ans, on constate des lacunes graves dans la représentation de certaines périodes ou, plus précisément, de certains artistes, on n'hésite pas à

1. Pierre AYOT

... et boule de gomme.

Sérigraphie; 76 cm x 56,5.

(Don des Presses de l'Université du Québec)

rechercher les pièces manquantes. Ainsi, le tableau *Les Pensées* d'Alfred Pellán, des années 1935-1940, vient combler, en 1956, un vide malheureux. De même en est-il d'*Autriche* de Riopelle, peint en 1954 et intégré à la collection en 1963, ou encore d'un dessin abstrait de Brandtner, de 1930, acheté en 1970, et d'un panneau de Cosgrove, daté de 1948, et acquis en 1961.

Grâce à ces efforts concertés, une visite de la collection québécoise du Musée permet sans doute de reconstituer un panorama des mouvements déterminants de notre art, mais elle donne bien souvent également l'occasion de redécouvrir combien les artistes, et leurs œuvres surtout, échappent aux catégories dans lesquelles on a trop tendance à les ranger bien docilement. Autant le crédo automatiste ne saurait expliquer tout l'œuvre de Borduas, d'une part, autant le concept de la peinture plasticienne ne peut, d'autre part, rassembler et retenir dans un cadre étroit, tous les peintres qu'on y a parfois rattachés, de près ou de loin, à cause de leurs préoccupations formelles, de préférence géométrisantes.

Un éventail de tableaux judicieusement choisis de Borduas illustre avec une clarté remarquable les principales étapes de l'évolution de son langage pictural. De la *Nature morte* de 1941 à la gouache de 1942, en passant par l'austère portrait de *Mme G.* (1941), nous assistons à l'abandon progressif des prétextes figuratifs. *Les Carquois fleuris*, de 1947, concrétise les intuitions surréalistes et le geste automatique, qui prennent ensuite de l'ampleur dans *Les Signes s'envolent* (1953) et *Le Jardin sous la neige* (1954), ouvrant large le champ aux impulsions du subconscient. La très grande lucidité de l'artiste s'impose finalement avec une intensité accrue dans *l'Étoile noire*, de 1957, tableau sobrement construit sur les rapports spatiaux des modulations du blanc, du noir et du brun, et qui amène le peintre à une phase limite du pictural.

L'attachement déclaré d'Alfred Pellán à un art reposant sur des bases figuratives n'est que très rarement remis en question à travers toute son œuvre, et son *Jardin volcanique*, acquis par le Musée peu après son exécution en 1960, est sans doute celui de ses travaux où il frôle de plus près la forme abstraite. Amalgamant dans sa pâte colorée les éléments les plus divers, tels le tabac séché, la poudre de silice et le polyfilla, Pellán façonne une surface rutilante qui marque un sommet de sa quête d'une peinture électrique, d'une peinture tellement intense qu'elle soit «impossible à regarder».

De Fernand Toupin et de Fernand Leduc, qui furent du premier groupe des plasticiens, le Musée possède *Blanc-Sablons* (1964) et *Plans érosions* (1968), respectivement; œuvres dont la manière paraît à ce point différente de l'une à l'autre qu'on a peine à imaginer les liens qui ont pu les regrouper vraiment dans une même école. Par ailleurs, les tableaux *Rectangles* et

lignes jaunes (1961) de Guido Molinari, *Cercle latin* (1969) de Claude Tousignant et *Rondes rouges et bleues* (1967) de Denis Juneau qui, entre autres, représentent la seconde vague du mouvement, possèdent, malgré leur éloignement dans le temps, de réelles affinités au niveau de leur commune recherche des effets vibratoires de la couleur dans un espace savamment mesuré et organisé.

Très nombreux sont les peintres qui, bien qu'ils aient pu manifester à un moment quelconque de leur carrière des sympathies pour les idées esthétiques de l'un ou l'autre des groupes militants, se sont maintenus à une certaine distance, afin de poursuivre leurs recherches originales. Il ont, dans la collection du Musée, une présence qui témoigne de la validité de leurs efforts et de la richesse de leur contribution. Jacques de Tonnancour est ainsi représenté par trois tableaux évoquant autant de facettes de son abondante production, dont *Trilobe* de 1966 qui affirme avec maîtrise une nouvelle orientation. Jean McEwen, Charles Gagnon, Yves Gaucher, Jean Dallaire, Albert Dumouchel et Jean-Paul Lemieux, parmi tant d'autres, comptent chacun au moins deux de leurs œuvres au sein d'une collection qui fait place, par ailleurs, à la très grande majorité des artistes québécois de quelque envergure.

Bien que cet ensemble d'œuvres contemporaines intègre la peinture dans une plus vaste proportion, les autres disciplines artistiques, et particulièrement la sculpture et la gravure, n'en sont pas pour autant absentes. L'acquisition en 1959 de *Waiting People* d'Anne Kahane, de *Composition* de Robert Roussil et d'une œuvre sans titre d'Armand Vaillancourt, constituait le noyau initial de cette collection. Elle connaîtra un enrichissement significatif, dix années plus tard, par l'addition de pièces choisies d'Henry Saxe, Serge Tousignant, Ulysse Comtois,

François Dallegret et Hugh Leroy. Les Daudelin, Hayvaert, Trudeau, Gnass et Bonet y figurent également en bonne place. Les œuvres monumentales ne forment à ce jour qu'un faible ensemble mais l'aménagement longuement souhaité d'un jardin de sculpture laisse prévoir, pour un proche avenir, un élargissement de ce corpus.

L'art de la gravure a pris un véritable essor à Montréal grâce au talent de professeur et d'animateur du regretté Albert Dumouchel. Il a su provoquer chez ses disciples et chez ses étudiants un amour du patient et méticuleux ouvrage et leur faire découvrir les infinies possibilités des diverses techniques de l'estampe. La prolifération des ateliers de recherche et de production, tant à Québec qu'à Montréal, souligne cette heureuse réussite. Elle est reflétée au Musée par l'accroissement considérable de la collection d'estampes au cours des dix dernières années. La présence du maître est signalée par plus d'une vingtaine d'œuvres alors que des centaines de linogravures, de sérigraphies, d'eaux-fortes et de lithographies illustrent la variété et l'originalité de ses continuateurs, qu'ils s'appellent Richard Lacroix, Roland Giguère, Gérard Tremblay, Robert Savoie, Gilles Boisvert ou Pierre Ayot.

La collection d'art québécois contemporain du Musée s'enrichit dans son ensemble d'année en année mais elle semble se caractériser, particulièrement depuis 1963, par un vigoureux rajeunissement. Il y a treize ans, en effet, M. et Mme Samuel Bronfman s'engageaient à verser une somme annuelle de \$10,000 destinée à l'achat d'œuvres de jeunes artistes canadiens âgés de 35 ans ou moins. Cette générosité s'est maintenue depuis, et les artistes québécois ont pu largement en bénéficier. Des toiles de Lise Gervais, de Claude Girard, de Jacques Hurtubise, de Jan Menses, de Louise Scott; des ta-



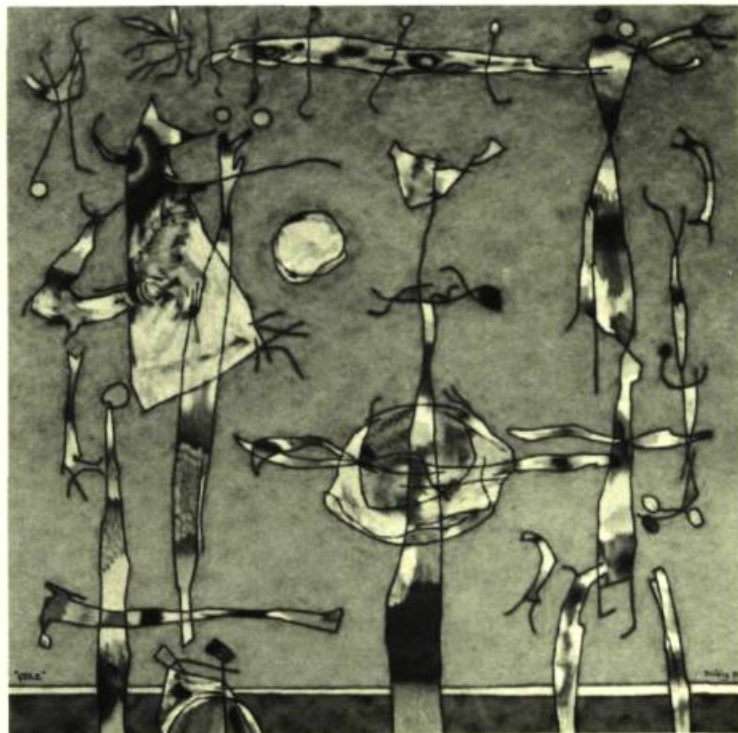
2. Alfred PELLAN
Les Pensées.
Huile sur toile; 81 cm 3 x 100,3.
(Fonds Harriette J. MacDonnell)

3. Paul-Émile BORDUAS (1905-1960)
Les Carquois fleuris, 1947.
Huile sur toile; 81 cm 2 x 109,2.
(Don de M. et Mme Maurice Chartré)

4. Jacques GODEFROY de TONNANCOUR
Le Trilobe, 1966.
Huile et collage sur toile; 122 cm x 122.
(Don du Comité des Bénévoles)

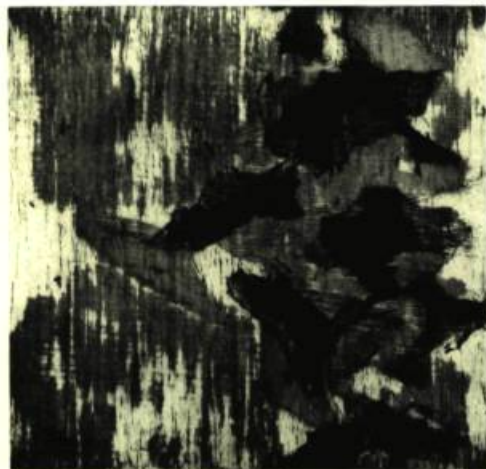


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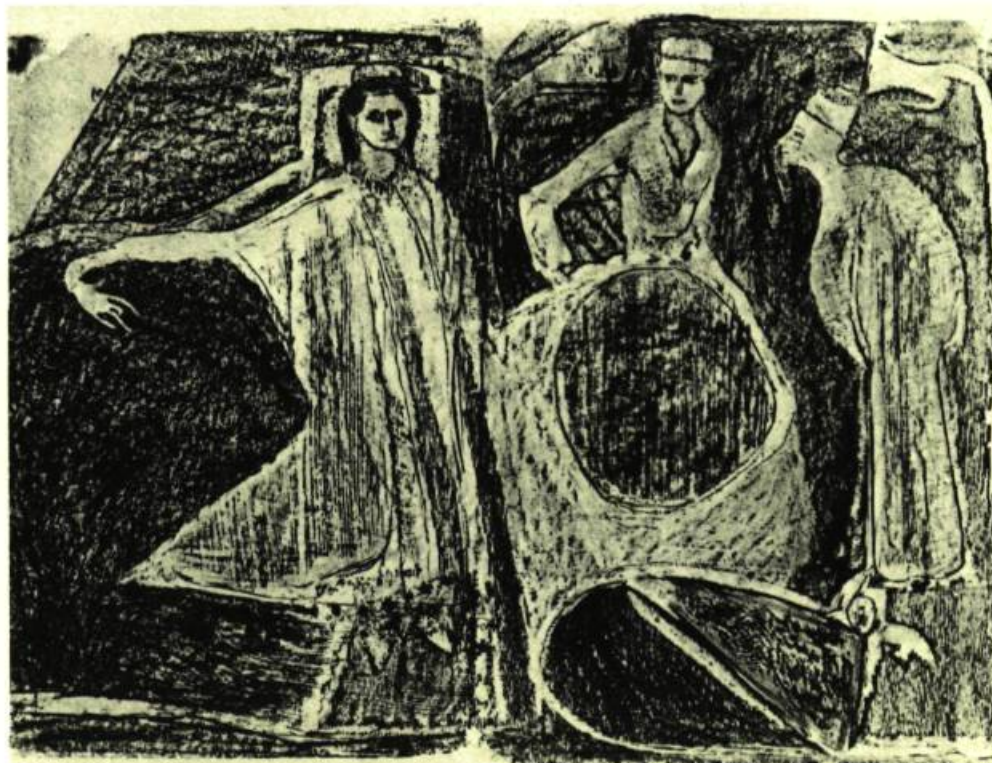


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5. Richard LACROIX
La Feuillée, 1963.
 Eau-forte; 62 cm 2 x 62,2.
 (Coll. S. et S. Bronfman d'art canadien)

6. Jean DALLAIRE (1916-1965)
Odile, 1957.
 Huile sur masonite; 122 cm x 122.
 (Legs Harriette J. MacDonnell)

7. Albert DUMOUCHEL (1916-1971)
Les Jaloux au sacre de l'impératrice Théodora, 1965.
 Lithographie; 50 cm 3 x 65,4.
 (Legs Horsley et Annie Townsend)

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8. Charles GAGNON
Traversée en février, 1963.
Huile sur toile; 81 cm 3 x 81,3.
(Coll. S. et S. Bronfman d'art canadien)

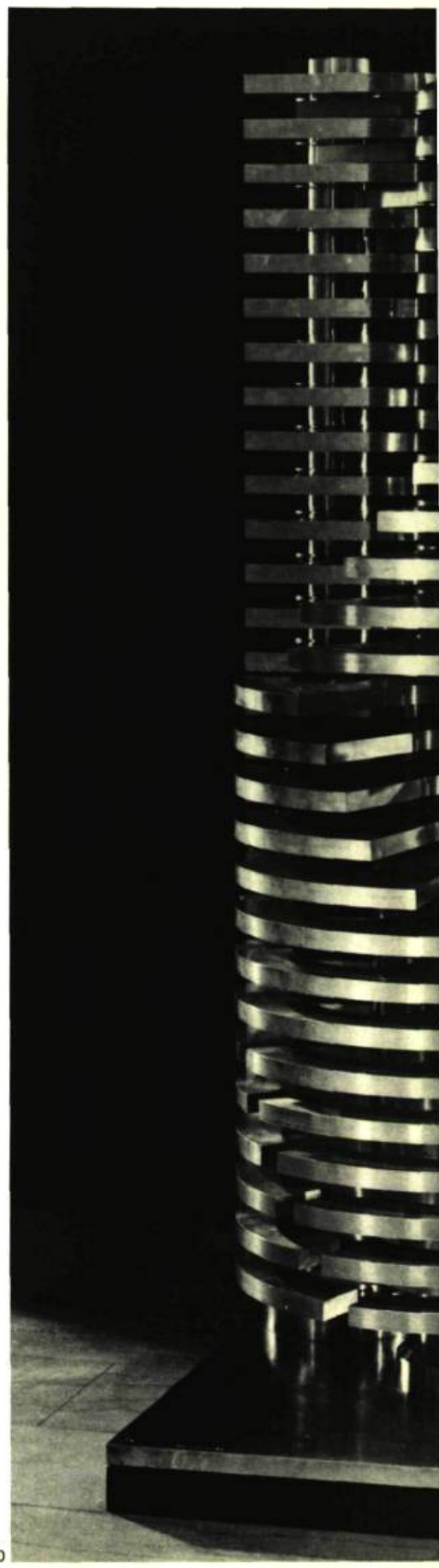
9. Anne KAHANE
L'Attente.
Bois; 94 cm x 81,2 x 31,1.
(Don de Mme Samuel Bronfman)



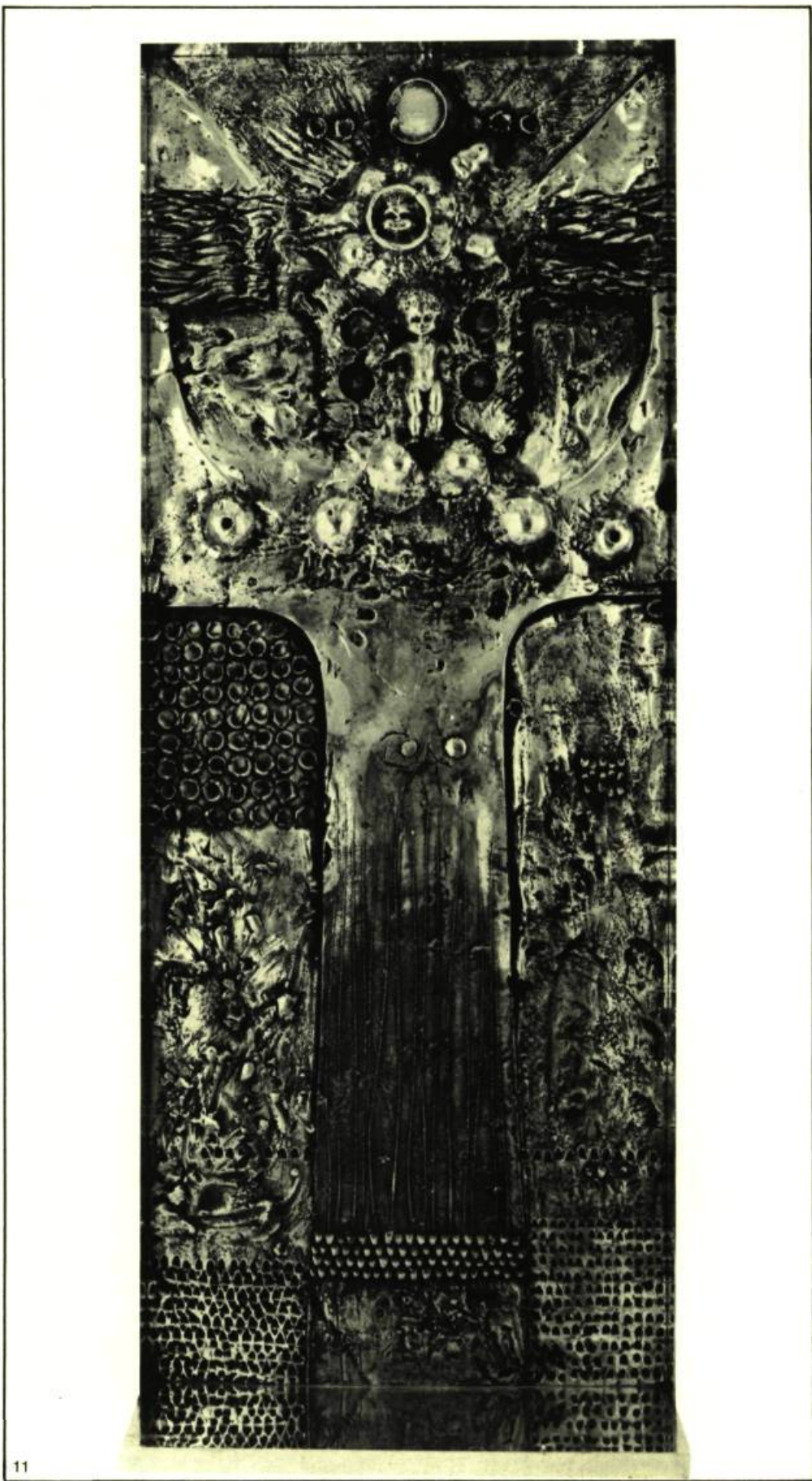
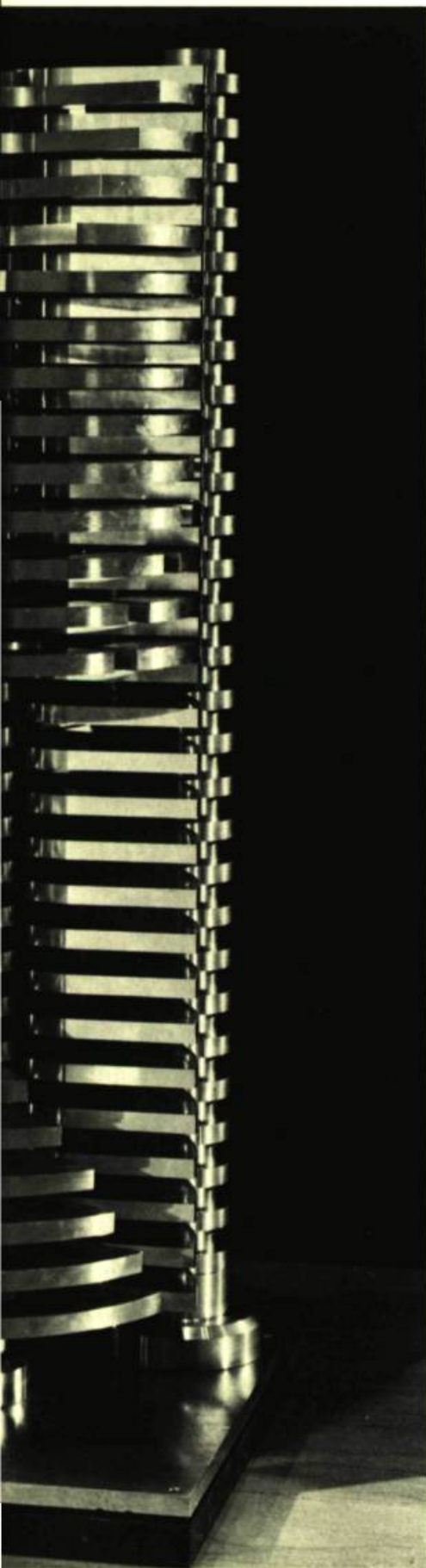
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10. Ulysse COMTOIS
Octobre 23, 1969.
Aluminium et acier inoxydable; 174 cm 6 x 58,4.
(Legs Horsley et Annie Townsend)

11. Jordi BONET
Godó.
Aluminium; 234 cm x 90,8 x 61.
(Legs Horsley et Annie Townsend)



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pisseries de Micheline Beauchemin et de Fernand Daudelin; un ensemble impressionnant de dessins et de gravures sont ainsi entrés dans la collection du Musée grâce à ce fonds.

Les portes du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal s'ouvrent de nouveau après une longue interruption qu'il a mis à profit pour se refaire une beauté et se donner des espaces dignes de la qualité et de la diversité de ses collections. Les visiteurs auront plaisir sans doute à y découvrir sous un nouvel éclairage l'ampleur et l'importance de la représentation de l'art québécois contemporain en constante évolution et, surtout, à y admirer pour la première fois la moisson recueillie au cours de la période de transition.

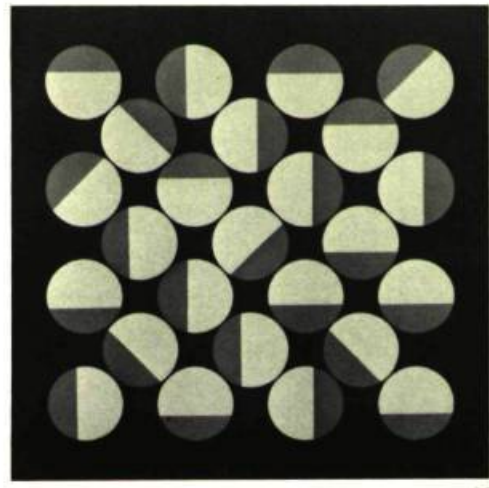
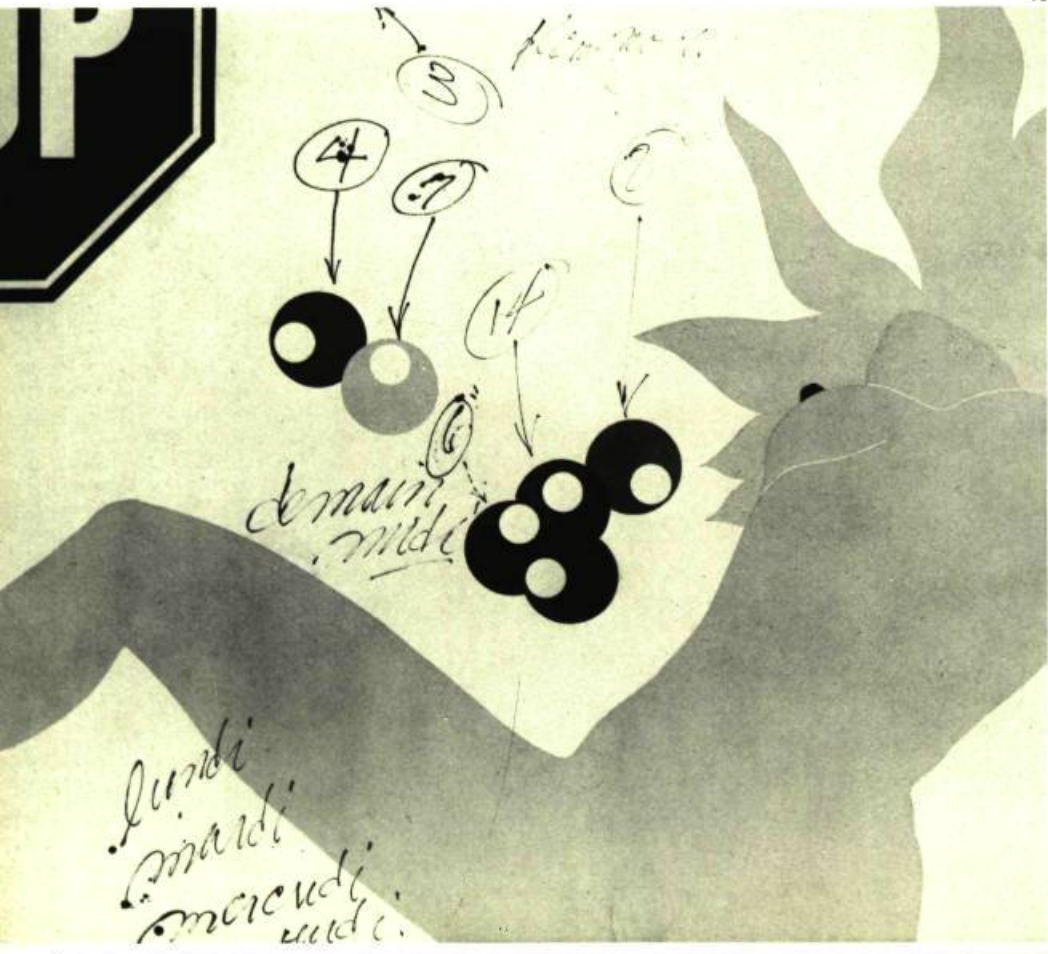
Germain Lefebvre, Conservateur adjoint de l'art canadien au Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal.

English Translation, p. 90



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12. Jennifer DICKSON
Souvenirs No 52, 1972.
Acrylique et collage sur toile; 82 cm x 94.
(Coll. S. et S. Bronfman d'art canadien)

13. Gilles BOISVERT, 1940
Demain midi, 1969.
Acrylique sur toile; 122 cm x 137,7.
(Collection S. et S. Bronfman d'art canadien)

14. Denis JUNEAU
Rondes rouges et bleues, 1967.
Acrylique sur toile; 172 cm 7 x 172,7.
(Legs Horsley et Annie Townsend)

rest and let us also be assured that many contemporary artists, and not minor ones, will perhaps join them some day.

Secondly, the choice of the work of each painter is variable and uneven in number and quality, most being represented by only one or two works. The collection admits of voids, particularly in the class of French-Canadian painters. It must not be forgotten that until very recently the Museum was the almost exclusive domain of the Anglo-Saxon *gentry* of Montreal and that its members were almost the only donors. It is understandable that they gave their preference to their compatriots and that, perhaps badly served by that cultural isolationism which has too often afflicted some Anglo-Canadians, they were led to neglect the French-Canadian painters. Very fortunately, the Museum's acquisition policy has changed much in the last twenty years and has appreciably corrected this state of things. However, there still exist some deficiencies. Among the painters of the past, some are still conspicuous by their absence, such as Zacharie Vincent — although it is true that he produced very little —, Napoléon Bourassa, Charles Huot, Ludger Larose, Henri Beau, Joseph Saint-Charles and, closer to us, Randolph Hewton and Alexandre Bercovitch. The Museum owns only one oil by Henri Julien, Georges Delfosse and Marc-Aurèle Fortin, and it seems to us that the groups by Suzor-Coté — painter of Bois-Francs who made a career in Montreal and by Clarence Gagnon — Montreal painter who made his in Paris — could be more ample. As much, in any case, as those by William Brymner and Maurice Cullen, of whom the Museum owns a considerable number of very good works. Finally, the Museum contains only two Homer Watsons and three Horatio Walkers, all very characteristic, nevertheless of the style of these artists. It is to be hoped that all of these absences will be corrected with time.

We have just described the shadowed corners, and it now remains for us to emphasize the strong points of the collection of yesterday's Canadian painting at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.

Putting aside the few weak spots mentioned above, we can state that, all in all, a visitor to the Museum can acquire there a satisfying knowledge of the evolution of painting in Canada, provided, naturally, that the canvases are hung, as was not, unfortunately, the case in the past. A visit to the McCord Museum, with which the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has made a friendly agreement, will give the lover of art the opportunity of completing in large measure the information previously acquired at the Museum. The latter has few specimens of the work of our very first painters, who confined themselves mostly to church pictures. A recent donation by Mr. Maurice Corbeil has brought to the Museum two historical figures painted by François Malepart de Beaucourt, and five years ago a rare still-life by William von Moll Berczy was acquired. Paul Kane, the iconographer par excellence of the Indians of Canada, is best represented at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and at the National Museum in Ottawa; the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts owns two of his pictures which are first-rate. Cornelius Krieghoff, a clever artificial painter who has for decades been the favourite of auctioneers and Anglo-Canadian financiers, appears well represented with eleven canvases in which are displayed his dexterity and his picturesque shodiness, while his contemporary, William Raphael, holds his own very well and less noisily with two characteristic works. Jean-Baptiste Roy-Audy is well represented by three solemn and

pompous portraits, and the three Quebec painters, Joseph Légaré, Antoine Plamondon and Théophile Hamel are represented as well, the first by a strange composition, the second by portraits and religious pictures, odd parts of a stations of the Cross, and the third by two strong portraits. The lesser Canadian landscape painters of the 19th century are numerous on the walls, with their panoramic views divested of pretensions other than descriptive.

But it is with Canadian painting of the 20th century that the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts achieves a great documentary richness. We have noted in passing the excellence of the representation of William Brymner and Maurice Cullen, while deploring the insufficiency of Suzor-Coté's and Clarence Gagnon's works. Almost all the important painters of the pre-contemporary period are worthily represented here, and almost always by fine pictures. Three Ozias Leduc, more or less recently acquired, one of which is his famous *L'Heure mauve*, illustrate wonderfully although incompletely the special talent of this recluse, while John Lyman holds an honourable place with seven luminous oils. A delightful Adrien Hébert, bought recently, *Hyman's Tobacco Shop*, has just been added to his limpid perspective, *Place Jacques-Cartier*. The ensemble of canvases and sketches by the painters of the Group of Seven and their epigones, Albert Robinson, David Milne, Lionel LeMoine FitzGerald and Emily Carr is perfectly representative — although scanty in number — of this school of Toronto painting with which not everyone is infatuated, it is true, but which has nevertheless played an important rôle in the history of Canadian art.

The very best part of yesterday's Canadian painting collection at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, if not the best of the whole museum, is undeniably that of the pictures, sketches and water-colours by James Wilson Morrice, who was and still remains to this day Canada's greatest painter. Thanks are due for this to the artist's family, who generously bestowed on the Museum an unrivalled ensemble in which one can admire all the facets of the painter's talent. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts possesses no fewer than seventy of Morrice's works, of all sizes. Of these, nine were given by different English donors, nine were bought by the Museum thanks to funds provided by other patrons, and the rest were bequeathed by the Morrice Family, among them about ten sketches and water-colours in 1974, during the closing of the Museum. If we exclude the nudes, we can enjoy in this much-varied collection all the aspects of this engaging and unusual poet who was the equal of the most brilliant minor masters of Impressionism: landscapes of France and the Antilles, views of Venice or North Africa, street or circus scenes, melancholy faces sunk in reverie, snowy vistas of Quebec, all of Morrice is here with his economy of line and colour, with his accents discreet as murmurs and yet so enticing. I know several art lovers, and we are among them, who have often returned to the Museum solely to see the Morrice works once more. We are told that the renovated Museum will have its Morrice room, and that they will exhibit in turn the different pictures they have of his. To mark the reopening of the Museum in May 1976, no celebration could be more brilliant, in our opinion, than to see gathered together for once, in the same place, all the Morrice works in the Museum's collection.

The late Donald Jarvis, who had a feeling for a spectacle, had persuaded the Canadian government to acquire some canvases by masters from the collection of the princes of Liechtenstein (two Filippo Lippi, a Memling and a

Rubens), in order to enrich the National Gallery of Canada by prestigious pictures able to attract crowds and, in the same line of thought, he had even dreamed of bringing in also the extraordinary *Portrait of Ginevra Benci* by Leonardo da Vinci now at the National Gallery in Washington. We have often examined the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts collections in order to discover in them poles of popular attraction. There are excellent things in our museum, but few dazzling ones. Lacking Mona Lisas or Venus de Milos, why should we not further show to advantage this prestigious collection of James Wilson Morrice's works that is the brightest jewel of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts collection of Canadian painting of yesterday?

1. To fill the gaps in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts collections, and in all of Canada's museums, and to hasten their enrichment, it is much to be desired that there should finally be passed in Ottawa a more flexible and more generous tax abatement law, comparable to the one in force in the United States, and which would further prompt collectors to transfer their treasures to public galleries.
2. Our warm thanks to Mr. Germain Lefebvre, Curator of the Canadian Painting Collection at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, whose assistance, during this period when the museum was closed, has been immeasurably valuable to us.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

QUEBEC CONTEMPORARY ART IN THE MUSEUM

By Germain LEFEBVRE

In October, 1940, the Art Association of Montreal — since become The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts — staged a major exhibition of the work of Alfred Pellán who had just returned to Canada after a fourteen-year stay in Paris. It had the effect of a bomb on Montreal critics and art-lovers and the Museum, in presenting it, officially recognized the artistic renewal which had begun in Quebec a year before through the foundation of the Contemporary Art Society, under the leadership of John Lyman.

The desire to maintain a close link with contemporary creative activity was not a new phenomenon at the Museum where the *Spring Exhibition* each year shows the most recent achievement of painters, sculptors and print-makers. Even before the Pellanian shock, the *Spring Exhibition* catalogues of the late 1930s included the names of a number of artists who soon were to participate in the emancipation of an art centred on the search for new aesthetic values, such as Goodridge Roberts, Fritz Brandner, Marian Scott, Jean-Paul Lemieux, and Paul-Émile Borduas.

A year after the appearance of *Refus global*, whose author drew the censure and anathema of the authorities and the Establishment, the jury of the sixty-sixth *Spring Exhibition*, presented from April 20 to May 15, 1949, dared accept the works of Marcel Barbeau, Pierre Gauvreau, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Jean-Paul Riopelle, all co-signatories of the manifesto, and topped its audacity by awarding the prize for painting to Paul-Émile Borduas. It is interesting to note that the exhibition also included entries from Léon Bellefleur, Anne Kahane, Jean McEwen, Alfred Pellán, Jacques de Tonnancour, Albert Dumouchel, Louis Archambault, and Robert Roussil.

Beyond these group exhibitions, the Museum

early in 1949 initiated twin solo exhibitions by contemporary artists — budding creators, then only novices, who since have achieved fame. Exhibitions during 1956, for example, included the names of Jean-Paul Riopelle, Louis Belzile, Fernand Toupin, and Pierre Clerk. In 1960, Micheline Beauchemin, Jean Goguen, Betty Goodwin, Jacques Hurtubise, Guido Molinari, and Claude Tousignant, who to-day rank among the better known artists, showed their work. More recently, exhibitions staged by the Junior Associates in the Stable Gallery pursued the Museum's interest in new art. In addition, major retrospective exhibitions consecrated the work of the leading Quebec masters in the Museum's principal galleries: Paul-Émile Borduas in 1962, Jean-Paul Riopelle in 1963, Jean-Paul Lemieux in 1967 and, shortly before the temporary closing of the Museum, Alfred Pellán in 1972.

The imperative need experienced by Museum authorities to express the vitality of Quebec art also became evident in acquisition policy, making it possible over the years to establish a collection which, both in terms of scope and in the quality of works it has assembled, marks the significance of artistic development in Quebec. As early as 1942, the Museum acquired a small still life by Paul-Émile Borduas which he had painted the previous year. It was the first work by Borduas to be acquired by a public institution.

Curators try to keep in close touch with the evolution of various trends, making every effort to obtain, as soon as they appear, the most notable works: a painting by Marian Scott executed in 1942, another by Maurice Raymond dated 1943, a 1954 painting by Fernand Leduc, a 1969 sculpture by Ulysse Comtois were acquired, for example, within a few months of their creation. When, with the passing of time, serious shortcomings are observed in the representation of certain periods or, more accurately, of certain artists, a search begins without any hesitation whatsoever in order to fill the gaps. Alfred Pellán's *Les Pensées* of the years 1935-40 filled a regrettable void in 1956. The same is true of Riopelle's *Autriche*, painted in 1954, which entered the Museum's collection in 1963; of a 1930 abstract drawing by Brandtner which was purchased in 1970; of a 1948 Cosgrove panel, acquired in 1961.

As a result of such concerted efforts, the Museum's Quebec collection not only makes it possible to reconstitute a panorama of the most meaningful movements of Quebec art but often also enables the viewer to rediscover how artists, and especially their works, avoid the labels one tends to place on them too readily. Just as the Automatist credo fails to explain all of Borduas' œuvre, neither can the concept of Plasticien painting imprison within a narrow framework all the painters sometimes linked to it, by near or far, because of their formal, preferably geometric, concerns.

A range of carefully chosen paintings by Borduas illustrates with remarkable clarity the principal phases in the evolution of his pictorial expression. From the 1941 *Nature morte* to the 1942 gouache, including the austere portrait of *Mme G.* (1941), one sees the progressive abandonment of figurative pretexts. The 1947 *Carquois fleuris* solidifies surrealist intuition and the automatic gesture; these gain in scope in *Les Signes s'envolent* (1953) and *Le Jardin sous la neige* (1954), opening the way to subconscious impulses. The artist's great lucidity finally imposes itself with renewed intensity in the 1957 *Étoile noire*, a painting soberly constructed on the spatial relationships of modulations of white, black and brown, bringing Borduas to the limits of the pictorial phase.

Alfred Pellán's self-admitted attachment for an art based on the figurative is rarely in doubt in the whole of this entire œuvre. His *Jardin volcanique*, acquired by the Museum shortly after it was executed in 1960, is undoubtedly the work wherein he comes closest to abstract expression. Mixing the most diverse elements, such as dry tobacco, silica powder, and poly-fila, in his paintings, Pellán fashioned a glittering surface which marked the peak of his search for a form of electric painting — a painting so intense that it would be "impossible to look at".

From Fernand Toupin and Fernand Leduc, who were among the early members of the Plasticiens, the Museum owns *Blanc-Sablons* (1964) and *Plans érosions* (1968), respectively; the works are so different from one another that it is difficult to imagine any bonds which might have joined them effectively in a single school. Furthermore, the paintings *Rectangles et lignes jaunes* (1961) by Guido Molinari, *Cercle latin* (1969) by Claude Tousignant and *Rondes rouges et bleues* (1967) by Denis Juneau who, among others representing the second wave of the movement, share a true affinity, despite a difference in time, in their common search for vibratory effects in colour, in expertly measured and organized spaces.

There are many painters who, though they may have manifested sympathy for the aesthetic ideas of one or another of the militant groups at some point in their careers, kept a certain distance in order to pursue their original research. Their presence in the Museum's collection testifies to the validity of their efforts and the wealth of their contribution. Jacques de Tonnancour is represented by three paintings evoking an equal number of facets of his vast production. *Trilobe*, executed in 1966, masterfully expresses a new orientation. Jean McEwen, Charles Gagnon, Yves Gaucher, Jean Dallaire, Albert Dumouchel and Jean-Paul Lemieux, among many others, each have at least two of their works in a collection which embraces the great majority of Quebec artists of any significance.

Though painting predominates the contemporary collection as a whole, the other disciplines, particularly sculpture and graphics, are in no way neglected. The 1959 acquisition of *Waiting People* by Anne Kahane, Robert Rous-sil's *Composition* and an untitled work by Armand Vaillancourt formed the nucleus of this collection. Ten years later, it was enriched significantly through the addition of works by Henry Saxe, Serge Tousignant, Ulysse Comtois, François Dallegret, and Hugh Leroy. Daudelin, Hayvaert, Trudeau, Gnass and Bonet also figure prominently in it. There are few monumental works but creation of a long-sought sculpture garden suggests the expansion of this body of work in the near future.

The art of printmaking assumed major importance in Montreal because of the talent of the late teacher Albert Dumouchel. He fostered among his disciples and students a love for patient, meticulous work, leading to their discovery of the infinite possibilities of the various graphic techniques. The proliferation of research and production studios, in Quebec as well as in Montreal, underlines the success of his efforts. They are reflected in the Museum by the considerable growth of the print collection during the last decade. The master himself is represented by more than a score of works while hundreds of linocuts, serigraphs, etchings and lithographs illustrate the variety and originality of those who continued in his wake, including Richard Lacroix, Roland Giguère, Gérard Tremblay, Robert Savoie, Gilles Boisvert, and Pierre Ayot.

The Museum's collection of Quebec contemporary art has grown meaningfully each year but since 1963, it has been characterized by vigorous rejuvenation. Thirteen years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bronfman agreed to contribute an annual amount of \$10,000 for the purchase of works by young Canadian artists aged 35 years or less. Their generosity has been maintained ever since and Quebec artists have benefited accordingly. Paintings by Lise Gervais, Claude Girard, Jacques Hurtubise, Jan Menses, Louise Scott; tapestries by Micheline Beauchemin and Fernand Daudelin; and an impressive group of drawings and prints entered the Museum's collection because of the fund.

After a long interruption which allowed a face-lifting and the creation of spaces worthy of the quality and diversity of its collections, the Museum is opening its doors again. Visitors surely will be fascinated to discover under new lighting the scope and importance of the representation of Quebec's constantly evolving contemporary art and, especially, to admire for the first time the harvest of the years of transition.

DONALD LINDBLAD AND HIS DOG

Karl MacKEEMAN

"A chain attached to the dog is staked from the centre (of the canvas) to a brush, which is his favorite chewy. Attached to the brush is another stick with a magic-marker attached to it". This is the artist's description of the painting methods he had used in collaboration with his faithful dog, Thud, both of Bass River, Nova Scotia. He goes on to describe how they contribute to and control the marks made on the nine-foot canvas sections. The dog, in his attempt to gain control and possession of the brush, causes marks to be made on the canvas. This movement of playing chase and tug-of-war on the canvas is expressed automatically by the attached marker. The felt tip expresses speed in longer and lighter marks, and tight agitation where the lines are concentrated in areas. In short, it records graphically all the movements of the game. There is no concern here with 'self-expression' as with 'the artist controlling the brush directly' and emotionally applying paint to the surface. In this case the artist sets off a series of events which cause a painting to happen and also express some record of those events as performed in canine frolic.

The 'dog paintings' represent some of the most recent work of Donald Lindblad, shown at the Owens Art Gallery at Mount Allison University, Sackville, New Brunswick. The large paintings with laminated photographs in the centre occupied one wall to the left of the entrance. The photo-enlargements depict on one canvas a portrait of Thud, the artist's dog, and on the other a picture of the dog and master in action.

Donald Lindblad was born in Alton, Illinois, and studied art at Kansas City Art Institute before coming to Halifax in 1969. Here he attended The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design until 1972.

The analytical use of the words "modified" and "unmodified" reoccurs in conversation with the artist and the words themselves often form part of the painting. There are two 'dog