EDIFICE SIGMUND SAMUEL CANADIANA

Jusqu'au 1er novembre: Peintures de Peter Rindisbacher.

CARMEN LAMANNA GALLERY

840, rue Yonge


THE ISAACS GALLERY

832, rue Yonge


ROBERTS GALLERY

641, rue Yonge


LONDON

LONDON PUBLIC LIBRARY AND ART MUSEUM

305, avenue Queens


THE ART GALLERY OF WINDSOR

Willistead Park


CHARLOTTETOWN

CONFEDERATION ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM

Edifice des Pères de la Confédération


SACKVILLE

OWENS ART GALLERY

MOUNT ALLISON UNIVERSITY


VANCOUVER

THE VANCOUVER ART GALLERY

1145, rue Georgia Ouest

Jusqu'au 18 octobre: Rétrospectives de Jack Chambers; 21 octobre-8 novembre: Peintures de Christopher Pratt; Nouvel horizon 70; 10 novembre-6 décembre: Artistes canadiens cinéastes; 15 novembre-15 décembre: Exposition d'art aquamau

VICTORIA

THE ART GALLERY OF GREATER VICTORIA

1040, rue Moss

Jusqu'au 25 octobre: Rétrospective de Jack Shadbolt. 27 octobre-15 novembre: Nouvelles acquisitions; 17 novembre-décembre: Ouverture d'une nouvelle aile; Du 8 au 27 décembre: Mark Tobey.

NEW YORK

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Fifth avenue at 82nd St.

Jusqu'au 1er novembre: La France au 19e siècle; gravures et dessins; 13 novembre-12 février: Cinq cents ans de chefs-d'œuvre; 16 novembre-4 janvier: Exposition de peintures chinoises de la Collection Earl Morse; Jusqu'au 3 janvier; Sculpture de l'Amérique Centrale.

THE SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

1071 Fifth avenue


WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

945 Madison Avenue at 75th St.


PARIS

MUSÉE DU LOUVRE

Du 21 octobre au 4 janvier; Dessins du Musée National de Stockholm; Jusqu'au 7 décembre: Goya.

MUSÉE NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE

Jusqu'au 16 novembre: Serge Poliakov.

MALMAISON

MUSÉE NATIONAL DU CHÂTEAU

Jusqu'au 19 octobre: Autour de Napoléon—Histoire et légende.

SÈVRES

MUSÉE NATIONAL DE CÉRAMIQUE

Jusqu'au 26 octobre: Porcelaines de Paris de 1800 à 1850.

TRANSLATIONS/TRADUCTIONS

EDITORIAL

By Andrée PARADIS

Instead of the image, speech. For the reader, a message other than a written one: here are the first glimpses of a meeting that brought forth a wealth of strong, often contradictory impressions.

The Canadian government invited about a hundred art critics, historians, and museum scientists, all members of the Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art (A.I.C.A.) to come from the four corners of the world to become acquainted with Canadian art and art circles.

From August 17th to the 31st, the association held its twenty-second general assembly and its eleventh special congress, during its itinerant meeting which took place in the cities of Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver and Victoria.

As they became aware of the size of the country, as the Under-Secretary of State, Mr. Jules Léger, who greeted them in the name of the government so recommended, the members of the congress were able to measure the scope of the task that is truly incumbent on the art critic, that is to say, an attempt at a more global vision and synthesis of all the elements if we wish to arrive at a more perfect understanding. The president, Mr. René Berger, wishes that the critic-decipherer orient his work in such a way as to obtain a more rigorous course of action in order that no aspect or tendency of the work of art be neglected.

But that day in Montreal, the sun was shining, there was a taste for discovery and Kéro, the insatiable eye, was at the meeting with her cap . . .

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
Cosgrove and establishment criticism

by François GAGNON

Art criticism is certainly one of these activities whose purpose is the least clearly defined and whose necessity is the least justified. We shall see this with respect to Stanley Cosgrove.

In our circles—but in that, it follows European models—art criticism seems to aim primarily at defining the characteristic style of our painters. But its methods of procedure resemble those of treatises of graphology or typology, or even those of astrology columns that we can read by consulting the horoscopes in big-circulation newspapers. The same experts have discovered them in the exterior configurations (forms of graphism, arrangement of facial features, arrangement of stars at birth, organization of lines and colours of a painting) the unique character of an individual and to express it by epithets which one believes appropriate. Thus, the result of these curious experts' reports strangely resemble one another. Let us read from start to finish a kitchen recipe, a horoscope, the definition of a temperament and handwriting analysis of a great person; we will be very astonished to find there the same mixture of adjectives borrowed from morality or para-psychology. Let us take it into our heads afterwards to read an article of art criticism: we will notice that the verbal landscape has not changed very much.

One of the first, if not the first, times that a critic took a notion to define the characteristic style of Cosgrove, was in November, 1939. On the occasion of an exhibition of Cosgrove at the Musée de Québec, M. Gérard Morisset, on page 4 of "L'Action Catholique" of the same year, wrote about it this way: "...he suggests instead of affirming; he transposes the exterior world instead of photographing it ( . . . ) he willingly believes in his own vision, in his original reactions, in the great subtlety and unobtrusive movement of his craft."

It is difficult to be more vague (or more wise). One does not dare think of the number of contemporary painters to whom exactly the same words could be applied. Thus, two years later, Morisset again takes up, from his sketch, "(A Look at the Arts of New France, 1941, p. 142): "( . . . ) most of his works are freely spontaneous compositions, rich in subtle harmonies and unobtrusive movement, austere in their groupings and design."

The adjective "subtle" has been retained, but after having qualified the "craft" of the painter, it is now applied to his harmony of forms. Let us note also the appearance of the attenuating adjectives with respect to Cosgrove: the "unobtrusive" aspect of his movements (which ones?) coming to echo "he suggests instead of affirming." From this time, we can say that the main lines of French-Canadian criticism—we will see that English critics use other registers—are fixed with respect to Cosgrove.

Maurice Gagnon takes them up again in his book "Modern Painting", 1943, p. 75: "He works with a paint that envelops more than it specifies . . . ." Further on, "the coloured relationships", called "subtle" by Morisset are to be found by him. "On a certain state of Canadian painting by 1944, p. 88, the same critic, renewing the series of epithets, affirms no less the "fine personality" of the painter, the absence of "brusqueness and constraint" in his line, his "natural shyness", his "distinction", his modesty . . . "everything in him is overflowing with charm", even if certain canvases show a certain "vigour" and a "calm strength."

Dealing with "Bouquet of flowers" in "Vie des Arts, Summer 1959, p. 13, Andrée Paradis keeps to the consecrated adjectives: "He composed this bunch of flowers juxtaposed in a range of pastels whose rich shades are as soft as they are sensual, . . . . Softness and sensitivity, again we find components of the "woman's sensitivity" diagnosed by Gagnon. Then Andrée Paradis adds, in the attenuant register, the metaphor of some succumbing: "These flowers give a taste of summer, a summer that would last forever, but which, unfortunately, slips through our fingers."

When in 1964, Guy Robert, in his "Montreal School", p. 29, will compare Cosgrove to the line and a half that is regular in this kind of work, he will speak only of the "great delicacy" of his paintings.

In the meantime, the English critics were writing about Cosgrove too. New adjectives were to be proposed. In an otherwise remarkable chapter of "The Growth of Ocean Painting", 1964, p. 105-106, Donald W. Buchanan had thought to be able to summarize Cosgrove's entire effort as the tendency "toward a contemporary classicism. The suggestion seems to have found favour. It is found again in "Anthology of Canadian Art", 1960, p. 26 by R. H. Hubbard: "There was also in Montreal the Mexican-trained Stanley Cosgrove who professed a style of classic simplicity."

The adjective seems to please this author: he takes it up again, in another of his publications, three years later, ("The development of Canadian Art", 1963, p. 123), where he speaks of the "limitations of the "subject-matter" in Cosgrove's best work. But he had tried in the rather unpleasant paragraph that he devoted to him in his little book "Modern painting in French Canada", 1964, p. 40, to denounce the "very outwardly classical" aspects of the "stereotyped manner" of some of Cosgrove's critics (Hubbard and Orzoco) of "Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art", 1967, p. 111, will define the style of a "classicism" of Cosgrove.

Things would get rather involved if we had to show how the adjectives were uncalled-for with respect to Cosgrove. It will be evident to everyone that it is vague and self-encircling to return to the prose of our compatriots which poses other problems. Our style graphologists, our charters of cultural horoscopes, our gastronomists of painting, each one dealing with it in his own little way, had thus retained, to define Cosgrove's characteristic style, the features of sensitivity, delicacy, timidity, softness . . . The portrait was at once moral (delicacy, modesty, softness) and pre-psychological (timidity, sensitivity). Those are adjectives that our masculine culture willingly reserves for the feminine mind. Had Gagnon not fixed Cosgrove up with "a woman's sensitivity"? We can ask ourselves if this assault of caressing adjectives, even used with good intentions, did not finally harm Cosgrove. It is not a good thing in our man's world, to think of the man's sensitivity, of his timidity. But it is not a good thing in Cosgrove's memory, to think of the woman's timidity, modest person, Cosgrove finally disappeared from our cultural census.

J. R. Harper no longer even mentions him in his large book of "Painting in Canada from the origins to our days", 1967.

We understand that at the time reproductions of Canadian paintings are to be found in books, it is difficult to give intense visual judgments, that is to say, to go beyond the appearance of what we see. But it is not enough for the critic to think of the number of contemporary painters whose work is presented in the same way. To tell the truth, as in the heart of a big corporation, critics don't pass on these borrowings and ideas and terms, and don't see why they should thus do without the photos.

They do not fail to call attention to the names of Cosgrove's teachers. They already appeared in Buchanan. In 1955, the small catalogue of the First Canadian Biennial Exhibition, in its account consecrated to Cosgrove, summarized the essential facts. Cosgrove studied "under . . . ; in the block of "Still life", 1939, from the collection of M. Gérard Morisset. We understand that at the time reproductions of Canadian works were hard to find, but in 1967? The art photography business must have made great progress.

The critics, besides wanting to define the characteristic style of painters, attach a great importance at once to the tracking down of influences being exercised on the painters and to the revelation of resemblances between their works and those of their predecessors or contemporaries. Thus do we see them record with a great deal of care the names of painting teachers who taught them or more famous painters with whom they spent time. Is it not from them to begin with that we have the best chance to discover these famous influences?

From the horoscope, criticism turns to a scholastic honours list. They did not fail to call attention to the names of Cosgrove's teachers. They already appeared in Buchanan. In 1955, the small catalogue of the First Canadian Biennial Exhibition, in its account consecrated to Cosgrove, summarized the essential facts. Cosgrove studied "under . . . ; in the block of "Still life", 1939, from the collection of M. Gérard Morisset. We understand that at the time reproductions of Canadian works were hard to find, but in 1967? The art photography business must have made great progress.

With regard to the same comparative intention, we find among the critics attempts to classify the painters under vast headings, designating schools or tendencies. Thus, in his book of 1943, Gagnon placed the timid, shy Cosgrove among the Fauvists. Much later Guy Robert
rejuvenating the categories, without questioning the proceedings, will relate Cosgrove, in a very anachronistic manner to "new figuration". There is the great delicate Cosgrove, as we recall, in the company of other no less dangerous Fauvists, Dubuffet, Francis Bacon, Enrico Tagliabue, etc. As if that were not sufficient, we see our critics becoming interested in medals, decorations, rosettes, awards, more or less honorable prizes that the painter has been awarded in the course of his career. One might think one was reading a report of agricultural merit. The artist is like a prize calf... The biographical notices consecrated to Cosgrove, except those in Buchanan or in the dictionary of Colin S. MacDonald, 1967, pp. 145-7, always very compact, give great importance, comparatively, to these trifles. Thus the "Panorama of painting in Quebec, 1914-1967", 1967, does not leave any out. What seems to confirm the publicity purpose of this kind of notation is immediately after there follows the name of the gallery where the painter's works can be bought. "30 Quebec painters" (an undated publication of the Metropolitan Galleries) went so far as to list in two languages the painter's specialties: "Peintre du nu, de paysages et de natures mortes. A.R.C.A. en 1951. (sic). Painter of figures, landscapes, and still life. A.R.C.A. since 1951."

Jean McAllister, by René Garneau

Beyond resins, stone or wood, Jean McAllister sculpts her dream, the insistent human dream that steels the inner face and the intimate movements of matter. A daughter of Lucretius who aspired only for knowledge, rather than a sister to Faust who wanted change. Her artistic approach is first and quite naturally inscribed in exterior space by projections to which she periodically returns as though to pay her respects as a sculptor. But every time there is more force and freedom in the impulse, and thus by research into the heart of the material, she has been able, in the meantime, to extend the play of light, form and colour within her modelled figures.

Jean McAllister worked in France with a master who led her to the loftiest galleries in Rheims to restore statues damaged by erosion. She certainly is fully aware that in the ninth and tenth centuries monks hollowed out the small mountains of the South-West by sheer strength to open unknown paths to light, to project colours in small chasms destined to blindness, to turn towards the opacity of matter and no longer be satisfied only with taking fragments from it, is perhaps a form of aesthetic violation. In any case, it is an original and spontaneous art, without reference to her Japanese associations, with the density of a form of expression which, in its modern experiences, has too often become a rigid barrier; she wants us to be received into the sculpture. She had already tried this experiment with a large scale piece, "Promenade verticale", whose intended purpose was to open craters, pierced tunnels, and, reassured by what she discovers in the course of her walk in the catacombs, she periodically returns to using full light. It is then a matter of taming the beast whose secrets one has disturbed and the total control is applied to mastering movement as to opening up darkness.

Like these forms that are firmly set on steel frameworks or "deployed metal" that exploit, according to the rules of a Valéry-like calculation, the rich possibilities of the play of cross-cut angles. Here there is full use, but no abuse, of freedom. There is no search for expressionism and still less any trace of this affirmation at all cost of the sculptor's personality which has falsified so many recent works. However, McAllister is not absent from her creations. One of them may evoke an animal from the Roman bestiary, which Muyr can wants to soften a form of expression which, in its modern experiences, has too often become a rigid barrier; she wants us to be received into the sculpture. She had already tried this experiment with a large scale piece, "Promenade verticale", whose intended purpose was to open craters, pierced tunnels, and, reassured by what she discovers in the course of her walk in the catacombs, she periodically returns to using full light. It is then a matter of taming the beast whose secrets one has disturbed and the total control is applied to mastering movement as to opening up darkness.

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countries. It also allows one to understand the reasons for this misappre-
ception.

More than his graphism (sometimes modern and anarchistic with respect
to his own time, sometimes “dated” and marvellously anti-
quarrelsome), it is his research which strikes us. The artist
with esthétiques, Baudelaire is not mistaking when he discovers
in Grandville an inclination to philosophy. Moreover, he criticizes it.
When he envisages Grandville’s wish to unite art and philosophical
research, he sees in it a logical and logical adventure that
“the artist Grandville wanted the pencil to explain the law of association
of ideas... He spent his life looking for ideas, and sometimes
finding them... Naturally, he touched on several important questions,
and he went ‘délirer dans l’absurde’, being neither quite a philosopher, nor
an artist.” Grandville never really defined; in order to produce,
he lost his reason, success, and happiness.

His adventure consists in disturbing our categories of thinking; in
abolishing, or rather in transferring the systems of differences which
allow us to live and reflect; as Baudelaire says, in transforming nature
into Apocalypse. In the most obvious way, Grandville refuses any
privilege to man. Whether he is illustrating La Fontaine or representing
(for texts by Balzac, Musset or G. Sand) the secret and known lives
of animals, he has men and animals act in the same way. Even religion
does not escape this derisive treatment; on a roof, a simpering little
cat hesitates between a modest, white, guardian angel cat and a black
devil cat with the wings of a bat... To disfigure them, to produce
an animal, the artist Grandville put on a human mask and thus reveal
their aggressivity and their eroticism; the metaphors become forceful by
being reversed: the goat is lustful like a man; the hawk is fierce like a man.
Beginning with this operation which maintains a difference between
a man and an animal, and merging the creation of hybrids (in
the sense in which R. de Sollier uses this word in his Art fantastique)
is possible. The production of monsters is made by transplants, by
a surgery of delirium; “I do not invent”, said Grandville, “I only
associate dissimilar elements and superimpose other antithetic or
heterogeneous forms.” The monster is made up of two contrasting
possible conditions: it is made of man and animal, or of various
animals; differences are momentarily abolished, but when the monster
takes on life, these differences are more vigorously manifested and they
appear to be creature to pieces.

In his desire, man is thus defined as animality. In his function, in
his activity (even artistic), he is a machine. The dancers have jointed
creatures, the plants are animated and optical instruments come
to life to gaze at the stars. Often clothing moves and allows he who
does not put it on to be as present (as absent) as usual. A strange
theory of men-machines carries on the Cartesian concept of animal-
machines.

In Grandville’s drawings, skeletons and living men smile at one
another. Anarchism and the confusion of localities are multiplied.
Vegetables fight. In the form of dice, pyramids or obelisks, the plants
spread out. Other plants are constituted by the “vegetalisation” of
wigs, lace, or brushes. Anticipating certain kinetic works, Grandville
dreams of painted monsters that come to life and step out of their frames.
This man”, specifies Baudelaire, “with a superhuman courage spent
his life painting. He turned a fantastic and apocalyptic landscape,
rearranged it, explained it, commented on it, and nature was trans-
formed into Apocalypse.” At the same time, Grandville’s reflection
on masks tends to make suspect the visual opposition between being
and appearing, and that of depth and surface, as a text which accom­
panying qualities which are absent from a civilization of countries that
are much too organized, old, sclerotic, and “different” in every dimen­

sion. Thought, like art, cannot cross the Atlantic like a simple object.
Neither exporting nor importing have ever really been profitable
for art. At most, schools, tendencies, ideas can bear up, precipitate
an evolution that should, to be brought to a successful issue and be sound,
be contained in the recognized limits of a country, of a civilization.

Toupin has understood that well, and, for him, European art is
only a catalogue to which he likes to refer for pleasure, but not really
to sustain his own plastic problems. Thus he considered Mondrian
(a man from Holland, that is to say of a necessarily geometric vision,
and deeply entails there reality is abstracted. Why not already in
Vermeer?), but he withdrew nothing essential for himself besides
exercising liable to strengthen his technique.

One example among many. Everyone around him synthesizes with­
out cause, brings reality back to purified lines to a disembodied geo-

metry. He struggles with the material, acknowledges feelings, personalizes
his art to the utmost, projects himself frankly, adopts lyricism at the
expense of a possible order. In the same way that the nature in which
he lives, and with which he succeeds in identifying himself blooms,
Toupin will have an expansive vision. He will also see white. Every­
thing around him is immaculate. No doubt we must not consider his
first paintings as the simple illustration of Canadian nature. White
is also a colour that is sufficient unto itself, which has its mysteries,
its beauties. Toupin plays with white, but, in the same way as the hero
of Giono, he will experience vertigo.

Soon great tears will come to wound these virgin surfaces. Blood
will spurt from the icy hearts. A strident note. Vital urge. White
stabbed is also a cry.
From that time onwards, Toupin's painting will be organized around this duality: the projection of material (granulations, impasto), and the crevices. At times these are a simple incision into the heart of the material, at times (and most often), a fringe of emptiness between two masses of material that seem to go to meet each other.

Whereas in the works of 1963-66, the material expands in well-ordered shapes, following contrasting lines, without an immediate relation to the crevices, but becoming evident, or even suggested, in the recent works (1963-70) it is really a question of a violent and superb field of action where successive waves of colour are placed edge to edge like incandescent lava, storms at high sea, powerful energies.

But whereas in every work of the very essence of reality the material is asserted, at first, by large accents. The trowel has replaced the brush, the material, at times (and most often), a fringe of emptiness between the crevices. At times these are a simple incision into the heart of this duality: the projection of material (granulations, impasto), and the crevices. The Projection of art is implicated in an environment which serves as its permanent background: Dramatic occasion VIII. For example, a generous contribution by Lardera to the International Symposium of Sculpture and who exhibited at the Musée d'Art Contemporain in 1965, and whose work was placed in front of the French pavilion at Expo 67.

Lardera and the challenge of architecture

By Guy ROBERT

To reply to the "need to think about matter, to dream matter, to live in the matter, or else—what amounts to the same thing—to materialize the imagination," according to the apt phrase of Gaston Boche-Lardera, we then talk about the function of art. In 1965, one of the very first three-dimensional sculptures by Lardera placed the fundamental coordinates of his plastic language in the open, fronting a building by Hans Van Der Rosse, at the Haute Lame Museum of Krefted. Ten years later, this time, in front of the Johnson Foundation Building designed in Racine (Wisconsin) by Frank Lloyd Wright, Love of Sunny II stood in all its poetry after having cleared the barriers of a dock-workers' strike in New York, owing to an exceptional privilege granted by the workers to a work of art. In 1958 the 4.3 meters of Dawn I proudly stood at Berlin's Hansaplatz, in front of buildings by Oscar Niemeyer, Alvar Aalto, and Pierre Vago.

From 1962 to 1964 Lardera works on the monument of 3.5 meters for the State Technical Centre designed by Pierre Vago at Le Mans: Between two worlds IV organically reunites the space including between two of the modernist structures of the French municipal square, serving somewhat as the heart of the animated centre of Le Mans, without, for all that, losing anything of its autonomy. "With my sculptures placed in architectural complexes, I wanted to contrast the functional spaces with invented spaces. They come from a more or less parsimonious element; more than an implicit manner; he makes the problematic element explicit, with an imposing passion and rigor, and proposes convincing solutions (put in front) of the works of a few of the great names of contemporary architecture. Sometimes we only regret that Lardera has not had the opportunity to engage in a dialogue in which we can imagine would be as fertile as it would be energetic, with a building by one of his friends Le Corbusier. As early as 1949, one of the very first three-dimensional sculptures by Lardera placed the fundamental coordinates of his plastic language in the open, fronting a building by Hans Van Der Rosse, at the Haus Lange Museum of Krefted. Ten years later, this time, in front of the Johnson Foundation Building designed in Racine (Wisconsin) by Frank Lloyd Wright, Love of Sunny II stood in all its poetry after having cleared the barriers of a dock-workers' strike in New York, owing to an exceptional privilege granted by the workers to a work of art. In 1958 the 4.3 meters of Dawn I proudly stood at Berlin's Hansaplatz, in front of buildings by Oscar Niemeyer, Alvar Aalto, and Pierre Vago.

From the evidence, it is no longer a question of dutifully maintaining the utopia of the integration of plastic works (architecture—sculpture—painting—design) in a precise balance; indeed, to the contrary, Lardera claims his absolute right to oppose, to a soft or impersonal architecture, the impact and the conviction of his thoughts on plastic art, lucidly matured in the crucible of his patient imagination; or still, in the best cases, he draws from the background of the architectural or natural tableau, the calm certitude of his equations in space, constraining the emotion to appear on the metallic surfaces. Far from melting or adapting his forms to architectural themes, he builds them in their integrated autonomy.

Heroic Rhythm VIII the sculpture and its environment in the double dimension indicated by the title, in front of the gigantic residential complex of Maine-Montparnasse in Paris, a building by Jean Dubuisson. Since 1964-65, a work of 6 meters Dramatic occasion VIII has been receiving constant mention in Kölner Diäten Platten. Here the same rigorous eloquence, placed in the Duisburg municipal park and there asserting its indomitable presence. In 1966-67 Lardera undertook in his studio at Cité Falguière, in Paris, the composition Ille de France a few sober and vigorous planes divide the space into concentrated areas whose every outline combines, with an unforgettable grace, the steadiness of an examining look and the caress of a hand affected by emotion which shapes from the palpitating flesh of the emotion, to the homage of the Florentine sculptor's adopted land, and also the unprecedented pitfalls of such an avowal. The casting torch sings along the contours of the pieces of metal, and reveals its powerful energy, inscribed in the very thickness of the steel. And we deplore the fact that the City of Montreal was not able to keep such an evident masterpiece, which, in September of 1969, left the presence of the French pavilion of the international and universal exhibition of Man and His World (where, however, it had never really gotten along very well with the architecture of the previously mentioned pavilion), to enchant a museum in Hanover with its presence.

Very recently, in 1967-68, Lardera analyzed the problems presented by a building complex and found the masterful equation of Heroic Rhythm VIII for the cultural centre and the Conservatory of music and architecture in St. Petersburg (Le Koon, Goubitz). And for only a few months, Heroic Rhythm IX has been standing in the square of the University of Fribourg, exhibiting with a faithful authority the rigorous attitude that the artist proclaims in several cities in the world, towards the place of sculpture, and towards monumental sculpture in modern life.
The Inner Presence
In order to cast a very modest look at the man himself, let us broach a few questions. How for example, was he to forget his Lombardian and Tuscan origins? How was he to forget the sumptuous Florentine wonders seen from the heights of Fiesole? How was he to wash himself forever of the millennial alluvium of the Mediterranean, still impregnated with mythological marvels? And yet, Berto Lardera went up to Paris in 1947 at the age of 30, and without a single nostalgic look back to his native Italy, espoused Parisian life in its most concrete and Tuscan origins? How was he to forget the sumptuous Florentine potential that the students presented and which revealed itself in the quality of his gouaches and collages has been finding renewed life. A sculpture is real because it constitutes in itself a vital gesture of an absolute importance. The truth of a work of art does not consist in the exactitude of the representation, but in its interior necessity. Thus speaks Lardera, confiding his deepest thoughts to Josep Llunas. And it is exactly in this moral and ethical foundation, that we see the steel flowers of Lardera taking root. They testify that in our civilization, there is a just balance between romantic fulgence and cybernetic dryness; they attest to the nobility of the spirit and the turmoil of the heart. And finally, Lardera's work is not limited to a few hundred metal sculptures that have been exhibited throughout the world, from Tokyo to Venice, from Oslo to New York, that animate the public places of the nobility of the spirit and the tumults of the flesh. A sculpture is new when the spectator who has beheld it, is not concentrated in a form that sets the laws of intelligence to the frontiers of what is possible and what is happening. It is with these words that Marcel Biron ends his preface to a recent book devoted to the artist's work.

"Human presence is essential for every work of art, but it is not necessary for the representation of certain aspects of nature. I conceive this presence to be like a manifestation of the soul and the spirit. The first drive that begins the work of artistic creation, is the rediscovery of deeply felt emotion which engenders the work; and only the spectator is capable of giving "life" to the spiritual "material" that engenders the need to be expressed. A sculpture is real because it constitutes in itself a vital gesture of an absolute importance. The truth of a work of art does not consist in the exactitude of the representation, but in its interior necessity. Thus speaks Lardera, confiding his deepest thoughts to Josep Llunas. And it is exactly in this moral and ethical foundation, that we see the steel flowers of Lardera taking root. They testify that in our civilization, there is a just balance between romantic fulgence and cybernetic dryness; they attest to the nobility of the spirit and the turmoil of the heart. And finally, Lardera's work is not limited to a few hundred metal sculptures that have been exhibited throughout the world, from Tokyo to Venice, from Oslo to New York, that animate the public places of the nobility of the spirit and the tumults of the flesh. A sculpture is new when the spectator who has beheld it, is not concentrated in a form that sets the laws of intelligence to the frontiers of what is possible and what is happening. It is with these words that Marcel Biron ends his preface to a recent book devoted to the artist's work.

Colab—An experiment in group creativity (Rhode Island School of Design, Spring 1968)
By Marc LEPAGE

Bringing the spectator to participate in the creation of the work of art has been the main concern of my work of the last four years. With the intention of discovering new possibilities of participation, I undertook, at the Rhode Island School of Design, the creation of inflatable environments that surround the spectator and give him the possibility of expressing himself by manipulating the pneumatic material. The spectator becomes both a sculptor since he gives form to the material with his hand, and a spectator since he becomes the important element of the work, being formed and surrounded by the material.

To create these environments, I had worked with a young engineer whose help proved to be not only useful, but began to give work new dimensions, and technical refinement that I could not have envisaged if I had had to work alone. Encouraged by these results I began to perceive all the possibilities that the school offered, not only because of the highly specialized studios but also because of the immense potential that the students presented and which revealed itself in the form of creative energy.
in inflated plastic, and a rotating machine, that I made, that caused immense balloons inflated with helium to move about the entire space of the gym. The whole thing was convincing. The professors were so impressed with our presentation that most asked their students, as projects for April, to search for solutions to planning the ground, building different parts of the structure and finding the materials from companies. We were given dozens of rolls of plastic as well as all the tape needed to join the different parts of the structure.

The setting up of the structure

All the uncutting of the plastic—carried out according to the plans and calculations of our engineer—was done in the gymnasium by students who gave freely of their time. It was necessary to draw, cut, then glue the different parts that were then transported to the project site and inflated all at once. The entire structure was pliable and was transported in pieces to be assembled on the ground that had been prepared and designed for this purpose. A few weeks before the end of the project, almost the whole school was working on it, from the first-year students who were making banners to announce the project throughout the city, to the fashion designers who were making a series of costumes for the Saturday evening masked ball.

The Colab Week-end

The atmosphere during the week-end was indescribable; enthusiasm was at its peak Saturday evening for the masked ball. Inside, the atmosphere was unreal: flashes of light danced in the atmosphere of artificial mist that had been created by special machines, immense balloons ten feet in diameter were pushed into space and seemed in a state of weightlessness because of the effect of the strobos. We had created an atmosphere of a universal exhibition with not one, but many ideas, a great deal of energy, and a unique spirit of collaboration.

If one wants to speak of open works, I shall certainly speak of this one: a work open not only to the consumer or the spectator, but to its creators who embark on an adventure that gives creative ideas the opportunity to confront others and thus ensure their evolution. Colab was a thrilling group-work experiment as well as a structure, and a fascinating series of events. It was man, and his evolution, because of his contact with others in the group, that is really a work of art.

(Translation by Yvonne Kibyson)

Roland Pichet

By Michel BEAULIEU

Since finishing his studies at the École des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, about ten years ago, Roland Pichet has been engaged in a plastic research which, although it may seem to follow the beaten track now and again, still turns away from it in certain impulses of a clear originality.

The recent outcome of this research was horizontal bands on large canvases which seem to uninitiated people to be identical to the vertical bands of a painter like Molinari or the aesthetics of Noland, yet they differ from them by the irrational aspect of the process of creation within a rigid structure. In Pichet's work, two essential factors, one: a work open not only to the consumer or the spectator, but to the problematical approach of Molinari, proceed from paradox: the rational, that is to say, they are made by an open, rather than a closed research which, although it may seem to follow the beaten track now and again, began the most resolutely optic phase of his work, in which the shock of elements is of prime importance, leading the artist very quickly, to the end of a period of reflection, where he paints relatively infrequently, to his horizontal lines where colour becomes focal, while retaining a certain suppleness, began to organise his space more rigidly by sketching a first response to the problematical matter of the interaction of forms-colours through the definition of relationships acting on the masses themselves. Throughout the course of this second phase, the longest one, which preceded his stay in Europe, the delimitations of the masses grew more rigid and the colours no longer were interdependent.

In the course of his stay in London, the incorporation of horizontal and broken lines, either within the masses, or without, isolating or destroying them, began the most resolutely optic phase of his work, in which the shock of elements is of prime importance, leading the artist very quickly, to the end of a period of reflection, where he paints relatively infrequently, to his horizontal lines where colour becomes focal, while retaining a certain suppleness.

Monique Voyer

By Michèle TREMBLAY

Born in Magog, Monique Voyer decided, last May, to present her new plastic works at the Apogée Gallery in St-Sauveur-des-Monts. Outwardly this lovely Canadian-style house is not distinguished in any way from its neighbours; but inside, it is full of contemporary Quebec masterpieces. In the basement there is an atmosphere of privacy and contemplation which provides a suitable setting for the monthly exhibitions of the gallery. The warmhearted owners, Claude Gadoury and Maurice Robillard, do not hesitate also to exhibit young, unknown talents.

Upon leaving the Montreal Beaux-Arts, Monique Voyer won the first prize in painting and left to study at the Beaux-Arts in Paris. On her return to Canada, she won another painting prize and an honorable mention in prints during a provincial show. Since 1954 she has had many personal exhibitions. In 1955 she also worked as a costume designer for C.B.C. Today she is teaching plastic arts part time at a secondary school in Duvernay. But in her studio she is overcome by poetry.

Suddenly tamed by colour the faces grow larger and lock up and eyes too and hands too and men who again take their place in this sunshine world.

(Translation by Yvonne Kibyson)
Such is the presentation that the artist herself wanted at her exhibition. Around Helios (the Sun) revolve life, nature, fire, weather, desire. Monique Voyer sings of this Sun . . . this Centre.

Since her last exhibition three years ago, an important change has occurred in the artist's technical evolution. From somber and cold tones, she passes on to lively and warm colours, which certainly reflect her overflowing enthusiasm and joie de vivre. Moreover, we will recall the expressionism, then lyricism of her abstraction. Today she presents more structured compositions to us, which, for all that, are not geometric; she would be closer, on the contrary, to an implicit figurative art. Vasarely has again recently reminded us, in an interview in Esprit, of the fundamental principle of abstract art. "Painting is abstract," he said, "from the time when form-colour wins out over parasitic, naturalist or anecdotal relics." Now, Monique Voyer places the Sun at the centre of her research. This Sun is looked at, studied, reflected in all its aspects. Now close . . . now far . . . now going toward it . . . now coming from it . . . now pale, now brilliant . . . now surrounded . . . now solitary (which the artist prefers). In all time, the Sun has been this symbolic and inaccessible Force that intrigues peoples, this "Will to Power and Joy" sung by Nietzsche.

All this certainly belongs to the realm of the Metaphor, but it would be pertinent to know if the meaning of the sun-metaphor is simply a figure of style in the artist's work or else a source of secret inspiration which would finally surpass Myth. Here the artist insists on the sun-theme. Now the artist's function is to unveil, to shed light on the obscure, to unfold the other side of things, which, in her case, would be to suggest the absence of light and heat, the theme of Death. After all, the plastic arts, as well as dance, music, or even cinema, are made less to distract than to move one to introspection and, as says René Daumal, "incessantly to return one's gaze to the intolerable centre of one's solitude".

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

Claude Girard
By Christian ALLÈGRE

Let us try to establish a bond between the poet Claude Girard and ourselves, his audience, which by one, two, ten, a hundred canvases will lead us to the day when, after his first one-man show, he returned from New York, on the familiar and unknown road of his life as an artist.

A few words of his language come to us. Delicacy, let us say, refinement and sensibility. And we know that nothing is said yet. Attempting to define what is perhaps most indefinable, we may try, unwillingly, romanticism or melancholy, and we discover that Claude Girard has learned his art from Jean-Paul Lemieux in Quebec. Calm and cold exteriors, white moons, halos as for a Chaucerian setting, golden blue, rifleman, biochemistry of worlds unborn, slow and astringent movements of canvases painted ten years ago, material ecstasy of a person born in 1938 near Chicoutimi, under the sign of Sagittarius: calm, strength and balance.

We make our way, powerless spectators wanting to capture everything with words; we think of these: Dream, Beauty, Hope, like in these delicate extracts of poems by Baudelaire and Éluard with which he marked each of the canvases of his first exhibition in Quebec, in 1961.

Lyrical abstraction, let us state, in our folly of rationalization, classification. Our perception is unaimed and yet we want to judge. "C'est la mer allure avec le soleil" (It is the sea gone with the sun), would have spoken, better than us, another poet, Rimbaud. Sea, this city, Venice, as seen during a period at the Fine Arts Academy in this city, or else Malaga or Morocco, which create his best memories.

Can the art of a painter like Claude Girard thus be enclosed in a few formulas, without some surprises? No. What happened in 1967? Need for rigor, a sudden taste for discipline, a sigma of lively forces gathered in dream and poetry, evolution? We thus say: sharp edges, little squares or rectangles that vibrate on vast fields where vision falters, masking-tape and acrylic, rhythm, equilibrium, 900,000,001,000,001,001,001,001,001,001,001 units, says the title of the 1968 exhibition. Lively tonalities, a search for coloured values, always refined; has the poet forgotten poetry? Let us continue. Titles of the past: "A few unities of heat on an icefield", "From time to time, yes", "For mornings reminiscent of this secularized church in the Eastern Townships, that he loved for five years and that he recently gave up to be able to continue to create, to exhibit, to be an artist. There is contemporary music: painting is abstract", "Sensations-sounds by which helikes to be accompanied even at his work when, for the needs of the painting, he moves around making a movement of the body, a flexion of the knee or a gesture of arms that is inspired by his McLuhanian philosophy; in which, in her case, would be to suggest the absence of light and heat, the theme of Death. After all, the plastic arts, as well as dance, music, or even cinema, are made less to distract than to move one to introspection and, as says René Daumal, "incessantly to return one's gaze to the intolerable centre of one's solitude". (Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

QUESTION: Has Claude Girard really repressed the Self, the B; has he really made way for intelligence and frustrated emotion, a struggle between Descartes and Freud?

The creator laughs at us, of course, who look as does an entomologist turns toward evolution and its laws, we, his indefatigable and cooperative witnesses must trace the outline, believe that a future work by Claude Girard, based on a work that has already become great, will affirm, according to a physics of the mind and matter that is proper to it, canvas by canvas, year by year, the great forces, the great plant which is it the creator's privilege to know. (Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
David Samila et la joie de créer
par Virgil G. HAMMOCK

Les tableaux récents de David Samila, de Winnipeg, seront présentés en janvier prochain au Centre Sainte Brigid, de Montréal. Le public des galeries montréalaises est déjà familier avec l’œuvre de Samila, grâce à sa participation, au Salon de la Galerie Duverger de 1968 et à la Galerie du Siècle, à Montréal. Son tableau de lac récent, Une ville natale en 1969 après un séjour prolongé en Europe, et deux stages au Musée des Beaux-Arts de Montréal. Samila fut aussi l’un des artistes choisis par le juge William Seitz pour présenter cinq tableaux à la Septième Biennale de Peinture Canadienne à la Galerie Nationale du Canada, en 1970. Il est certain que la Galerie nationale, de Washington, étant un lieu ouvert au public, le lèger espace formé par les sections de son tableau forment une sorte de dessin sur une surface plane. Le léger espace formé par la rencontre des sections de Samila, des qualités supérieures: on juge le produit et non le procédé. Le critère qui le juge le dessin. Les arabesques et les calembours visuels, si évidents chez Samila, des qualités supérieures: on juge le produit et non le procédé. Il n’aurait pas non plus confiance aux commandes téléphoniques comme le fait Robert Morris. Ce qui ne confère pas nécessairement aux œuvres de Samila des qualités supérieures, ou qu’il produise du produit et non la forme.

An exhibition at the Galerie du Haut-Pavé, in the heart of the Latin Quarter, a programme filmed in colour by the Office de la Télévision Française (O.R.T.F.) in the framework of the series The face of art, an article by the France-Press agency, and a few brief articles about him published in the French dailies did not turn Louis Comtois’s head at all. On the other hand, the stubborn silence of Quebec’s news media serves to have made him a great deal more unknown. We hope that this article will make up, at least in part, for such an oversight. 

Not any kind of aluminium!

Louis Comtois is 25. He did not wait for the end of his secondary studies at the Collège Saint-Laurent in Montreal to become interested in painting and enrol in the art studio directed by Gilbert Marion and Gérard Lavallée, neither did he wait for the end of his studies at the Beaux-Arts to exhibit his first works in several Montreal galleries (Nova et Vetera, Galerie du Siècle). He recalled that his professors of the last two years, notably Mario Merola, Claude Courchesne and Jacques de Tommascou, had taught him that work truly takes on form and power when the artist works alone. Basically, a fine arts school should be a kind of free studio where dialogues and human relations that would give rise to better lessons would occur among the participants (students and teachers). It is too soon to say if Louis Comtois has achieved this point in Quebec. However, we grant a greater place to imagination than do some European establishments. From this point of view, technique is acquired in a similar way. The important thing is to become aware of contemporary problems as quickly as possible. To the dry academicism of certain European schools, our schools raise topical questions which tend to lead the artist’s choice.

"And today how can we imagine an artist's life disassociated from..."
research work?”, exclaims Louis Comtois. That is where there intervenes the collaboration of people who are often strangers to proper called art (engineers, technicians) or artists whose works can be integrated with mass production (graphists, photographers, sculptors).

At the Ecole des Beaux-Arts de Montréal, Louis Comtois used varied materials: wood, formica, plastic. Today, he uses aluminum.

"Not any kind of aluminum", he hastens to add, "but anodized aluminum. I mean one that has undergone an electrochemical treatment (electrolysis) in which the metal acts as an anode. On this anode is deposited a film of aluminum that gives the metal this distinct appearance that does not show up easily on photographs. I like aluminum because it affords multiple possibilities of colouring and also because it is a great material, noble in its purity and presence!" It is also very expensive. Thus Louis Comtois turned to great industrial societies. In particular, he worked with the Society of Industrial Electroplating of France. The French Technical Centre of Aluminum Research was also an inestimable help to him.

From creation to integration

The works are vast panels in the dimensions of murals (nine feet wide by twenty feet long, for example). The forms include squares, rectangles, and circles. He proceeds by two steps: first, the construction of a model with the help of figures cut out from metallic "Mylar", cardboard and plastered paper; then the elaboration of a second model, the exact scale of the future work, this time using plates cut straight from anodized aluminum and glued to a wooden support.

The creation finds its point d'appui from the first step. It is at this point that there is a participation of instinctual, rational, irrational, indeed chthonic, intuition. But which, on the contrary, leave the artist a kind of creative freedom. From then on, the creation is situated less on an intellectual level than on a level of sensitivity. Inspiration, ventures, and discoveries intertwine, remain in the background, are opposed, grow dim, and turn to disorder and tend towards a kind of perpetual aesthetic entropy. In the very interior of these groups forces of equilibrium and imbalance exist. Indeed, it is the general group that one must see and like. It is not at all a question of the art of the easel enlarged to a new universe.

But why use only geometric forms? Why use only two of the dimensions of space? Louis Comtois answers: "If I use only geometric forms—circles, squares, rectangles—I am not trying to be systematic, for the circumstances of our times or for fashion. The panels are imitating, for the time being, a certain sensitivity that is my own. It is like. It is not at all a question of the art of the easel enlarged to a new universe."

Projects, projects, projects

The one-man exhibition which he held in Paris, on April 15, 1969, is already long past, it was only a step. Louis Comtois has, since that time, pursued his research and, taking advantage of the opportunity, travelled in Europe. He made many interesting contacts. Other ideas, other models were conceived. He presented them to the famous Danish architect-designer Arne Jacobsen who was very interested in them: it is too soon to say more about them at this time.

His present plans include a one-man exhibition in Milan (Italy) during the fall at the Apollinaire Gallery, where a stainless steel multiple work will be shown, and participation in the Salon Comparaison.

In Milan, in March of 1970, Louis Comtois met several architects and decorators who became enthusiastic about his models. Several projects were conceived during these meetings. For the present, however, he decided to set up an exhibition at "Apollinaire", a gallery that is considered to be one of the most representative of present-day art in Italy. Only environment works are presented there. They will exhibit a new work, the last one by Louis Comtois. A photograph of this construction of this work will appear in the fall issue of the magazine Domus.

The Salon Comparaison is an exhibition that takes place this year on the site of the former Halles of Paris. All the contemporary trends meet there, it is a sort of kind of replay to people them. Louis Comtois will hang one of his latest works at this exhibition.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

Can Venice be saved?

By Simona Ganassi SERENI

Archit

Venice is an endangered city: the high tide, which about twenty years ago used to flood Saint Mark's Square and a few roads once a year, has become stronger and more aggressive. Twice or three times every year (sometimes more) the city is seen to be half-submerged. Moreover, air and water pollution cause an acceleration of the corrosion of statues, frescoes and works of marble in general.

We could continue to describe this physical decay; it would not summarize all the important and too obscure aspects of the drama of Venice. It is a matter of problems related to the socio-economic decline of the city that cannot be ignored if we wish to understand the very essence of the difficulties to be resolved.

However, the social problem of Venice cannot be understood without some historical background. For several centuries, Venice was the capital of a valuable maritime empire. Its position on a lagoon was advantageous to its relationships with distant countries, to its contacts with the mainland with which it could communicate by waterway because of a system of canals that flowed into its lagoon. At that time it was a rich, prosperous, and active city. These conditions changed completely between the end of the XVIIIth century and the beginning of the XIXth, when Venice lost its freedom and when new means of transportation (the railway, then the automobile) made maritime transportation less important.

The period which dominated Venice from 1790 to 1866 (except from 1806 to 1814, a period in which it was held by Napoleon), did not understand the singularity of its urban structure and its architectural quality and tried to transform it into a city like so many others.

It was linked to the mainland by a bridge for the railroad, thus losing its importance. Within the city, the canals were increasingly neglected; networks of pedestrian traffic were developed at the expense of traditional water traffic. Venice joined the new Kingdom of Italy in 1866, the Italian government continued more or less the same policies. However, if the Piedmont politicians could not understand the singularity of the city either, there were political reasons that justified their attitude: Venice was, for the new Italian kingdom, a fringe area, and it had, moreover, an immediate neighbour, an enemy state: Austria. Because of this, neither the port nor the great shipyards—the only elements that might have given new impetus to the economic life of the island—were developed by the new Italian state.

It was during the course of the first world war that the harbour installations of Venice were favored by their strategic location. After the war, the situation became even better due to the new borders. Venice was no longer a city on the perimeter; moreover, the development of the hydro-electric resources of the Venetian Alps permitted the consideration of the possibility or rather the necessity of building a new industrial port and of modifying the administrative limits of the mayorality of Venice. In 1926 were annexed the mayoralties of Mestre, Chioggia, Favoro Veneto, little towns that numbered at the time about 38,000 inhabitants compared with 230,000 for Venice and the islands.

The industrial area bordering on the lagoon and the inner commercial port of the city gave a new impetus, which led administrators to see Venice even more as an ordinary city, thus they came to build a new bridge, in the area of the old Austrian bridge that allowed cars to come onto the island, opening the way to the dangers of the invasion of the automobile, dangers increased today by the development of parking lots and the construction of garages all around the head of the bridge. In spite of the economic recovery, other phenomenon began to occur toward the end of the 30's, the exodus of inhabitants onto the mainland.

The second world war stopped this movement and brought about rather an opposite course of events, that is to say, a return to the island, which seemed safer and better protected. During this time, activities linked to war production had given rise in Venice, as in most of the Italian cities, to an unreal atmosphere of well-being. When the war was over, in fact, the movement to leave the city began again all the more. Within the next 15 years the population of Venice had decreased whereas that of the mainland had more than doubled.

This result was brought about not only by the migration of Venetians, but also by the attraction exercised on the rural population by the new urban concentration of Mestre, since the decrease in the
we consider the extent of the island of Venice, the characteristics of modern living conditions. The effort must be made in several areas: repopulation. That it is necessary not only to hasten to prevent new departures, but that the death rate is higher than the birth rate. Which means that the population would continue to decrease even if the exodus were to stop. We might think that this phenomenon of the reduction of population is not important. All the historical centres of old European cities, transformed into business centres have lost their original residential function. We might foresee the same future for Venice. However, if we consider the extent of the island of Venice, the characteristics of its urban centre, we notice that we cannot envisage conserving a living Venice without conserving its residential function. This also means that it is necessary not only to hasten to prevent new departures, but if we do not wish the population to decrease (because of the present day demographic structure) we must assure conditions of a veritable repopulation.

To this end, it would be necessary to assure Venice of jobs and modern living conditions. The effort must be made in several areas: research into new functions, restoration of buildings, setting up of new means of communication between the city and the mainland.

The problem is thus that there will be no sound defence for Venice on the one hand, and the creation of new functions, or rather the reflection of forms, within larger ones there was produced a reflection as astonishing as one or several spheres float in space by themselves, created entirely no longer imaginary, but quite visible. This opens the way to the development of new possibilities. And because it is difficult, the fundamental preoccupation of his work is light. It dictates the choice of materials. The metal he had already used had certain limitations: every medium does. However plastic opened the way to immense possibilities. "It intrigued me as a challenge to be taken up. It is also a departure from a material which generally is not greatly appreciated because it is fragile and not well known. But with it I attain, at least in part, my goal: light."

In his metal forms, it plays on well defined planes, limited to a static element, which can be transformed by the source of the light which transforms. Peter Gnass then integrates phosphorus into his works: to give form an independent luminosity would seem a step toward a solution of this question. But phosphorus, an artificial light, is hard to use. It almost requires a setting that makes displaying the work more difficult, especially if exhibited in a gallery, owing to the almost constant impossibility of isolating a sculpture in semi-darkness.

He had to find an answer. It came to him quite by chance when he was preparing his last exhibition at the Joliet Gallery in the old capital: "I am a great believer in luck, but a luck that is sought out, provoked." By moving smaller, phosphorescent plexiglass semi-spheres within larger ones there was produced a reflection as astonishing as it was unexpected: the optical illusions make us see other semi-spheres of greater dimensions than those that cause them—in front of the reflecting dome. Light here becomes an active element, material: one or several spheres float in space by themselves, created entirely by a simple reflection. By doubling or tripling the mirrorings surfaces, there occurs a multiplication of forms, or rather the reflection of forms, no longer imaginary, but quite visible.

"I am aware that my latest sculptures are one way: they have a fragile, and I shrink. Light collaborates with him; he is the artist, and the viewer. The contact is made and the game begins."

Peter Gnass: Construction with light

By Luc BENOIT

In 1957 Peter Gnass emigrated from Germany and settled in Montréal. He was 21. In Hamburg he had registered at the Fine Arts Academy, but suddenly, owing to the reluctance of his father, an engineer, to see him take up this kind of a career. He had to wait almost a year before being accepted at the Montreal Beaux-Arts, where he remained until 1962. He went from one class to another without doing anything, where there was something to be learned. He registered in engraving with Albert Dumouchel. "That was where I discovered sculpture", he said. "I dug, I cut into copper and zinc plates deeper and deeper. I tried to obtain the greatest possible depth. At times I immediately abandoned painting. His first exhibitions presented him to us as a printmaker. But there were already a few three dimensional works.

In 1962, after six years, he had to leave the Beaux-Arts. He then spent a year in Europe studying and travelling. Upon his return he still pursued for some time his research into prints, but he shortly gave up this means of expression, as he became increasingly interested in sculpture. "At the time I lived from the meagre revenue that I received from making scenery for different theatre or ballet companies."

Then things took a different turn: exhibitions in Montréal as well as Quebec city and New York made him known to the public. He made a mural of steel, bronze and copper for the Théâtre Maussainne of Place des Arts and also executed a zinc and copper alloy sculpture for the Catholic Church of St. John of God in the north of Montréal.

The previous year he had taken part in the Kinetic Sculpture Symposium at Lac St-Jean. He then had an exhibition in Chicago in 1969, and, the same year took part in an exhibition of the Pagani Foundations in Milan. One of his sculptures is also on display at Expo 70 in Osaka.

In 1962 he was secretary of the Association of Quebec Sculptors; he then became vice-president and president. He is also a founding member of the Groupe Création de Montréal.

Peter Gnass is not a sculptor, but a constructor. That is the conclusion we reach after a survey of his three-dimensional work. "I have never sculpted either wood or metal," he says, "I build things by adding to them."

His first experiments were done with copper soldered onto lead. Quickly realizing the limitations of these materials, he experimented with steel and bronze and four years ago he began to use plastic.

The fundamental preoccupation of his work is light. It dictates the choice of materials. The metal he had already used had certain limitations: every medium does. However plastic opened the way to immense possibilities. "It intrigued me as a challenge to be taken up. It is also a departure from a material which generally is not greatly appreciated because it is fragile and not well known. But with it I attain, at least in part, my goal: light."

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There is room for humour and satire in the work of Peter Gnass. For proof consider this Bombé in honour of the Canada Arts Council. And for him the game has many aspects. But rather let us listen to him: "Work for work's sake: no. That makes frustrated and embittered people. Since life goes on, we must go on with it. This I like rounded forms, when they are volumes and not circles. Rectangles, not squares. Rectangles do not need volume, they can be flat. They are links to the development of new possibilities. And because it is difficult, it is fascinating."

In his studio Peter Gnass experiments: "I have to arrive at having one another reimagined by the other, in the same way, by different appearance: so that from a square, a rounded form, for instance, is produced."

The static element of the work and the viewer is gone. The viewer is now a participant. If he moves or he moves the semi-spheres, he automatically moves the luminous forms which expand, twist, shrink. Light collaborates with him; he is the artist, and the viewer. The contact is made and the game begins.

The earth is to be explored... I am curious about new things. When something deserves attention, we stop before it, explore it and go along to something else. We must be able to detach ourselves. We go along to something else. We must be able to detach ourselves."

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(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
Harold Pinter and the Pinteresque

By Brian ROBINSON

The work of Harold Pinter, the only British dramatist who can clearly be ranked among the writers of the absurd, has at times a so perfectly unique quality that the term Pinteresque, far from being a label, is a term whose meaning is not easily understood. Certainly the values communicated by the authors of the absurd are most elusive, and if Ionesco is more anxious than all the others to inform us about the meaning of his work, Pinter does not care to explain himself.

First, let us see why we should rank Pinter's work with the theatre of the absurd, for any criticism that does not proceed from this basis will necessarily prove to be false. It is, however, true that in spite of the importance attached to the narrative of the absurd—the plays of Beckett, Ionesco, Genêt, Arrabal, Albee, and Pinter are continually being performed—and this has scarcely made its way into the terminology of the critics, who in their judgment of the plays, take them most often for satirical works. We must thus clarify why the absurd is incompatible with satire. The satirist always clings to a humanist ideal: he continues to believe that if man mends his ways, he can satisfy his essential desires: to know himself, to be aware of the world, to communicate, to love and feel loved, to fulfill his vocation, his reason for living. The writer of the absurd denies this ideal, which he judges to be unrealizable. He even pokes fun at it and invites us to take pleasure in situations where characters outrageously violate this ideal. Delights in situations where characters are overworked or uncontrollable laughter or we remain spell-bound, fascinated by the horror embellished by poetry.

What distinguishes Pinter from the other dramatists of the absurd is, first of all, the level of the absurd itself. It is the social level to which Pinter's characters relate. For example, if in The Homecoming Davies is so perfectly unique a character one is overworked uncontrollable laughter or remain spell-bound, fascinated by the horror embellished by poetry. In this play he is a product of the absurd: he is not a Frenchman, nor a Frenchwoman, but a man of the absurd, an Englishman, consequently, full of bad intentions.

From his first play Pinter had created a dialogue that is peculiar to him and which already served to emphasize the imperfect nature of communication between people. In The Birthday Party and The Caretaker—this dialogue serves to heighten the atmosphere of fear that envelops the paranoiac. He is characterized by brief and vague statements that give rise to questions whose elusive answers only lead to further questions. The frequent repetition of words gives them a meaning that is at once vague and sinister. Then conversation is shortened, exhausted; a pause occurs, laden with the terror of emptiness. Pinter has specified 170 pauses for the staging of The Caretaker. On the other hand, the pauses between the dialogue are too long. It is inexplicable. Here is an example of Pinteresque dialogue that appears in The Birthday Party:

\begin{verbatim}
STANLEY (abruptly)—How would you like to go away with me?

LULU—We might as well stay here.

STANLEY—No. It's no good here.

LULU—Well, where else is there?

STANLEY—Nowhere.
\end{verbatim}

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

It wouldn't matter.

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