Summaries of the Articles

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SUMMARIES OF THE ARTICLES

Translation by BILL TRENT

editorial

BY ANDRÉE PARADIS

Works of art generally live on because they have specific identities. Isolated from their creators, they are autonomous. They may proclaim a basic meaning or truth — but whose? That of the artist, or that of the spectator? Or is the meaning the result of a combination of the artist's intent and the viewer's reaction? Then, too, it must be realized that there is the element of time and that this may introduce a third dimension.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to establish the meaning of the contemporary work. Modern art really defies decoding without access to all possible sources of information. Michel Seuphor maintains that the people who are best equipped to popularize modern day art are not the critics but the artists themselves. And in this connection, he cites the dialogues of Mondrian, the works of Kandinsky and the notebooks of Delaunay and Arp and the writings of Klee and Moholy-Nagy.

This thinking is reflected in Great Britain with the publication of Leonardo (Pergamon Press) in which artists contribute texts in which they discuss their works. The publication is primarily intended as a means of communication among artists. Learning is the basis of everything — and, in basic terms, this implies imparting to the young what their elders have learned. There is no great dividing line between art and the public that views it. It is simply a question of communication and the artist is certainly his own best intermediary.

museum of contemporary art

BY GILLES HENAULT

Millions of people visited the International Gallery of Art at Expo 67 last year. The permanent pavilion in which the gallery was set up is now the property of the Quebec Government and since last February it has housed the Museum of Contemporary Art, an institution which owes its existence to the Department of Cultural Affairs.
For anyone interested in pre-Columbian art in Mexico, I would recommend an indispensable book by Octavio Paz called Le Labymiste de la Solitude.

mexican painting

BY CARLA STELLWEG

Mexican art today is the continuation rather than the result of the characteristics which fashioned the sensibility, language and mode of expression over the centuries. The contemporary Mexican artist is influenced by existing means of communication and by new trends in thinking and creativity. The group of Mexican artists considered the most important today includes such people as Vlady, Manuel Felgueres, Arnold Belkin and Vincente Rojo, all of whom are intensively engaged in a search for new dimensions. The most recent generation of painters includes people like Pedro Coronel, G. Aceves Navarro, Arnoldo Coen, Robert Donis, Lopez Loza and Icaza.

Yves Trudeau

BY TONY P. SPITERIS

At the beginning of his period of transformation, Yves Trudeau made good use of current technology by employing metal to express his feelings of free form. He remained figurative while simplifying and even eliminating the philosophical qualities of the past. Later, unsatisfied and restless, he moved into a new stage in which the wood was framed and squeezed by the metal and in which the emptiness was filled, or at least defined, by a trellis of long nails. It was a technique already employed by the Yugoslav Djamonia and permitted Trudeau to work out ambivalent plans. It made it possible also for him to suggest a certain sense of color while giving the adventure-some spectator new scope for his imagination.

The demands of void and volume, a reminder of Henry Moore, and a strong love of the material involved have given an unexpected vitality to the work of Trudeau. It is not difficult to discern in his work an old empirical tradition dear to the English, a tradition which exploits the highest organic vitality of matter. His subjects became more restrained, more static as he gave himself to the sober discipline of the bas-relief. There was a pause and the empty spaces gave way to occupied surfaces. During this period, in 1966 and 1967, he did his Barque des Dieux and his Phare du Cosmos. Before this, he had created a whole collection of characters, some of them dramatic, others right out of science fiction. In this collection were such works as Oedipus, Cosmonaute, l'Homme Cosmique and l'Homme Sphinx. The conflict here manifests itself in the worry, the agitation and the tragic in the structures. The sculptor achieved a kind of relief in doing the Phare du Cosmos. His work shown at Expo 67.

The question of achieving a plastic expression of time and space has always been the basis of the artistic dream. Brancusi, Pevsner and others right out of science fiction. In this collection were such works as Oedipus, Cosmonaute, l'Homme Cosmique and l'Homme Sphinx. The conflict here manifests itself in the worry, the agitation and the tragic in the structures. The sculptor achieved a kind of relief in doing the Phare du Cosmos. His work shown at Expo 67.

Picasso in Rome

BY JACQUES LEPAGE

Face and coincidence have played strange roles in the lives of great men. Picasso, for example, could never have guessed in 1916 that in the early days of the following year he would leave Paris for Rome and that at the Hotel Mirvella, he would meet a dancer who would become his wife. Nor could he have guessed how great an influence his stay in Italy would have on his work — or that for eight years he would devote much of his time to the theatre.

Picasso's association with the theatre began when he did set designs for a ballet conceived by Jean Cocteau, set to music by Satie and mounted by Sergei Diaghilev for the Ballets Russes. This was the austere period of cubism and painting for the theatre, especially for the Ballets Russes, was tantamount to committing a crime. No one believed that Picasso would go through with it but he did.

Ernest Ansermet, conductor of the Ballets Russes orchestra, recalls those bygone days this way: "Picasso was with us in Rome in the spring of 1917. He was working on Parade (the ballet) with Cocteau, Satie and Diaghilev. I lived at the Minerva Hotel along with other members of the company, including Olga Koklova whom he loved. When he was 37, he married Olga.

Ansermet recalls that Picasso travelled with the company to various cities of Europe and for some years was considered a man of the world. In Madrid, on one occasion, he even gave up his old Montmartre clothing for the smarter fashions of the continental. Picasso, however, did not change as an artist. He remained independent, fiercely protecting his freedom. It was in Rome that the artist did some of his most beautiful drawings. One of his drawings was of Cocteau and he did a number of caricatures of such people as Diaghilev, Andre Senneterre and Massine.

Living with the cast of the Ballets Russes was exciting but Italy was holding a far deeper effect on the artist. There among the antiquities of Rome, Picasso's work underwent a great transformation, the effects of which would be seen for years to come.

Jean Antoine Derners

BY JACQUES DE ROUSSAN

It is a fact that Jean Antoine Derners' search for rhythm in art led him into abstraction and that some 15 years ago, he was influenced by De Kooning. But he was soon to find himself in conflict because of his flamboyant forms and the assurances they gave of the predominance of color. He seemed to be fated to follow a highly-personalized route to artistic achievement. He began to unravel the conflict within him about 1960 when he gave his characters a figurative look in a luminous environment born of a subconscious rather than an objective reality.

The first stage of this evolution was marked by an elimination of conflict of color. Reds and blues dominated. The blues won out and then gave way to dominant greens and a uniform effect of sky. Derners thus found his niche, not in the conflict of surface and color but in a world of movement and reverie. He does not seek to integrate himself with the denatured world of the 20th century. Rather he seeks to elude modern pragmatism and find his place in the three-dimensional context of movement, form and light.
James Rosenquist

Pop art, and the work of James Rosenquist in particular, may only be appreciated by the observer who has come to understand the dialectic between the individuality of the artist and the way in which the works are presented. The images may well evoke a number of reactions. The viewer may find them intimate or disquieting, even profound.

There is much said, perhaps too much, of the influences of poster art but where technique is concerned, there is an almost academic perfection to it. And it was in poster painting that Rosenquist learned his pictorial language. He is best known for his chalices and two of them are in the Ursuline Convent. One of his chalices, that of l’Islet, is truly exceptional. There is no doubt that Ranvoyzé’s work is among the most important in the history of Quebec art.

Ranvoyzé is well represented in Canadian collections. The National Gallery of Canada acquired two of his major works, Painting for the American Negro (1962-63) and Capillary Action II (1963). Deep Pile (1966), Stellar Structure (1966) and Circles of Confusion (1965-66) belong to individual Toronto collections. A lithograph entitled Roll Down (1965-66) is part of the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario. Last February, the National Gallery organized a retrospective which included 32 of his paintings, engravings and sculptures. It was, for the artist, the most important show ever organized of his works.

Visitors to the United States Pavilion at Expo 67 had the opportunity of viewing one of his large-scale works, a giant canvas 33 feet high called Fire Pole (Vie des Arts, No. 48) which the artist claimed had a certain rapport with events in Vietnam. It would be a mistake, however, to see his works in terms of social comment alone. In the first place he attacks the established canons and in so doing he rolls back the frontiers of art. His work is the result of constant research and experience. Most important perhaps, he detoxes a lack of natural quality and honesty and rebels against sham in any of its forms.

FrançoiS Ranvoyzé

BY JEAN TRUDEL

Despite the research and writings of Barbeau, Morisset, Traquair and Langton, comparatively little is known about the old gold and silver work of 19th and 20th century Quebec. The big problem facing the researcher, of course, is the fact that the works are so widely scattered. There are hundreds of pieces in the collections of the Quebec Museum and of Henry Birks but there are thousands more spread around among churches, religious houses, private collectors and Canadian museums.

The history of Quebec’s beautiful gold and silver works contains all sorts of artistic, economic and sociological implications which would not only be helpful to the researcher but would also enable us to expand our knowledge of the subject. It is a difficult matter, however, when one considers how widely-dispersed the works are. To make matters worse, many parish centres are selling many of the real masterpieces and are using the silver as a source of revenue. When a work changes hands frequently, its origins are usually lost.

The most widely known and most prolific of our artists in this field is François Ranvoyzé who was born in 1739 and lived in Quebec until his death in 1819. Historical records indicate that he had a shop on St. John street and, beginning in 1774, his name appears in the account books of various Quebec parishes. It was the golden age of the art in Quebec and men like Laurent Amyot, François Baullière, Louis Quevillon, Louis Dulonpée and others were at their peak of popularity. Because of the heavy demand for gold and silver objects, the factories were giving important orders to the gold and silversmiths and Ranvoyzé emerged as one of the highly-respected member of the merchant community.

A number of interesting pieces had been brought to Quebec from Paris during the French regime and they were invariably the pride of their owners. But with the increase in population, more were needed. Craftsmen were then given many of the old pieces to repair and copy. Ranvoyzé was little-known for commercial efforts. His main work was with religious centres and he used the French imports owned by them as his models. He is best known for his chalices and two of them are in the Ursuline Convent. One of his chalices, that of l’Islet, is truly exceptional. There is no doubt that Ranvoyzé’s work is among the most important in the history of Quebec art.
michele demers

BY JACQUES DE ROUSSAN

The age of space and electronic revolution has left our environment in a state of constant change. Maurice Demers, of Montreal, is conscious of the rapid developments taking place and in his St. Andre street workshop he is producing work that reflects the fluctuating currents of our time. Demers is playing the prophet. He employs the materials and ideas of his day and hopes they will help us become aware of our environment — but at the same time he is projecting into the future, prophesying the reality of the next century.

le patriote

BY CLAUDE-LYSE GAGNON

Le Patriote, the east-end Montreal boîte a chansons, has added a new dimension. It will continue to feature singers but in addition space has been made available for exhibitions of painting, sculpture, photographs and for poetry readings and meetings. The exhibition hall is situated above the club. In effect Le Patriote has become a popular cultural centre to which the public is invited free of charge.

man and his world

The French Pavilion at Man and His World will house six exhibitions this year. The Quebec Museum has loaned 150 works of the Canadian sculptor Alfred Laliberté. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has organized two shows, Terre des Femmes and Zoo-in. The Dominion Gallery will show works from the collection of its owners, Dr. and Mrs. Max Stern, as well as some works recently acquired from the gallery by collectors. There will be an exhibition entitled Les Amitiés Franco-Canadiennes. Finally, there will be an exhibition of posters about various countries serviced by Air France. These are by Georges Mathieu.

canadian exhibition

The Exposition Realités Canadiennes, which has been touring Europe since last year, will move to Mexico next October as part of the cultural program organized in connection with the Olympics. The exhibition, made up of a wide array of items, attempts to explain how 20,000,000 Canadians live, work, and play, and tries to explain their national characteristics and aspirations. The exhibition makes use of many of the visual methods employed at Expo 67.

A brilliant retrospective of the work of Jean Dallaire was arranged by André Marchand, curator of the Quebec Museum. The exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal included some 100 works done between 1930 and 1965. The collection featured gouaches, charcoalcs, oils and some tapestries. There were many lovely items although some even more beautiful ones were omitted. Dallaire was born in Hull and studied there and in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Boston before going to Paris on a grant.

BY GUY ROBERT

selection 67

In a recent issue of Vie des Arts, Luke Rombout, of Mount Allison University, Sackville, N.B., discussed the presentation of Selection 67. Now there is a reply from Claude Roussel, director of the Department of Visual Arts at the University of Moncton. He takes objection to a charge of aggressiveness without motivation in the show. In displaying the work of nine New Brunswick Francophones, there was no attempt to attract attention by playing up Acadian regionalism. The creative vitality of the artists seems to assure a future as dynamic as that of any other region in Canada. Selection 67 was as good and as interesting as other exhibitions held in the Maritimes.

BY M.-MADELEINE AZARD-MALaurrie

A collection of works from the oldest civilization in America will be shown for four months beginning June 1 at the Grand Palais in Paris. They belong to the Mayan civilization of Guatemala and are part of the findings in recent excavations. Archaeologists discovered the traces of ancient cities which, for nearly 15 centuries, occupied the high surfaces of Central America.

BY M.-MADELEINE AZARD-MALaurrie

The centenary of the death of Vuillard is being marked at L'Orangerie des Tuileries this summer with a joint exhibition of his works and those of his close friend, Roussel. It is in remembrance of the long friendship of the two artists that the joint show is being presented. Vuillard and Roussel were inspired in different ways and their works show a great diversion of subject matter. Vuillard painted interiors and portraits while Roussel did landscapes.

BY M.-MADELEINE AZARD-MALaurrie

royal academy

BY MARIE RAYMOND

A magnificent exhibition of 18th century French works of art was held by the Royal Academy of Arts in London. No effort was spared by the organizers to produce a collection that was completely representative of the period. It was an extraordinary presentation of more than 1,000 works. Fifteen countries, as well as many individuals, sent their best works. If there is one regret, it is that only the people of Britain could see it. The exhibition should really go on tour.

BY J. M. VAN AVERMAET

brussels

It was something of a surrealist season for art lovers of Brussels. First there was the retrospective of Paul Delvaux at the Musee d'Ixelles and then there was the Magritte retrospective at the Galerie Brachot. The first was an extraordinary show. The fact that an official museum would undertake to organize a retrospective of this importance is proof of the esteem in which Delvaux, this authentic master of Belgian art, is held.

La Brasserie MOLSON du Quebec Ltee