Translations/Traductions

Yvonne Kirbyson, Lucile Ouimet and Pierre W. Desjardins

Number 56, Fall 1969

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58155ac

See table of contents

Publisher(s)
La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN
0042-5435 (print)
1923-3183 (digital)

Cite this article
The act of faith by the builders who wanted to give everyone the opportunity for entertainment the opportunity to increase their knowledge and pleasure, to assure their access to a world of marvels, such is the adventure of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa with which this issue will deal. The centre was brought into existence by the National Arts Centre Act (14-15 Elizabeth II, 1966, chapter 48) which received royal assent on July 15, 1966, by Order-in-Council (1966-2273) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation and nine other members were appointed as provided in Section 4 of the Act. Section 3 of the Act opens the Centre to the arts community, the Board, the Mayors of Ottawa and Hull, the President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Director of the Canada Council, and the Government Film Commissioner.

The National Arts Centre also owns its inception to the National Capital Arts Alliance which was founded in February 1963 and soon after embodied approximately 65 art organizations within the National Capital region. In June of that year the Alliance invited Dominion Consultants Associates to study the feasibility of creating a national centre for the performing arts. The report which followed — the so-called Brown Book — was submitted to the Prime Minister in November, and on December 23, Mr. Pearson announced acceptance in principle of its two key recommendations, the creation of a national performing arts centre in Ottawa, and the organization therein of an annual national festival, as the major centennial project of the Federal Government in the National Capital.

An inter-ministerial committee was then created, its task was to prepare the necessary legislative measures for the establishment of the project until an appropriate agency had been created. The committee reported directly to the Secretary of State. The appointment of a Co-ordinator — Mr. G. Hamilton Southam on secondment from the Department of External Affairs — and the choice of the National Architectural firm of Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Sise were among the committee’s first recommendations to be accepted. In February 1964 the Prime Minister announced that the building was to be erected on Confederation Square, a central location made possible by a most generous gift of land by the City of Ottawa. At the same time the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State announced the setting up of advisory committees on operations, on building and art, and the role of these committees was to analyze the Brown Book in detail and to make appropriate recommendations to the Coordinator. In January 1965 construction work was begun under the direction of the Department of Public Works. The completion date was set for December 1968.

The first function of the Board of Trustees who met in Ottawa on March 8th, and 9th, under the chairmanship of Mr. Lawrence Freiman, was to determine that the Director, Mr. G. Hamilton Southam, should bear the title of Director-General. More than anyone else, Mr. Southam was the author of the project that he brought to completion. He wanted to give the capital the prestigious dimension that it had lacked: a centre propitious to the development of artistic talent, an "open" centre that would symbolize friendship and cooperation and which would arouse new national pride. The opening of the National Arts Centre on May 31, 1969 is an event that involves all of us.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Architecture at the National Arts Centre

On May 31, 1969, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa was officially opened. Erected in the centre of the city on 6½ acres of land at a cost of $46 million, the complex is the first actual sign of an intent to endow the capital with the cultural and social facilities that had always been lacking there.

Following representations and studies undertaken by the national capital’s Arts Alliance, the Canadian government entrusted the preparation of the building plans to the architectural firm of Desbarats, Affleck, Dimakopoulos, Sise, and to the Prime Minister’s office. From the technical point of view, the solution was not an easy one, for with the exception of the fairly wide-spread neo-gothic style, the city had almost no architectural tradition or, at least, a cultural tradition. The problem that was set and the conditions to be met could be summarized as follows:

The Integration of the Arts, a Permanent Debate

BY ANDRÉE PARADIS

Should an architecture that is complete be sufficient unto itself? And when may we speak of completeness?

Perhaps we can in the case of the Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto who, since about 1930 has been taking the part of a franc-tireur in international architecture circles. Putting aside concrete to return to traditional materials like wood and brick, introducing poetry into functionalism without denying the geometric severity in favour since constructivism; it is not an accident that he created a style that assured him a great popularity. He meets the aspirations of society for which he conceives a place to live that answers fundamental necessity for well-known materials and sensuality in it, and it leads him to build not only a house but also everything that serves the man who lives in it. Moreover, the manner in which he treats materials makes all ornamentation superfluous. He is said to be violently opposed to the integration of the arts.

The debate between puritans and non-puritans of the integration of the arts thus retains all of its acuity. It nevertheless remains that the architect who acts as a creator can also complement the painter and the sculptor with whom he feels affinities and with whom he can develop his ideas in favourable conditions. Such an attitude to work existed at the National Arts Centre where architect Fred Lebensold frankly opted for integration of the arts. Has this broad-mindedness, that desire to involve the artist found a satisfactory answer? Diverse opinions will allow us to have at least some idea of this and to measure the importance of the problems to be resolved.

The Omnipresence of Cultural Needs

The accelerated construction of vast architectural complexes intended for cultural purposes is a phenomenon of our times. Here and there, new buildings are going up. The postulate of Novalis is especially apt: “It depends on us whether the world is consistent with our wishes.”

For a long time cut off from cultural wealth, North America is taking the lead and is favorably building theatres and cultural centres. Lively controversy is the result. In the United States as in Canada, numerous objections are raised: from the economic point of view, the increased costs of building and operating; from the cultural point of view, design against the technical requirements of contemporary artists; from a political point of view, centralization versus decentralization.

This opposition is often justified of course, but the enthusiasm of the crowds who frequent the new art centres is undiminished. For the builders who wanted to give everyone the opportunity for entertainment, the opportunity to increase their knowledge and pleasure, to assure their access to a world of marvels, the Centre is an adventure of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa with which this issue will deal.

The Centre was brought into existence by the National Arts Centre Act (14-15 Elizabeth II, 1966, chapter 48) which received royal assent on July 15, 1966, by Order-in-Council (1966-2273) the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation and nine other members were appointed as provided in Section 4 of the Act. Section 3 of the Act opens the Centre to the arts community, the Board, the Mayors of Ottawa and Hull, the President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Director of the Canada Council, and the Government Film Commissioner.

The National Arts Centre also owns its inception to the National Capital Arts Alliance which was founded in February 1963 and soon after embodied approximately 65 art organizations within the National Capital region. In June of that year the Alliance invited Dominion Consultants Associates to study the feasibility of creating a national centre for the performing arts. The report which followed — the so-called Brown Book — was submitted to the Prime Minister in November, and on December 23, Mr. Pearson announced acceptance in principle of its two key recommendations, the creation of a national performing arts centre in Ottawa, and the organization therein of an annual national festival, as the major centennial project of the Federal Government in the National Capital.

An inter-ministerial committee was then created, its task was to prepare the necessary legislative measures for the establishment of the project until an appropriate agency had been created. The committee reported directly to the Secretary of State. The appointment of a Co-ordinator — Mr. G. Hamilton Southam on secondment from the Department of External Affairs — and the choice of the Montreal architectural firm of Affleck, Desbarats, Dimakopoulos, Lebensold, Sise were among the committee’s first recommendations to be accepted. In February 1964 the Prime Minister announced that the building was to be erected on Confederation Square, a central location made possible by a most generous gift of land by the City of Ottawa. At the same time the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State announced the setting up of advisory committees on operations, on building and art, and the role of these committees was to analyze the Brown Book in detail and to make appropriate recommendations to the Coordinator. In January 1965 construction work was begun under the direction of the Department of Public Works. The completion date was set for December 1968.

The first function of the Board of Trustees who met in Ottawa on March 8th, and 9th, under the chairmanship of Mr. Lawrence Freiman, was to determine that the Director, Mr. G. Hamilton Southam, should bear the title of Director-General. More than anyone else, Mr. Southam was the author of the project that he brought to completion. He wanted to give the capital the prestigious dimension that it had lacked: a centre propitious to the development of artistic talent, an “open” centre that would symbolize friendship and cooperation and which would arouse new national pride. The opening of the National Arts Centre on May 31, 1969 is an event that involves all of us.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Architecture at the National Arts Centre

On May 31, 1969, the National Arts Centre in Ottawa was officially opened. Erected in the centre of the city on 6½ acres of land at a cost of $46 million, the complex is the first actual sign of an intent to endow the capital with the cultural and social facilities that had always been lacking there.

Following representations and studies undertaken by the national capital’s Arts Alliance, the Canadian government entrusted the preparation of the building plans to the architectural firm of Desbarats, Affleck, Dimakopoulos, Sise, and to the Prime Minister’s office. From the technical point of view, the solution was not an easy one, for with the exception of the fairly wide-spread neo-gothic style, the city had almost no architectural tradition or, at least, a cultural tradition. The problem that was set and the conditions to be met could be summarized as follows:
From architecture to the integration of the arts

BY LAURENT LAMY

Directly bound to function and to economic and social needs, architecture is, of all the arts, the one that best represents the culture that gives it life. Thus, a work on the scale of the National Arts Centre assumes the value of a symbol. Before such an architectural group we may well ask ourselves what we are. Among all architectural works, does a National Arts Centre not occupy a choice place? Not being at the service of practical life like the subway, a factory, or even a house, it is rather, like a church, a place that man, curious about himself and the world and avid for experiences rich in imagination and fantasy, occupies in exceptional moments.

The architectural group

For the National Arts Centre, the architects used the hexagon as a module. This form which follows from the lie of the land has been fully exploited since we find it again not only as the volume of the building but again in the light wells, the stairways, and the elevators. It is moreover the link between the terraces, the foyers, and the offices. The hexagon which is near to the perfect aesthetic form of the circle, presents several advantages for a theatre: it gives the audience around the stage, offers them the utmost in visibility, and favours the principle of participation.

The neighbouring area of the Centre was not particularly charming. The vaguely gothic architecture of the Parliament buildings, the vague greco-roman traces of the civil centre of Ottawa, for all the pretension of the Château Laurier, the modernity of the museum, required a clear visual affirmation that would in some way form the centre of Confederation Square. The massive, almost blind architecture of the centre answers this need. On the theme of the hexagon, the Centre is a well-balanced unity of overlapping simple forms and by maintaining the strength too often interpreted as rigidity or coldness. This austere architecture enters into modern research. Let us recall the blank architecture of the pavilions of England and Venezuelan Expo, the church of Nevers in France by the architect Claude Parent, the work of Louis Kahn in the United States. Completely oriented toward the interior and the activities that it houses, the Centre affirms itself as an architectural success that is perfectly integrated into the surroundings. The lines created by the vertical windows and their ribs animate the main façades. The open angles of the hexagons and the different levels of the volumes put rhythm into the architectural space and make them constructions where triumphs the spirit of truth and absolute simplicity. Contrary to the buildings at Place des Arts, the Centre is devoid of any exterior decorative ornamentation and, on the architectural level, fully assumes its social purpose.

Does it exist? Is it to be found since you go inside the doors? In its function such a "place" should invite invention, escape, and dream. The finality of an arts centre is related closely enough to the essence of man that the atmosphere should be stimulating, even strange. This is not another work of art; it is an area that calls for activity and emotion. One expects that the interior of such a building should be of the same quality as the exterior. In its dimension and its form this architecture is devoid of lyricism. On the other hand, by its severity and unity it lends itself, and no better occasion could be imagined, to the integration of the arts.

The Works of Art

Is not integrating works of art the use of these works in such a way that they form a whole with the environment? Integrated art can be considered to be something that is an essential part of it. Without them the concrete is more crumbly and less resistant.

At the National Arts Centre, is the contribution of the artists limited to additions, or do the creations participate in the group? Have we progressed since the first step was taken at Place des Arts in Montreal?

In their "place", the architects have chosen areas to present works of art. Other spaces could have been chosen. It is possible to discuss their location; a committee accepted their works. They are often excellent works, as is the case with Daudelin's sculpture outside the Centre. But stuck in a corner between the large theatre and the garages, it is dowdy. Inside the building, for example, the work of Louis Kahn in the United States. Completely oriented toward the interior and the activities that it houses, the Centre affirms itself as an architectural success that is perfectly integrated into the surroundings. The lines created by the vertical windows and their ribs animate the main façades. The open angles of the hexagons and the different levels of the volumes put rhythm into the architectural space and make them constructions where triumphs the spirit of truth and absolute simplicity. Contrary to the buildings at Place des Arts, the Centre is devoid of any exterior decorative ornamentation and, on the architectural level, fully assumes its social purpose.

Inside the centre the prevail characteristic is conglomerate concrete a strong material, whose rich greyish texture wanted emphasizing. This was done in some places by the red carpet. But in the main foyer, the monotonous and dull mosaic floor offers no contrast at all with the wall, in the area of colour as well as texture.

At the entrance to the small theatre, at the very place where the foyer is smallest, the centre is open to the place to step back. There has been placed an immense painting by Ronald. No total view is possible. The place is not suitable for this work whose highly coloured and changeable forms would have been very visually effective if they could have been discovered gradually while being approached. However, this mural serves as a vertical link between the floors.

Ornaments by Laliberté and the Polish tapestries in which man, curious about himself and the world and avid for experiences rich in imagination and fantasy, occupies in exceptional moments.

The architectural group

For the National Arts Centre, the architects used the hexagon as a module. This form which follows from the lie of the land has been fully exploited since we find it again not only as the volume of...
qualities. But its acquisition would have been more significant at the beginning of the century, right in the middle of the period; in 1969 it would be more in its place in a museum. Is it not in an arts centre that one should find works that depend on the most lively sources of art. As McLaughlan would put it, the choice was made by "looking through a "retrovisor".

In the stairwells, the giant glass block chandeliers by William Martin of Boston, are near to being arborescent forms but look too much like sugar candy. The result is one of the most debatable.

The work by Lorcini, made of aluminum rods and plates almost disjointed, is too thin to bring to the wall where it was placed. Again, not much room to step back and see it well. Enlarged and multiplied, it might have been able to effect an interesting counterpart to the exterior walls of the east side, which are gloomy in their severity. Better yet, Lorcini in collaboration with the architects and the engineers, to study the form and dimensions of the steel structure in order that it might project beyond the concrete. The structure incorporated into the architecture but partly apparent, could have become a really integrated mural.

Pretty, but with a disconcerting simplicity, the fountain by Julien Hébert is jarring in its banality. That is not the work of a sculptor. On the other hand, Julien Hébert succeeds completely as a designer when he composes the ceiling of the great hall. Conceived according to the imperatives of the acoustics engineer, the perforated, mobile, metal panels become in their unexpected but clear language, surfaces that are pierced by the play of forms and modulations. That is integration. Around the great hall, the ana­

The building of the National Arts Centre cost $46 million and, of this sum, half a million was spent for works of art. Do you consider this amount sufficient or definitely too modest?

A. — It corresponds roughly to standards accepted almost everywhere: that famous 1 percent intended for what is called the embellishment of the architecture.

But we should not approach this problem from a financial point of view. The essential thing is especially that the architecture be beautiful; then there is no need to embellish it. If the architecture is self-sufficient, it is preferable not to add to it works of art for the sole purpose of encouraging artists, which seems rather odious to me.

Q. — Anyway, since there are works of art, can you tell me how the artists were chosen?

A. — The National Arts Centre formed a consulting committee, and this committee, in full agreement with the architect, chose most of the artists to be commissioned. In some cases, those to whom this monumental sculpture was assigned, all competitions were limited to a few artists designated by this same committee.

Q. — Is it true that artists were asked to try, as far as possible, to make the style of their works agree with the form of the architecture, to say, with the two geometric patterns that constantly recur: the circle and the hexagon?

A. — No, I do not know that that condition was set. That would have been a mistake. No self-respecting artist, and there are many such, would have worked by adhering to a theme or given designs as, for example, the hour-glass, the triangle, which dominate here, but very simply by ways of his own, ways that emerge from his imagination, and his creative talents.

Q. — Let us proceed to the works themselves. Let us begin, if you wish, with the sculptures. There are two of them; let us speak first of the exterior sculpture by Charles Daudelin.

A. — It produces a great effect and is quite in keeping with the scale; that is the essential thing when we speak of integration into architecture. That is the case of this monumental sculpture is in proportion; in this respect, Daudelin, who is very conscientious, took all possible precautions. It was said that only the two sculptures were not integrated into the architecture. That is conceiving integration in a narrow and restricted sense, and it is erroneous, after all. Whether a work is part of the architecture or separate from it, the integration can be successful in both cases if the scale is right. As for the principle of construction of Daudelin's work, I find it to be honest, solid; it has a rhythm that is at once calm, set, and vigorous. This open worked structure inspires confidence by its healthiness and the sort of good humour that flows from it.

Q. — Let us pass on to the second sculpture, Zadkine's bronze which is inside the centre. What do you think of it?

A. — My reaction would probably be more reserved as far as Zadkine's work is concerned. If I admire certain works by this artist, I am not particularly infatuated with this one. It seems rather banal to me, rather dull if I dare say so. Concretely, moreover, it has neither depth nor contour; it is seen only from in front or behind, but very badly from behind, because it is almost standing against the wall. This poses a problem of integration. It might have been possible to place it in an area that was rather closed but that would have allowed it to be seen from the back. As it is, it should be illuminated better. Although it is not bad, I am not enchanted by this Zadkine and I take the opportunity to say that all things being equal, we might have gambled on a Canadian.

Q. — Proceed by means of a competition, but the competitions were limited to a few artists designated by this same committee.

A. — The National Arts Centre formed a consulting committee, and this committee, in full agreement with the architect, chose most of the artists to be commissioned. In some cases, those to whom this monumental sculpture was assigned, all competitions were limited to a few artists designated by this same committee.

Q. — Is it true that artists were asked to try, as far as possible, to make the style of their works agree with the form of the architecture, to say, with the two geometric patterns that constantly recur: the circle and the hexagon?

A. — No, I do not know that that condition was set. That would have been a mistake. No self-respecting artist, and there are many such, would have worked by adhering to a theme or given designs as, for example, the hour-glass, the triangle, which dominate here, but very simply by ways of his own, ways that emerge from his imagination, and his creative talents.

Q. — Let us proceed to the works themselves. Let us begin, if you wish, with the sculptures. There are two of them; let us speak first of the exterior sculpture by Charles Daudelin.

A. — It produces a great effect and is quite in keeping with the scale; that is the essential thing when we speak of integration into architecture. That is the case of this monumental sculpture is in proportion; in this respect, Daudelin, who is very conscientious, took all possible precautions. It was said that only the two sculptures were not integrated into the architecture. That is conceiving integration in a narrow and restricted sense, and it is erroneous, after all. Whether a work is part of the architecture or separate from it, the integration can be successful in both cases if the scale is right. As for the principle of construction of Daudelin's work, I find it to be honest, solid; it has a rhythm that is at once calm, set, and vigorous. This open worked structure inspires confidence by its healthiness and the sort of good humour that flows from it.

Q. — Let us pass on to the second sculpture, Zadkine's bronze which is inside the centre. What do you think of it?

A. — My reaction would probably be more reserved as far as Zadkine's work is concerned. If I admire certain works by this artist, I am not particularly infatuated with this one. It seems rather banal to me, rather dull if I dare say so. Concretely, moreover, it has neither depth nor contour; it is seen only from in front or behind, but very badly from behind, because it is almost standing against the wall. This poses a problem of integration. It might have been possible to place it in an area that was rather closed but that would have allowed it to be seen from the back. As it is, it should be illuminated better. Although it is not bad, I am not enchanted by this Zadkine and I take the opportunity to say that all things being equal, we might have gambled on a Canadian.
The work by William Ronald is very highly coloured. Q. The detriment of the stage, and its corollary, the curtain. That serves only to conceal the cat walks and lighting fixtures set in like the one in the theatre. The latter is formed of black grille work during the day, the charm it held at night.

First a fountain towards which you hold certain reservations? — A. — Yes, it has a rather psychedelic character which is basically quite suitable to the foyer of the experimental studio. However, this large fresco poses the problem of integration. Strictly speaking, it is integrated since the paintings in the hall have been executed by his own hand. The fresco, however, is really a composition, and it comes from a different aesthetic tradition. It is the prettification of the decorative art of the last few centuries.

Q. — Behind the doors by Jordi Bonet which protect the holy of holies, is an immense tapestry by Alfred Manessier. A. — A fountain is a great painting! What else can you understand by that? Manessier is an excellent minor painter. In his production there are some rather ordinary works, but this tapestry is excellent. Especially as the mounting was magnificently accomplished by the weaver Plasse-Le Caisne, who, I must say, never before had developed in the work, but took part in the creation and, besides, signed it with Manessier. When Plasse-Le Caisne executes a work, he invents as well, evidently, in the extension of the sketch. Both succeeded in composing a monumental work, with an immense sweep in our way. Moreover, corresponds to the orientation of Canadian art in the course of the fifteen years that followed the end of the last World War, that is to say our abstract expressionism. It also corresponds, in Manessier's mind, to the character even the Canadian scene. The artist was very impressed by Canada's rivers and forests, and he has been remembering the impact that it made on him in the execution of all of his work, including this tapestry, for the last four or five years.

Q. — Let us pass to Manessier to the standards by Norman Laliberté that are installed over the bars.

A. — These standards are banners, made of fabrics hanging from a rod and juxtaposed so as to form a tapestry. Laliberté is an American, but I believe that his paintings are French-Canaanese. These decorations are unpretentious. Some of my colleagues have evoked Dallaire. That is praising them, for Dallaire had a great deal of spirit and imagination. Laliberté perhaps does not possess such an inspiration, but he has succeeded in composing four tapestries that decorate if you prefer — that are each very different and that are stamped with humour, fantasy, and charm, and have a certain voluptuousness that is rather reminiscent of Oriental art.

Q. — What is the secret of the tapestries that Micheline Beauchemin executed for the great opera hall?

A. — I would say that it is, perhaps, the master work of the decoration of the National Centre. It is a revelation, a festival of colour and light, an absolutely extraordinary production. I certainly think that it is one of the most beautiful stage curtains in the world. It is the largest, in any event, that has ever been woven in such a way. The work was done in Japan on special looms. The evening of the opening, the spectators applauded the splendour of these tapestries before applauding the dancers of the ballet Kraneir. It is made to capture light, in several ways. It is first translucent, although it also receives the light from the fore-stage, and takes on in this way a striking relief. Moreover, I know that the artist would like it to be illuminated from the front in full intensity, to eliminate the shadows cast on it. I have not seen it thus, but such as it is, it is absolutely splendid.

Q. — Julien Helbert conceived two important works for the Centre. First a fountain towards which you hold certain reservations?

A. — That is to say that in broad daylight the fountain seems to me to be simplistic. A fountain does not fulfill only a functional and utilitarian role; it should be, at the same time, an attracting pole. Now this one seems to me to be rather rigid, rather puritanical. That is a fault, or rather a tendency, that one can find elsewhere in the National Centre, and perhaps you will say in the whole city of Ottawa.

Having said this, I saw the fountain last night, and beneath it the flood lights and the shadows of the basins; the water that illuminates itself and the pennies that, happily, were thrown there for luck, give it an atmosphere, and life. So that in spite of the reservations already expressed I accept the fountain, such as it appears at night. It would be desirable to adjust the lighting to allow it to be found again during the day, the charm it held at night.

Q. — Julien Helbert also executed the ceiling of the opera hall. A. — I have visited the room, it is beautiful, and beyond reproach, but it is too spectacular. It should be unobtrusive like the one in the theatre. The latter is formed of black grille work that serves only to conceal the cat walks and lighting fixtures set in like the one in the theatre. This obliterating of the lighting fixtures draws very near to the American expressionist Franz Kline: by the fact that the lighting itself is the absence of light which, it seems, is the main concern of the artist. In the ceiling of the opera hall, the light is all the stronger and more voluptuous because it is the source of the illumination itself, and while uniting it by the quality of the invention and the sensibility, and not by direct recalls of the architectural forms.

Q. — In closing could you speak to us of the Theatre's stage curtain. Concept and execution by Maurice Legendre: Why, unfortunately, you cannot see it because the arrangement of the sets of Littérature did not allow it to be placed on opening night.

A. — That is the reason for which it has been much discussed, and it is a shame. I know it from the model. Not a gouache or water colour, but a small mural on a large scale. It is, unfortunately, a very fine work that has not been able to be seen, because the arrangement of the sets of Littérature did not allow it to be placed on opening night.

The Presence of Manessier

BY JEAN-RENE OSTIGUY

Following his visit to Canada in 1967, Alfred Manessier, whose immense tapestry has just been unveiled at the National Art Centre, executed a series of tapestries inspired by his visit to Canada. As these new works have not yet been exhibited, it would be difficult to write a criticism of them; yet, by looking at some reproductions, we can preview them and make a few remarks. First, this artist has rediscovered the delightful light that he loved in France, like the one he knew during his childhood in Abbeville in the Somme. "For some time I had already been feeling nostalgic for a certain northern light" which I found, I was about to say, found again, in your country, but on a different scale, with a very new pattern which, I believe, is particularly to Canada, and a specific idea of the large one. Now, this tapestry has qualities of warmth, voluptuousness, authenticity, and at the same time, monumentality, which make it a great work; and I wish that there could be a special opening devoted to it, as soon as other performances would allow it.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson
uninteresting the next. Now there is more than one Manessier that stands the test of time. In answer to a skeptical critic who wants to know what his generative work has been like since his abstractions, we would do well to reply: "Look at Saint Rémy (1945) of the Musée de Rennes, the Fleurs en Bouteille (1949) of the Philippe Leclerc collection Fideur prix Hélium (1956) of the Museum of Berlin, and other works which have been received in art institutions d'art moderne of Paris, Aube matinale (1948) Quarraine d'Epinnes (1950), and the 1962 triptych, L'Empreinte. The picture in the National Gallery of Canada, La Terre (1963), clearly illustrates the statements works, the one of the Allées de l'Etoile that the artist contrasts with Gethsemanis or Sainte Face, and with all his paintings of shadows. The central element of the composition is reminiscent of Quarraine d'Epinnes (1950) of the Carnegie Institute. It is a curious, but this crowd could also be the earth, already at noon. In fact, the ambiguity of the metaphor is enriched by the Provence countryside that inspired the artist in 1958 and 1959.

Summers flavoured by hairpin roads and hollowed out by deep gorges, suggest the composition of the National Gallery's work. It must be compared in this respect to the picture of the Musée de Lyon: "Anche sur la garrigue" (1958) (2). Yet it is only to the latter work that Manessier's declaration applies in full: "Even more than to the colours and the light, I have been sensitive to the motif, and his touches on automatisms, the constant use of the metaphor however, assuages the unity of his work. The metaphor's signs and symbols are modified and enriched at each new phase. The ones that animate the compositions Per amantis amictus (1954) and Vénus (1955) and Henri (1955) and Hippocrate in La toile orange (1968) and Filibert Spectacle (1969), but greatly modified, by a new conception of light, more closely bound to the matter and more dramatic, creating tensions between the backcloth and the motif. Thus Manessier's abstraction should be considered as a desire to make symbolic images evoking the deepest spiritual realities, the ones that cannot but relate to the sacred world. His fervour does not depend in any way on some stray impulse; it expresses a courageous faith. He has been taking from nature and perfecting the abstract signs of his vocabulary with the same point of view since 1941. At that time he was presented to the French public in an exhibition at the Braun Gallery in the company of Jean Bazaine. Maurice Estève, Charles Lapicque, Gustave Simon and the leading spirits of the "Young painters of that French tradition". His painting retained ties to colourful cubism at that time. If he evolved slowly in the years that followed towards lyric abstraction and gradually came to use the blot, he constantly kept open the door of the unopened form of his picture, beyond the inspiration of the moment. That characteristic is French, or at least European, and is one of the reasons why his art and its direct effect on the painting of Canadian artists of the time. The North American mainstream would grant more importance to the execution of this great mono-type, but greatly modified, by the reality of certain objects that are more or less aggressors, and is able to bring out the vast and more searching dynamism of the inner-connected sensitivity of the relationship between the body and the soul. In this respect the work of Jordi Bonet provides numerous examples, whose various levels permit, precisely, a more fruitful approach. And we emphasize the murals, compositions which put public action into play in the phenomenon of perception, producing, in return, a shock in the consciousness of the artist and engaging him to perfect in the subsequent works a process of expression which is all the more concerned for its extension into society.

The Dramaturgy of Jordi Bonet

BY GUY ROBERT

There are works of art that draw back into the opaque gauze of the material, revealing their entity only through a patient initiation; other works, on the contrary, display their aggressive ardour and blow their own trumpets constantly, that is to say, more than music, certain works invite one to a celebration, offer a joyous saraband whose sensuality exudes from the form; and finally there are a few works that move the pillars of emotion and compel man to face his destiny straightforwardly.

And far too few works succeed in synthesizing the diverse modalities of expression, and in beginning, between the implicit and the obvious, the lascivious and the serious, between order and chaos, between Apollo and Dionysious, such fruitful combinations as Kline and Kooning on the other, and then touches on automatism. The metaphor's signs and symbols are modified and enriched at each new phase. The ones that animate the compositions Per amantis amictus (1954) and Vénus (1955) and Henri (1955) and Hippocrate in La toile orange (1968) and Filibert Spectacle (1969), but greatly modified, by a new conception of light, more closely bound to the matter and more dramatic, creating tensions between the backcloth and the motif. Thus Manessier's abstraction should be considered as a desire to make symbolic images evoking the deepest spiritual realities, the ones that cannot but relate to the sacred world. His fervour does not depend in any way on some stray impulse; it expresses a courageous faith. He has been taking from nature and perfecting the abstract signs of his vocabulary with the same point of view since 1941. At that time he was presented to the French public in an exhibition at the Braun Gallery in the company of Jean Bazaine. Maurice Estève, Charles Lapicque, Gustave Simon and the leading spirits of the "Young painters of that French tradition". His painting retained ties to colourful cubism at that time. If he evolved slowly in the years that followed towards lyric abstraction and gradually came to use the blot, he constantly kept open the door of the unopened form of his picture, beyond the inspiration of the moment. That characteristic is French, or at least European, and is one of the reasons why his art and its direct effect on the painting of Canadian artists of the time. The North American mainstream would grant more importance to the execution of this great mono-type, but greatly modified, by the reality of certain objects that are more or less aggressors, and is able to bring out the vast and more searching dynamism of the inner-connected sensitivity of the relationship between the body and the soul. In this respect the work of Jordi Bonet provides numerous examples, whose various levels permit, precisely, a more fruitful approach. And we emphasize the murals, compositions which put public action into play in the phenomenon of perception, producing, in return, a shock in the consciousness of the artist and engaging him to perfect in the subsequent works a process of expression which is all the more concerned for its extension into society.

Ten Years of Murals

Jordi Bonet was born in Barcelona in 1932 and settled in Quebec in 1954. An accident in childhood cost him his right arm; this did not prevent him from drawing, painting, then sculpting, first in ceramic, then in aluminium and, more recently, in concrete. Jordi Bonet was already drawing and painting when he arrived in Quebec; in 1956 he learned ceramics and immediately developed a liking for it; in 1957 he began some studies on ceramic squares then returned to Barcelona for a few months, and again came in contact with the architecture of Gaudi, that had so recently made an impression on him as a child; in the beginning of 1958, he ardently began to work on ceramic murals; he had several exhibitions of them in Montreal in 1958, 1959, and 1961.

In 1961 he was awarded his first important contract: a 30 x 50 foot mural in the new church of Saint-Raphaël de Jonquière (Saint-Gelas and Tremblay, architects); other contracts followed including the contract for the new Laval University campus in Quebec city (Lucien Mauger, architect); the execution of this great mural was prepared for by more than a year of studies, drawings, research, on a pictorial level (a series of tableaux from 1962-4 revealed the masterful talents of the artist).
as well as that of materials and techniques; the 28 year old artist admitted that he was impressed by the scale of such a contract, and acquired new strength from his pilgrimage to Talhull (it is a small pre-Roman Spanish village, almost inaccessible, made up of about ten buildings that have been stripped of their admirable frescoes, but that really are the very remains of a completely visible society). The resulting aspects of the production require that the mural be bade in Courtrai, Belgium.

These varied works mark a period in Bonet's work, a period already clearly dominated by drawing, which is at times reminiscent of Picasso’s; the large Quebec mural is very impressive, and deceiving at the same time: the grandiose quality of the drawn gesture does not find sufficient balance in the other elements of the plastic composition, and, seen directly from a distance, he impresses more with the impact of featured columns, and the comic effect of the copyist of the words of Gaudi; then there is the first master work (I have no reserve whatever in using this strong term), his eight 5 x 10 foot tympanes for Place des Arts in Montreal.

The period of reliefs in ceramics opens a remarkable audience to Jordi Bonet, and stimulates him to the point that he no longer hesitates to expand his expression towards concrete and aluminium. In six years, it (1963) has occupied for his murals and sculpture beyond the borders of Montreal and Quebec, to go to Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, and as far as Vancouver, and in the United States, to Boston, New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago and Charleston.

The main ceramic murals unite an instinctive sense of telluric forces to the dynamism of symbolical form, and that is, we would say, the very alchemy of the fire that burns the clay and coats it at the same time: the same mud and water given life by the sculptor which in Bonet’s book of spells. Witness the most important of these ceramic murals, for example, the Vatican Prus, architect) can be the result neither of improvisation, nor the effort, nor the confidence, nor the conviction, nor the tension, nor the effort of audacity, nor the blunders, nor the errors, nor the imperfections, nor the absorption, nor the passion of the sculptor. But of an intense desire to achieve such a result, it is a work of that passion he feels for fire; and light becomes impracticable and the mural composition imposes its discourse, articulated on the theme of life and death that we have noted above, by unfolding into three monumental movements: Death, Space, and Freedom.

In three months in Quebec Jordi Bonet gave himself up to the unlimited space of the large wall. Crushed by tons, by cubic feet of concrete, deafened by the dusty and barbarous procession of cement trucks, he none the less attacked the blind wall, digging in meaning with his trowel, inscribing a palpitating significance.

And it is a poignant vision that emerges from the enormous, paradoxically fragmented, compartmentalized composition which is concealed behind the walls and pillars of a group, thus avoiding an otherwise too brutal shock, and in detached pieces, offering a fulgurating plea for the cause of Life and Freedom.

The tragic meaning of life

Shall I be permitted to borrow the title from a famous work by Miguel de Unamuno to more strongly define the sculptural motives of Jordi Bonet? In the same way that Unamuno was able to extricate himself from the artificial stasis of metaphysics, which ends up dealing with things without even conceding to touch them or even less feel them, Jordi Bonet resolves to unfold the horizons of his life completely in the “redeeming uncertainty” of which his native country spoke in The tragic meaning of life, in 1914, and he thinks also that it is in facing Death that life takes on all its meaning and tragic savour.

The colour sometimes voluptuously seductive, sometimes strictly constrained, establishes scales the best adapted to support the dynamic expression of the work, and establishes the consequent climate of this dynamism, always heavily impregnated with a grave and delicate eroticism. And the form, springing from the snare of the fire and incorporating the actuality of the technique and his own appreciation, it also with an often vehement conviction the tumults of his reliefs and his rhythm.

Jordi Bonet is able to develop a remarkable sculpural syntax, and put plastic art at the absolute service of a tragic reflection on the meaning of life. By avoiding the routine of a declamatory illustration, a frequent weakness of the Mexican art of 1920-50, for example, as well as that of abstract (and often vain and superficial) speculation, he injects into his gesture the precision of symbolism, which gives him the richest and most moving echo of Reality.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Stone Age Painters in the Laurentians

BY SELWYN DEDWNEY

On a granite wall that edges the southwest shore of a lake in the Laurentians only thirty-two miles northwest of Trois Rivières there is a group of severely-weathered aboriginal paintings that may prove to be the oldest surviving examples of prehistoric rock art in eastern Canada.

Late in July of 1956 my wife and I drove to Trois Rivières from our home in London, Ontario, with two objectives. We were to pick up our son Christopher and his young Viesta Interprovincial host, Roland Nobert, who was to be our guest for the month of August. And we hoped to find and record the rock paintings on Lac Wasaquagoue. Geologist Jacques Bélair had described these piccgravures in the February, 1959, issue of Le Naturaliste Canadien, which I had read with keen interest, being then engaged in searching for and recording aboriginal rock art across Canada, particularly in the Canadian Shield woodland region. Were these paintings in the mouth of rough language to the more than two hundred sites I had visited in central and northwestern Canada, or were they the expression of a different culture?

So, before calling on the Noberts, my wife and I drove north into Laurentian territory. We knew that the earth was certain to be the mural that is quick to increase its stress by the aggressive development of important reliefs; the position of the head which would view from a distance becomes impracticable and the mural composition imposes its discourse, articulated on the theme of life and death that we have noted above, by unfolding into three monumental movements: Death, Space, and Freedom.
bush trail that led into Lac Wapizagonke. By great good fortune, our first encounter at the lake was with M. René Valletand and his wife (the famous "Maman Fonfon") who knew where the site was and took us there.

At Wapizagonke, therefore, it is likely that we are viewing the work of shaman-artists. But their intentions were utilitarian, not aesthetic. It is rarely that we find a painting in the Shield region in which the artist took an obvious delight in the form he was picturing, or even in the composition of a group of figures. He seemed, too, to have been oblivious of the reaction of the viewer at least of the human one. For, although many of the paintings are on prominent rocks facing well-travelled waterways, not a few at least of the human one. For, although many of the paintings are in obscure backwaters where few would ever pass. But it was with mixed feelings that I first viewed the paintings: delight at having reached them, sadness at finding how little had survived the ravages of time; and dismay at discovering that unthinking souvenir-hunters had deliberately broken off fragments of the rock, seemingly accelerating the slow weathering of the centuries.

These vestigial paintings are the easternmost so far found in the Canadian Shield Woodlands, the region that lies between the northern end of the paper birch and the southern edge of the Precambrian rock formations. The westernmost is nearly 2,000 miles away, on a little Beaver stream known as Written Rock Creek, in the Northwest Territories twenty miles north of Fort Smith. By the fall of 1967, I had searched for aboriginal rock art, initiated by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1957. I was assured that no other audience was intended.

Yet among the numerous petroglyphs in sandstone along the banks of the Milk River in southern Alberta, which include representations of bears, mountain sheep, elk and deer, I found only three small and very recent drawings of bison, the main food source of the aborigines. The Shield paintings portray all the larger game of the region; but there is only one instance where there is any suggestion of a hunting motive; and representations of fish, a very important element in the food supply, are rare.

It is now widely believed that primitive art is passed on through an evolution from naturalistic to abstract styles. The Milk River glyphs do indeed show a transition from what I call an archaic naturalism to a high degree of abstraction in the case of animal forms, but human forms seem to have been highly abstract from the beginning. With the appearance of the horse the abstract trend suddenly goes into reverse, and a stylized naturalism emerges.

In the Shield paintings individualism runs so rampant that one loses sight of the only occasional representations of the horse. Among the Milk River glyphs - on which any chronological analysis of styles could be based. Representations of canoes, of a birdlike abstraction not too reliably identified as a "thunderbird," and handprints comprise the only frequently occurring motifs. Three rock paintings in Quetico Provincial Park approach the vivid quality of the Lascaux paintings; and here and there throughout the Shield one may find occasional renderings that show some sensitivity to the natural form. But these are the exceptions. More than half of the Shield paintings are abstract or non-representational. In some instances one will find three faint markers barely recognizable as the handiwork of man. On other sites there are dozens of paintings, some strong, some faint, scattered singly or in groups along the base of shore rock formations. All are accessible from the water, usually along four or five feet of sunken drawings usually in situations where they could only have been painted from a canoe. The only other common feature is the invariable use of the natural earth colour, red ochre.

In the Americas, however, there appears to be a greater emphasis on the animal images, as can be seen in the western plains would have made such use of their rock art. But the intentions were utilitarian, not aesthetic. It is rarely that we find a painting in the Shield region in which the artist took an obvious delight in the form he was picturing, or even in the composition of a group of figures. He seemed, too, to have been oblivious of the reaction of the viewer at least of the human one. For, although many of the paintings are on prominent rocks facing well-travelled waterways, not a few are in obscure backwaters where few would ever pass. But it was with mixed feelings that I first viewed the paintings: delight at having reached them, sadness at finding how little had survived the ravages of time; and dismay at discovering that unthinking souvenir-hunters had deliberately broken off fragments of the rock, seemingly accelerating the slow weathering of the centuries.

These vestigial paintings are the easternmost so far found in the Canadian Shield Woodlands, the region that lies between the northern end of the paper birch and the southern edge of the Precambrian rock formations. The westernmost is nearly 2,000 miles away, on a little Beaver stream known as Written Rock Creek, in the Northwest Territories twenty miles north of Fort Smith. By the fall of 1967, under contract with the National Museum of Canada, I had searched for aboriginal rock art, initiated by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1957. I was assured that no other audience was intended.

Yet among the numerous petroglyphs in sandstone along the banks of the Milk River in southern Alberta, which include representations of bears, mountain sheep, elk and deer, I found only three small and very recent drawings of bison, the main food source of the aborigines. The Shield paintings portray all the larger game of the region; but there is only one instance where there is any suggestion of a hunting motive; and representations of fish, a very important element in the food supply, are rare.

It is now widely believed that primitive art is passed on through an evolution from naturalistic to abstract styles. The Milk River glyphs do indeed show a transition from what I call an archaic naturalism to a high degree of abstraction in the case of animal forms, but human forms seem to have been highly abstract from the beginning. With the appearance of the horse the abstract trend suddenly goes into reverse, and a stylized naturalism emerges.

In the Shield paintings individualism runs so rampant that one loses sight of the only occasional representations of the horse. Among the Milk River glyphs - on which any chronological analysis of styles could be based. Representations of canoes, of a birdlike abstraction not too reliably identified as a "thunderbird," and handprints comprise the only frequently occurring motifs. Three rock paintings in Quetico Provincial Park approach the vivid quality of the Lascaux paintings; and here and there throughout the Shield one may find occasional renderings that show some sensitivity to the natural form. But these are the exceptions. More than half of the Shield paintings are abstract or non-representational. In some instances one will find three faint markers barely recognizable as the handiwork of man. On other sites there are dozens of paintings, some strong, some faint, scattered singly or in groups along the base of shore rock formations. All are accessible from the water, usually along four or five feet of sunken drawings usually in situations where they could only have been painted from a canoe. The only other common feature is the invariable use of the natural earth colour, red ochre.

In the Americas, however, there appears to be a greater emphasis on the animal images, as can be seen in the western plains would have made such use of their rock art. But the intentions were utilitarian, not aesthetic. It is rarely that we find a painting in the Shield region in which the artist took an obvious delight in the form he was picturing, or even in the composition of a group of figures. He seemed, too, to have been oblivious of the reaction of the viewer at least of the human one. For, although many of the paintings are on prominent rocks facing well-travelled waterways, not a few are in obscure backwaters where few would ever pass. But it was with mixed feelings that I first viewed the paintings: delight at having reached them, sadness at finding how little had survived the ravages of time; and dismay at discovering that unthinking souvenir-hunters had deliberately broken off fragments of the rock, seemingly accelerating the slow weathering of the centuries.

These vestigial paintings are the easternmost so far found in the Canadian Shield Woodlands, the region that lies between the northern end of the paper birch and the southern edge of the Precambrian rock formations. The westernmost is nearly 2,000 miles away, on a little Beaver stream known as Written Rock Creek, in the Northwest Territories twenty miles north of Fort Smith. By the fall of 1967, under contract with the National Museum of Canada, I had searched for aboriginal rock art, initiated by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1957. I was assured that no other audience was intended.

Yet among the numerous petroglyphs in sandstone along the banks of the Milk River in southern Alberta, which include representations of bears, mountain sheep, elk and deer, I found only three small and very recent drawings of bison, the main food source of the aborigines. The Shield paintings portray all the larger game of the region; but there is only one instance where there is any suggestion of a hunting motive; and representations of fish, a very important element in the food supply, are rare.

It is now widely believed that primitive art is passed on through an evolution from naturalistic to abstract styles. The Milk River glyphs do indeed show a transition from what I call an archaic naturalism to a high degree of abstraction in the case of animal forms, but human forms seem to have been highly abstract from the beginning. With the appearance of the horse the abstract trend suddenly goes into reverse, and a stylized naturalism emerges.

In the Shield paintings individualism runs so rampant that one loses sight of the only occasional representations of the horse. Among the Milk River glyphs - on which any chronological analysis of styles could be based. Representations of canoes, of a birdlike abstraction not too reliably identified as a "thunderbird," and handprints comprise the only frequently occurring motifs. Three rock paintings in Quetico Provincial Park approach the vivid quality of the Lascaux paintings; and here and there throughout the Shield one may find occasional renderings that show some sensitivity to the natural form. But these are the exceptions. More than half of the Shield paintings are abstract or non-representational. In some instances one will find three faint markers barely recognizable as the handiwork of man. On other sites there are dozens of paintings, some strong, some faint, scattered singly or in groups along the base of shore rock formations. All are accessible from the water, usually along four or five feet of sunken drawings usually in situations where they could only have been painted from a canoe. The only other common feature is the invariable use of the natural earth colour, red ochre.

In the Americas, however, there appears to be a greater emphasis on the animal images, as can be seen in the western plains would have made such use of their rock art. But the intentions were utilitarian, not aesthetic. It is rarely that we find a painting in the Shield region in which the artist took an obvious delight in the form he was picturing, or even in the composition of a group of figures. He seemed, too, to have been oblivious of the reaction of the viewer at least of the human one. For, although many of the paintings are on prominent rocks facing well-travelled waterways, not a few are in obscure backwaters where few would ever pass. But it was with mixed feelings that I first viewed the paintings: delight at having reached them, sadness at finding how little had survived the ravages of time; and dismay at discovering that unthinking souvenir-hunters had deliberately broken off fragments of the rock, seemingly accelerating the slow weathering of the centuries.

These vestigial paintings are the easternmost so far found in the Canadian Shield Woodlands, the region that lies between the northern end of the paper birch and the southern edge of the Precambrian rock formations. The westernmost is nearly 2,000 miles away, on a little Beaver stream known as Written Rock Creek, in the Northwest Territories twenty miles north of Fort Smith. By the fall of 1967, under contract with the National Museum of Canada, I had searched for aboriginal rock art, initiated by the Royal Ontario Museum in 1957. I was assured that no other audience was intended.

Yet among the numerous petroglyphs in sandstone along the banks of the Milk River in southern Alberta, which include representations of bears, mountain sheep, elk and deer, I found only three small and very recent drawings of bison, the main food source of the aborigines. The Shield paintings portray all the larger game of the region; but there is only one instance where there is any suggestion of a hunting motive; and representations of fish, a very important element in the food supply, are rare.
of how a natural form may be distorted and abstracted to a point where less sophisticated eyes might fail to recognize the subject. For comparative purposes I have added examples from farther west. Of these one would have misled me completely (7) had its interpretation by a reputed shaman not been recorded by Henry Schoolcraft, an American coleman, of Oujtawa, a word of that kind encountered on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and — mistakenly or not — named Canadians.

From the beginning their ancestors had been wanderers; wanderers across the breadth of the North American continent, wanderers across and out of the wide isthmus that joined Alaska to Siberia during the height of the Wisconsin ice age. Milennia before that they had been wandering across the open plains of the Old World. Regardless of this it was Algonkians whom Cartier encountered on the north shore of the St. Lawrence, and — mistakenly or not — named Canadians.

A Meeting with Peter Daglish

BY MARIE RAYMOND

When I went to meet Peter Daglish, in his studio in Chiswick, I almost had the feeling of being indirect. Knowing someone through his work is a very personal approach, to confront him with himself is a kind of self-examination that can easily become a more or less favourable public confession. I was not taking into account the simplicity of a real person, who is remarkably available and for whom the Old World is such a strong need that he speaks of it as freely as water runs from its source. Daglish is not a person caught up in a definitive formula — people who have seen his recent exhibition at the Galerie Libé and perhaps his album of lithographs called Man and the Beast, could establish this — for him the liking for experimentation with the plastic arts seems less a rash reflex than an inquisitive gesture con-
trolled by the intellect. He is aware of it, does not try to deny it and above all has not finished pursuing his research, feeling that he has no reason to limit himself to only one material, and still less to any one manner of expressing himself.

Born in Scotland, he arrived in Canada when he was an adolescent, and was brought up there; and found to be capable of making the leap of roundings in which to grow up. He first studied in Montreal — mainly with Dumouchel — and except for one or two periods when he taught, at the Banff Fine Arts School, he pursued his career in the East. When in 1965 he came to Great Britain for some time, he found his life in London, where he finally placed a place to begin painting again in the Chiswick area.

For two years, in fact, Daglish produced very little, due to lack of space. In 1965 he paid two canvases, then none for an entire year, to stay in form he made frequent use of his lithograph press and still participated in two exhibitions, one at the Commonwealth Institute and the other at the Whitechapel Gallery, which, in East-end London is playing the avant-garde role originally attributed to the Tate Gallery. Having returned to his palette, he immediately embarked on a new adventure; that of creating sculpture objects. Ideas on subjects to paint as well as the capacity to accommodate certain ideas and certain pictures that are not considered to their own account. Another of his most recent experiments is the album entitled Random words and album drawings. An introductory note — 'a more personal eccentric work'.

Daglish is also very involved in his teaching; he is giving basic and advanced courses on engraving. Giving students an opportunity for dialogue is an experience of which he speaks with an almost paternal fondness, so vital does he deem it to the period of formation. And I can well imagine him, discreet, respectfully directing the first rough sketches of coming artists, "the discipline comes from students and not from myself". "Teaching is a reexamination of my own ideas and essential for me", he adds; I think that one can also find in this assertion another of his essential characteristics because it translates very well his instinctive reaction, which is to always question everything that he is doing. And not always leaving away from leaving for Montreal to preside at the setting up of his exhibition. When he returned I found him optimistic, cheering, happy with what he had seen at home, full of plans, one of which will no doubt take him to Victoria next fall, since he has been offered a professorship there for next year.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Les Levine

BY JOANNA MARSDEN WOODS

This article deals with two works by Les Levine, one of which Electric Shock, will be exhibited at the VIth Biennale des Jeunes at the Musée d’art contemporain of the city of Paris during October 1969.

Process of Elimination (pl. 1) has already been exhibited at the Art Gallery of Glendoe University, York University, in 1968, and in New York in February 1969, on a vacant lot on Wooster street, between 3rd and 4th Streets. It consists of an assembly of 300 curved white plastic works scattered pell-mell on the ground. Every day for thirty days, ten works are removed until the end of the month when the work has been completely removed and the composition is destroyed. The works consist of styrofoam, dead leaves, and all the trash usually found on a vacant lot resemble the strewed pages of a newspaper that have been left to chance and the elements. Levine accepts chance as a part of the process which determines the forms seen by the viewer. It is a work without a preconceived idea of the object, without a determined internal structure. There is an unexpected poetry in the unforeseen displacements and formations of the artificial objects, which are returning to nature, and are subject to the laws of physics. In fact, the work is reminiscent of the monochromatic Canadian landscape, seen from an airplane in winter, but the colours are transposed; the white background of the snow is replaced, in Process by the greyish brown of the lot (pl. 3). In Process, Levine does not seek to interpret reality in the traditional sense, that is to say by laying down the order of his own imagination. Instead of imposing form to matter or of fashioning this matter, he has us observe the forms that already exist. He leaves things such as they are. Levine accepts the arbitrary condition of the lot for what it is in itself; he presents himself as the observer of the reality of the life that we lead. This is "litter art", the art of thrown away things.

The plastic works are a logical extension of "disposables", of art to throw away (1), they are made of styrofoam, a material that is ordinary and used in packaging, this is then reused, or used after use. (Pl. 4). One of Levine’s central ideas is that we should no longer consider the work of art as a valuable object. With Process, he moves
Art that Lives in an Enchanting Frame

BY CLAUDE BEAULIEU

From the top of the hill the house looks down upon the river and the great urban centre of the city. To reach it, it is necessary to meander up the western slopes of Mount Royal. Beneath the immense trees that surround it, a large metal sculpture, placed on the ground, greets the visitor. A number of works of art, further differentiated in size, texture, and colouring, but seen against a background, or rather under a ceiling made of repeated and serial elements. Whether at the viewer’s feet or above his head, the work consists of the sum of rigid and mobile elements, such that even under lack of weight invites the intervention of the wind for the “composition” of the sculpture, and on the other hand, of fixed and identical elements which invite the intervention of the viewer as an essential component of the sculpture.

Process and Shock are two large scale sculptures that occupy two given spaces, one out of doors, the other inside, without supressing the definition of these spaces as such, without hiding their everyday qualities. Levine would not want the works to distract our attention from the environment as an experience in itself. There is no advantageous position where the viewer can stand to look at them. A sculpture is usually thought to be an object that defines the environment, and that is chosen for its ability (4), which Levine believes that the environment defines what the sculpture is. The environment is not subordinated to the work; instead of commanding attention, the work adapts itself to the given space. It is a collaboration between the environment. Separated from the environment, the work does not exist; it is the elements which have no meaning by themselves receive their value and their interest from the given context. It would be impossible to regard an element as a fragment of an ancient sculpture, as a work in itself.

Process and Shock are large scale works and they are portable works at one and the same time. The two sculptures are transitory and consequently have no permanence; they happen in time. The element of time assumes prime importance. Since they do not exist out of time, neither are they objects that can be bought or sold. Their lasting value is reduced to the mental influence that they require. John Cage has written: “we are getting rid of ownership, substituting use”.

The works of Levine illustrate the current aesthetics that require that the artist does not give us a unique object, but a certain way of seeing, that art not be a thing, but an event, that the process be more important than the final result.

However, Levine does not insist on a conscious participation. “What I want to create is something that is such an integral part of the environment that it dissolves into the environment, and does not exist as a separate object.” (5) His works make us aware of the total environment: the natural one and the man-made one, and of their aesthetic possibilities, whether it be a question of an urban landscape created by negligence or a technological panorama of the XXth century, knowingly and deliberately created by man, by helping us to notice it more sharply and more deeply. “I am not at all interested in illusions, I am interested in reality.” (6) Levine’s art allows us to become aware, with a deeper and more personal knowledge, of the qualities and characteristics of the world that we are in the process of creating and the life we lead in it, and consequently, it means the purpose of art set forth by D. H. Lawrence, that is, that the purpose of art is to reveal the relationship between man and his ambient universe “at this living moment”.

NOTES

1. “Discordances” have already been exhibited in Paris, number 56 of the exhibition Canada - Art of Today, which was held at the Musée National d’art moderne in January and February of 1968.
5. See Note 2 above.

PLATES

2. The basin which is situated between the two modern art museums in Paris.

Art of Today, which was held at the Musée d’art moderne, in Paris.

1. 79.

The production of art is going through Levine’s Star Machine, Paris, January 12, 1968.


Art of Today, which was held at the Musée d’art moderne, in Paris.

1. 79.

The production of art is going through Levine’s Star Machine, Paris, January 12, 1968.


1. 79.

The production of art is going through Levine’s Star Machine, Paris, January 12, 1968.


1. 79.

The production of art is going through Levine’s Star Machine, Paris, January 12, 1968.


1. 79.

The production of art is going through Levine’s Star Machine, Paris, January 12, 1968.


1. 79.
beneath a 1946 watercolour by Riopelle and a graphite sketch by Picasso. Between the visitor and these works chosen with love, a tacile and mysterious communication spontaneously begins.

It is in the dining room that is evident the change that is taking place. In the separate rooms, always harmoniously adorned with the art of the most famous artists, who acquire new works by artists who are still unknown, but beginning to gain repute. There are also memories of trips: a Clavé, a Buffet discovered almost twenty years ago, a very large early McEwen, are among the first impressions. But it is in a small, intimate room that the transformations are most keenly sensed. African masks, an armchair by Breuer placed on a zebra skin replace graphic works, of which some remarkable examples remain: Léon Bonhomme, Derain, Rodin, and Vlaminck. A storeroom, a guarded place is evidently given to Canadian artists. In most of the rooms and free areas hang McEwens, and Dalliances, including the Peile aux fleurs (see the cover of no. 45 of Vie des Arts).

Objects, rugs, furnishings, everything attests to a valuable and rich culture. There is also a remarkable book-lover's collection including: Miroir, La Pire Ubu and La Passion, by Rouault; the Parler seul of Tristan Tzara, by Miro; the Prométhée of Gide by Henry Moore; Sainte Monique, by Bonnard; La tentation de Saint Antoine, by Picasso; the Le Spleen de Paris, of Baudelaire by Francis Gruber, and so many others...

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Zao Wou-Ki
BY RENÉ DE SOLIER

He is the most tactful painter in the West! His silence is baffling. Wou-ki does not speak about his painting. Amused, smiling, he looks towards us.

"Your turn to play!" (Wou-ki is, moreover, a remarkable tennis player). This sportsmanship is pleasing, even if it does not make the critic's task any easier. The painter surrounds himself with only the best people. Henri Michaux was one of his first friends. And the already lengthy bibliography indicates rather clearly the interest around his work which is reputed to be incomparable.

The reason for his silence are very easily understood. Learned, knowing ancient signs, writings and transcripts, wondrous materials, as well as the research of graphic etymology, Zao Wou-Ki imparts his knowledge elsewhere. In the course of his still unpublished study, "The Human Plant", Wou-ki pointed out and detailed certain scripts, of divinatory inscriptions on shells or on bones (Kia kou wén).

Certainly one experiences a great nostalgia when one is familiar with all these symbols, "the picture of the 214 keys", Wou-ki does not yield to the temptation. But what a calligraphy!

Could his painting, and his lithographs be variants, whose composition is inverted, of what we call the "science of signs"? Perhaps. But that matter pertains more to psychology than to art criticism, which does not like to take the slightest risk — unfortunately! At least we could willingly support this idea, with the painter's consent, if Wou-ki were not so inscrutable! To each his own risks.

Knowledge of the line, in the existing manuscript writings is so rich that one would wish to become very wise, or to be introduced into the secret workshops. One may marvel of the best of it, of our ignorance, especially since Wou-ki, who is not very strong, does not necessarily impart his knowledge "inside out", like a negative onto his canvasses, but according to a style of painting that is steady, lively, sprightly, and that needs not resort to the abominable blotting or staining that spoils so many works.

Having seen that and proceeding from what is real, there is one patient observation to be made, this painting has a hold on nature, how harmonious it is! It is a painting of "signs", if one can so describe the elements that intervene vividly in between (hair, hair, clouds, networks (without linear figuration). We are baffled by the quality of the techniques, by the extent of the knowledge of the science of colours, by the vigour and clarity of the colours.

What are the colours? Wou-ki declares — Which ones especially? None. I do not have any favourite colours. I am particularly sensitive to vibrations'.

That is perhaps the key word to the enigma, if one wishes to enter the painter's universe, one of the most mysterious of contemporary art.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

McLaren, or creative schizophrenia

"I shall build you a city with ragged bits I shall build for you without plans or cement An edifice that you will not destroy."

HENRI MICHAUD

BY DOMINIQUE NOGUEZ

Norman McLaren is the leader of a heretical sect that had the cinema pass from polytheism to monothelism. What art form was more inevitably devoted to multiplicity than the cinema before his? On one side of the film was a whole lot of co-creators ranging from the deity of the dialogues to the little goddess of makeup, and on the other side of the film was the director and the cinema. The pre-McLarrian film producer like the motion picture fan before the "magnétoscope" (Translator's note: a procedure of recording televised pictures on a plastic magnetic tape) was surrounded on all sides by the viewers. McLaren was thus restoring to the creative gesture all its meaning, its force, and especially its freedom. Tearing the cinema away from the theatre or from the puppet show, he was progressing, in painting and drawing, that is to say, among the arts where everything depends on one maker and where everything is possible. This liberation was a veritable Copernican revolution, for it saved the cinema from a seemingly inherent fate: enslavement to reality. With McLaren and his non-figurative cinema, cinema no longer revolves around the world, it is the world that revolves at the will of the cinema. The animated numbers of Kymatonic (1956), the facetious microphone of Opening Speech . . . McLaren (1961), the surrealist mechanisms of Begey shell care (1949), the ducks or earthworms of Hen hop (1942): these helter-skelter elements of the realistic universe are whimsically called together to the rhythm of the sarabands of Desormeaux or Blackburn. They and they were to be true, and they are often elementary: molecules or debris, blobs or points — simple starting points of a reconstituted world, a nihilistic world. For everything occurs as if McLaren, the impatient scientist were inventing atoms of a new physics, a mosaic of an imaginary biology in order to observe them as he pleased.

Now these multicoloured microorganisms that always seem to appear to us as though through a gigantic microscope or a dwarf telescope progressively and increasingly furiously from the work progresses, significantly draw the McLarian fairyland nearer to one of the most fantastic and yet coherent modern literary worlds, the one of Henri Michaux. Like many a text from Michaux's pre-cinematic period, each of McLaren's films is in effect something like an imaginary trip to a world of replacements, a counter-creation. A trip, yet, where exclamation and amazement are banished, and which appears to be all the more factual as it reveals more surprising creatures and gestures to us. In Michaux's Grande Garbage (1) sick people are choked, ministers burned, drown, tears shed over a fulling leaf, people are upturned over a snigle, they sneeze for months, in the most natural way in the world. And in the same way, who will be astonished by the extravagant pirouettes of the characters of Two Bagatelles (1953), by the lengthy shots of the backs of the antagonists of Neighbours (1952)? Is Jutra, confronted by a chair in A chairy tale (1957), astonished by the sweers, the chang­ing moods, and the remorseless movement of his wooden partner? And in Opening Speech . . . McLaren in which he is the protagonist, is McLaren startled to see his microphone expand, contract, wriggle, and flee into the wings? Finally, in the presence of the fabulous paintings of Pas de deux (1968), reduced in ratio and reunited to the rhythm of a harp or a piano's flute. Having a gracelessness that never before existed, who would prefer surprise to awe? Is it not as much the apparent lack of logic and realism of these cinematographic fantasies that should surprise as well as their deep coherence and their richness?

I have spoken of debris and it is very true that in a certain way this phantasmic world is made up of pieces of ours. But we must see how these pieces immediately regroup, find meaning and balance the lines. And a thousand times less, having a gracelessness that never before existed, who would prefer surprise to awe? Obsessive, for it is not so much a question of an entertainment as of an urgency: to
be surrounded by these populations of signs and scribblings as though they were insusceptible protection. The geometrical ballets of *Limes-verticalis* (1960) and *Limes-horizontalis* (1962), the spewed oranges and reds of *Fiddle de deec* (1947), the shimmering and oily reflections, the light confetti, the balls and marbles, the Dahl-like sets of *Short and sweet* (1959), the multicoloured bands of *Starsi and stripis* (1959), the brief and abstract phantasms as aggressive as a bolt of lightning or an electric discharge, the geometric-figurative motifs—the umbrella, chicken, pineapple, palm tree, bluebird, heart, and eggs of *Blindeye Blank* (1954), the dancing of blue, red, and green signs in *Happy hop* (1946), the mystic-phallic birds of *A Phantasia* (1952), or yet again, of *Short and suit*, the evanescing bird of *La poutette getre* (1947), the rows of unutter numbers of *Rhymatic* (1936), the bands, cutting the drawings of little men, and then the "real" and reduced in ratio characters of *Camera* (1964), — all this lively and rapid multiplication of forms and creatures that are rarely figurative, and often comparable, in a visual nature, to the neologisms of Michaux, can take a page of *buffet-state* (the formula is still Michaux's) between the creator and the real world, a real world still perceived as a threat, at best as a source of jokes (the chair of *Chairy tale*, the microphone of *Opening Speech...*). McLaren and his assistants contributed the most, as we noted in the beginning, to perfecting an individual, closed cinema, which does without apparatus and with their quasi mechanic performance owes itself, or that, on the contrary, it is McLaren who in them, by them, exercises or simply stimulates the schizoid nature. The essential thing is the unity that this creative "neurosis" assures them in themselves; the essential thing is the richness that reunites these rigorous phantasmagories, and confers on them, beyond their formal diversity, a similar sense; the one of a successful mere psychosynthesis in the moving, superb, and super-logical world of the film. P.S. May Jacqueline Saint-Pierre, of the N.F.B., who considerably facilitated access to the McLaren films find here mentioned my deep gratitude.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

**Kraaeng**

BY PIERRE W. DESJARDINS

Five and a half years after the initial approval of the project, the first, and probably the last, major ballet, *Kraaeng*, finally took place in the Opera House in Ottawa, Canada. The first performance was at the arts centre in Ottawa on Monday June 2nd. The Canadian general, the Prime Minister, the diplomatic corps, guests from all the provinces and critics from all over the world filled the 2,300 seats. It was the first performance of Roland Petit's latest ballet, "Kraaeng", commissioned for this occasion by the National Ballet of Canada. Defying chauvinism, a Frenchman created the choreography, a Hungarian designed the sets, a Greekman wrote the music, and an American designed the orchestra. The performances took place in Paris, Berlin, and New York, and were performed by Georges Piletta, Lynn Seymour, and Edward Villella. (To be altogether fair, one should point out that Lynn Seymour, from the Berlin Opera Ballet, is a native of Vancouver.)

First, a short and very unmemorable ballet titled "The Queen/ La Reine" paid its respects to nationalism and to both of our founding races. 'The O Canada' followed and at last the evening really began. It was well worth the wait.

As the critic from *La Presse* aptly noted, the collaboration of Xenakis (music), Varese (sets and costumes), and Roland Petit (choreography) recalled the glorious days of Diaghilev, when renowned composers, artists, and choreographers worked together in creating the first great contemporary ballets.

Clive Barnes of the New York Times hailed the music for "Kraang" as "one of the major ballet scores of the century. Although Xenakis was not altogether successful with the acoustic resources of the orchestra, a mixture of recorded tape, the use of a 23-piece orchestra with their costumes, their movements, their shadows, their image reflected and transformed by a circular mirror. The set became a work of art rather than an empty shell." *Kraaeng's* choreography disappointed certain Canadian critics who found it "an ugly, dingy, picturesque, a masochist's evening of ballet..." (James Barber, Vancouver Province). "A danse macabre" (Nathan Cohen, Toronto Star), "a tiny rubber balloon of a thought inflated to giant proportions..." (James Barber, Vancouver Province).
Les universités sont devenues aujourd'hui des centres de diffusion de l'art. Elles sont le lieu d'élection d'expériences artistiques; elles

Traduction de Lucile Ouimet
Des ateliers de ce genre sont inexistants au Canada et aux États-Unis. C'est à l'Université de Calgary que l'on a pu avoir l'idée de créer un tel atelier. Les ateliers de gravure que nous avons organisés et surveillés me plaident en faveur de tels centres de formation. Les artistes ne peuvent travailler continuellement dans la solitude. Ils ont besoin de changer d'atmosphère, de partager leur travail, de pouvoir exposer leurs travaux; plusieurs d'entre elles ont commencé à monter des expositions qui ont été un grand succès.

A Meeting with Arthur Pepin

BY M. F. O'Leary

Passing through Paris, I met Arthur Pepin, a Canadian painter who has been sojourning at Venice for a year. We made our way to an atelier in the Marais quarter where he showed me his recent pictures. These are of his new home in Venice, and I was very much impressed by the sense of light and atmosphere that he achieves in his work. I believe in previous existence. A stored-up knowledge that re-appears. Even if in 1969 one is French-Canadian, even if one is living in Paris, and even if one is a symbol of a language that is past, present, and future.

Q. — Arthur Pepin, why have you come to France?
A. — I came here to break with the kind of life that I was leading in Quebec, in order to compare myself with the other artists here in Paris where the competition is very keen; this confrontation will permit me to get my bearings.

Q. — Should an original painter be measured in this competition?
A. — It is vital to know what other people are doing. Seeing this is stimulating and in this sense Paris is a hive of activity, so I can go on from there.

Q. — You chose Provence.
A. — Yes, because I have a studio there that the Karolyi Foundation offered me. It is a marvelous workshop, with lighting an artist could only dream of.

Q. — You attach a great deal of importance to nature and ease of communication, I believe in a common thinking among Western and Eastern artists.
A. — That is my work. I believe in previous existence. A stored-up knowledge that re-appears. Even if in 1969 one is French-Canadian, even if one is living in Paris, and even if one is a symbol of a language that is past, present, and future.

Q. — What is your attitude to other artists and their work?
A. — I believe in previous existence. A stored-up knowledge that re-appears. Even if in 1969 one is French-Canadian, even if one is living in Paris, and even if one is a symbol of a language that is past, present, and future.

Q. — Would you say that the work of Arthur Pepin is related to Oriental writings?
A. — Yes, because I have a studio there that the Karolyi Foundation offered me. It is a marvelous workshop, with lighting an artist could only dream of.

Q. — How do you see the problem of the relationship between your painting and the East?
A. — I believe in previous existence. A stored-up knowledge that re-appears. Even if in 1969 one is French-Canadian, even if one is living in Paris, and even if one is a symbol of a language that is past, present, and future.

Q. — You cannot deny the relationship between your painting and the East.
A. — I believe in previous existence. A stored-up knowledge that re-appears. Even if in 1969 one is French-Canadian, even if one is living in Paris, and even if one is a symbol of a language that is past, present, and future.

Q. — Well, for you being a painter identified with Canada.
A. — Yes, because I have a studio there that the Karolyi Foundation offered me. It is a marvelous workshop, with lighting an artist could only dream of.

Q. — How do you see galleries and the intermediary of galleries, how do you see this problem?
A. — Galleries should not exist, but this is impossible. We must bow to requirements which are wretched hagglings. Young people are struggling against this strange thing, but it seems difficult to do away with it: it is a millstone.
be better off if we could manage to get rid of this marketing. However, I think that exhibitions that accept artists without eliminating any, even if all the works exhibited are not quality works, are valuable.

Q. — Engravings, gouaches, paintings, poetry, you are taking up different techniques, is the research the same throughout these varied approaches?
A. — Yes, since with each procedure I am translating an expression of myself that varies, certainly, according to the techniques, but whose direction remains the same. I am a colourist and my engravings as well as gouaches, or my oils, are a search for unity through colour and graphism. It is a spontaneous action, self-definitive, I do not start over again.

Q. — Do you work only by intuition?
A. — Yes. I am an intuitive painter, but lyric as well. I belong to the abstract lyric school. I am not as interested in explaining phenomena, as I am at having phenomena experienced such as they are. A landscape unfolds before us; we like it not because we understand why a tree is there or not, but because its imposing appearance strikes us and moves us, and finally pleases us: painting has the same meaning for me.

Q. — And is it easier to interpret this landscape in France?
A. — Yes the freedom that I have here is precious. In Quebec I am obliged to work, I am a teacher; one cannot paint under these conditions: one becomes drained and one cannot communicate with others.

Q. — What are your upcoming exhibitions and those in which you have participated recently?
A. — A few group exhibitions including the Superintendents and the Independents (Paris), and my own exhibition in Biarritz in June, and at the Mouffe Gallery in Paris in November.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson