

## Choisir le plastique

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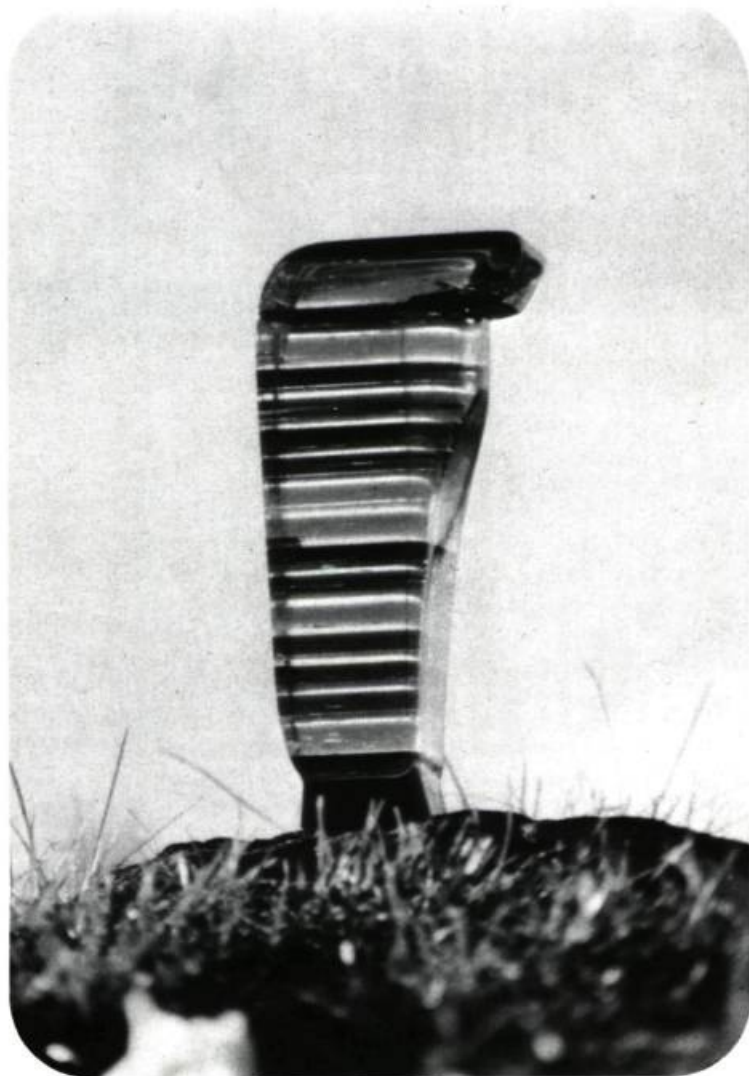
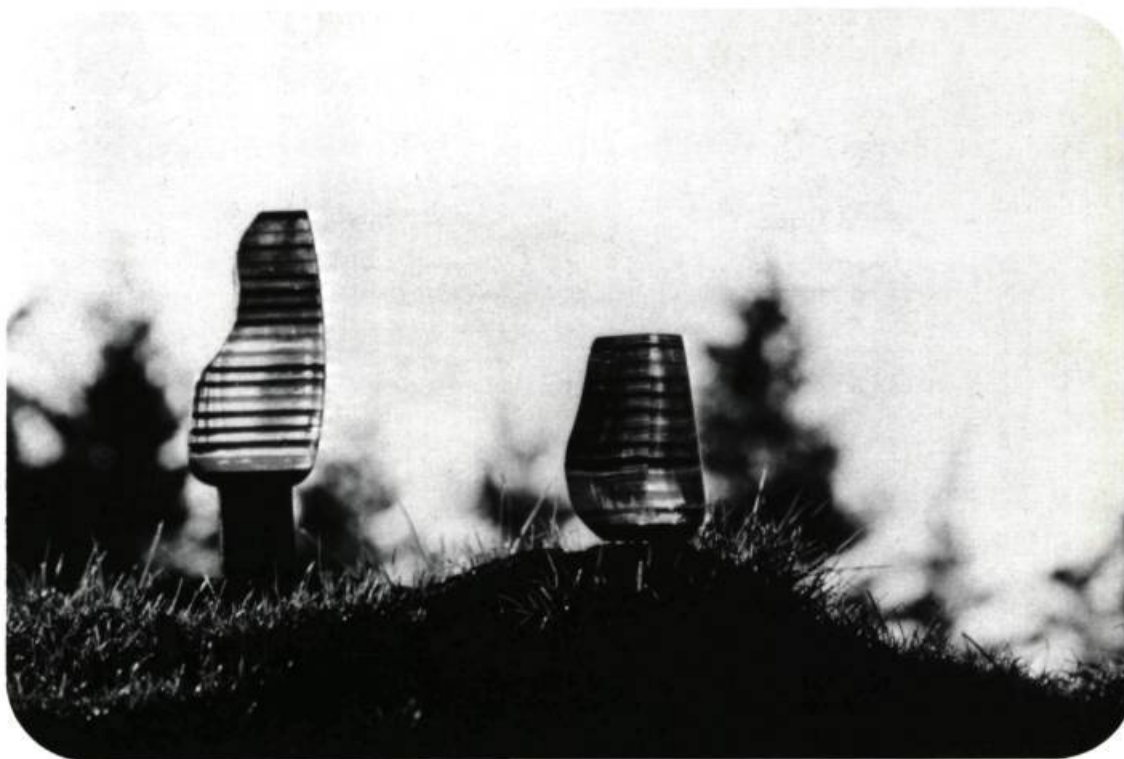
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# CHOISIR LE PLASTIQUE

par  
Nicole et Jean-Rock ROBERT

*Le plastique, phénomène du XXe siècle, est un monde à part. Son apparition répond à un besoin de plus en plus pressant des hommes, désir d'épure et de dépouillement, besoin d'espace et de lumière.*

*On connaît déjà l'emploi qu'en font les architectes et les designers. Quelques jeunes sculpteurs le choisissent.*



MICHEL LUSSIER, 22 ans, a fait l'essai de ce nouveau matériau. Il y découvre la dimension intérieure que la transparence du plastique peut apporter à la forme. A l'intérieur de ses sculptures, on découvre un aspect de la structure extérieure, aspect qui ordinairement nous serait cachée avec un matériau opaque. C'est la création d'une forme à l'intérieur d'une autre. C'est le jeu optique de la lumière qui renouvelle notre perception de la rencontre du contenu avec le contenant.

Travaillé en grande dimension, le plastique peut même intégrer son environnement.

Sa technique se divise en trois phases: d'abord la lamination; c'est la superposition de surfaces d'acrylique coloré, collées entre elles. Ici la lamination est horizontale mais elle peut aussi être verticale. A ce stade un autre procédé peut être employé, la moulée ou formation d'un moule dans lequel on coule de la résine, époxye, polyester ou acrylique. Il y a alors possibilité de jouer avec des formes et des angles intérieurs très divers.

La deuxième phase est la taille dans le bloc de plastique ainsi formé par les plaques encollées. La taille se fait au moyen de limes et de scies.

Puis vient la dernière et la plus longue des opérations: le polissage; dix abrasifs différents sont nécessaires pour atteindre la transparence voulue.

Michel Lussier nous dit que le travail du plastique l'a amené à modifier son vocabulaire de formes. Avec le facteur transparence, il faut penser la forme non seulement en fonction de son contour ou de son espace, mais aussi en tenant compte du potentiel de formes intérieures.

Ceci guide d'ailleurs une recherche portant sur l'électroluminescence des plastiques, c'est-à-dire l'incorporation au plastique d'un courant électrique qui lui apporte sa couleur et la fait varier avec un changement de fréquence. Ainsi, tour à tour le courant électrique vient colorer les formes intérieures pour ensuite s'éloigner vers le contour extérieur, faisant apparaître la forme globale.





JACQUES DAVID, 24 ans, qui a participé à trois symposiums, à Longueuil en 1969, à Haute-Rive et à Québec en 1970, utilise les plastiques d'une façon différente. Il intègre au plastique un autre matériau, l'acier chromé. Il a choisi le plastique à cause de ses propriétés particulières, inexistantes dans les autres matériaux: sa transparence, sa coloration et, surtout, sa flexibilité et son dynamisme. Il éprouve cette flexibilité du plastique en le mettant en tension par des cables de métal qui créent les formes et donnent un jeu de graphisme.

Ainsi sa technique ne fait appel à aucun moyen artificiel. Il exploite des phénomènes purement physiques tels que la tension, la suspension, le centre de gravité, le point d'attraction.

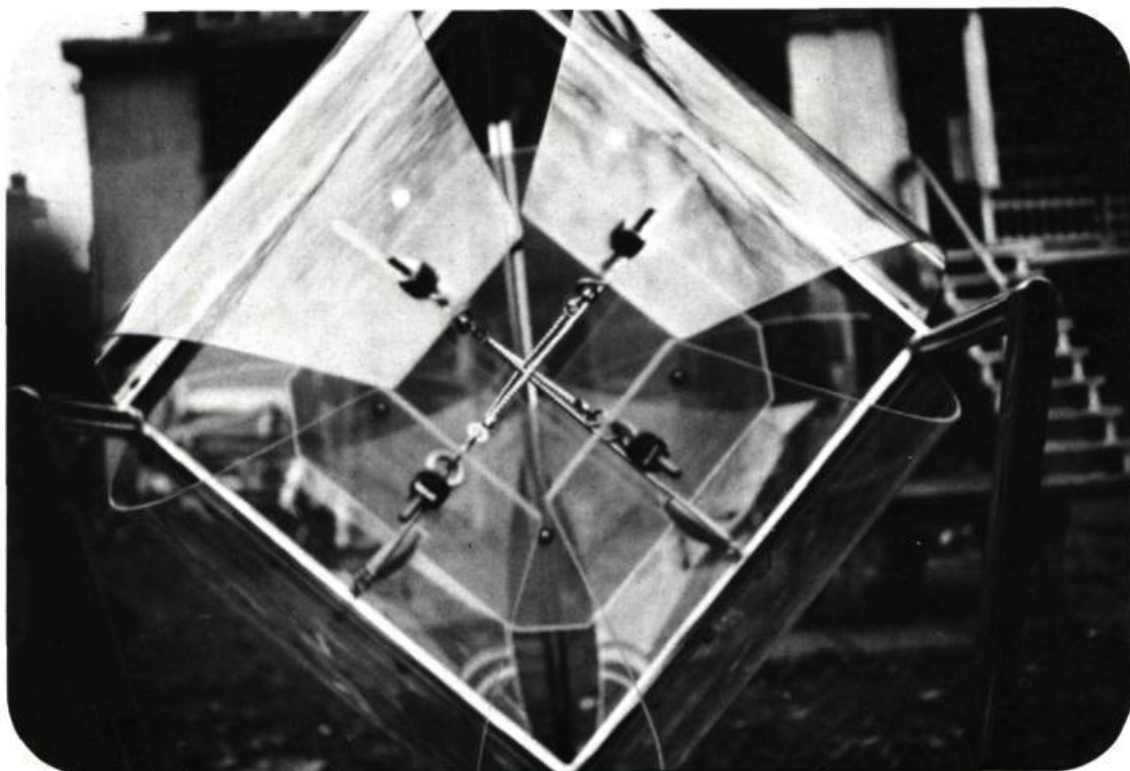
Sa forme totale est le résultat d'un combat de matériaux, le métal et le plastique, combat jamais définitif, où l'un tend l'autre, où l'autre résiste ou cède.

Il part de feuilles d'acrylique coupées à une grandeur voulue mais non travaillées,

non traitées. L'intégrité totale du matériau est conservée. Les feuilles sont rattachées en un centre choisi au métal et ce, au moyen de vis. A chacune de leurs extrémités un système de chaînes ramène le plastique vers l'intérieur, donnant ainsi des formes plus ou moins gonflées, qui semblent être soufflées. C'est la tension du métal exercée sur le plastique qui crée la forme. L'exploitation de ces phénomènes physiques donne un résultat très pur, le plastique pliant parfaitement, la tension du cable de métal donnant une ligne parfaite.

Le plastique est en majorité blanc transparent et permet de voir la courbe de tension des feuilles d'acrylique, le jeu de lignes des cables et des bords des feuilles, laissant à découvert toutes les forces intérieures de la forme totale. La tache de couleur crée une référence.

Jacques David considère le plastique comme un des plus beaux matériaux, contenant en lui-même cette beauté.



Michel LUSSIER  
Silhouette.  
Flop.  
Réminiscence d'une goutte.

Jacques DAVID  
Mon nom est mon oui.  
H.: Environ 3 pieds.





LUCIEN GOBEIL, 24 ans, était à la recherche d'une matière sensuelle pouvant ajouter à l'effet de ses formes. La luminosité du plastique l'attire. Cette transparence utilisée au maximum apporte un effet nouveau. Elle brise la perspective, accapare les couleurs qui l'entourent et crée un environnement. Le plastique apporte à la forme plus de sensualité, créant un immense objet désirable au toucher.

Sa sculpture est formée de deux parties indépendantes s'engrenant l'une dans l'autre. Elles peuvent, selon le désir du possesseur, se placer différemment. Le plastique est laissé transparent.

Lucien Gobeil utilisa la technique du coulage pour exécuter sa sculpture. Il y eut plusieurs étapes dans ce travail du plastique. D'abord un dessin, puis une maquette en bois. Cette maquette est alors reproduite à la grandeur désirée. La pièce est de grande dimension, ce qui demande plusieurs heures de travail. A partir de cette pièce en bois, il fait le moule dans lequel il coule le plastique. Cette étape a lieu en

industrie où c'est la première fois qu'une pièce de forme organique aussi grande est coulée. La pièce est ensuite cuite à 200° dans un four fermé hermétiquement afin d'éviter la formation de bulles d'air. Après la cuisson, il procède au dégrossissement de la pièce puis au sablage qui représente une opération des plus longue mais aussi des plus satisfaisante, car c'est à ce moment qu'au toucher se crée la transparence. Le travail de finition se fait par un polissage sur une meule de coton.

Lucien Gobeil garde de son passage dans l'industrie un souvenir enrichissant. Le contact direct avec des hommes travaillant un matériau dont il fait un usage différent, la découverte quotidienne de ces hommes d'un monde nouveau, leur goût de voir et de toucher cette immense forme, furent pour lui une expérience de plus de valeur qu'une exposition dans une galerie. Il s'oriente maintenant vers le verre soufflé, qu'il travaille avec un technicien, et caresse un projet de stage dans les cristalleries d'Europe.

(English Translation, p. 80)

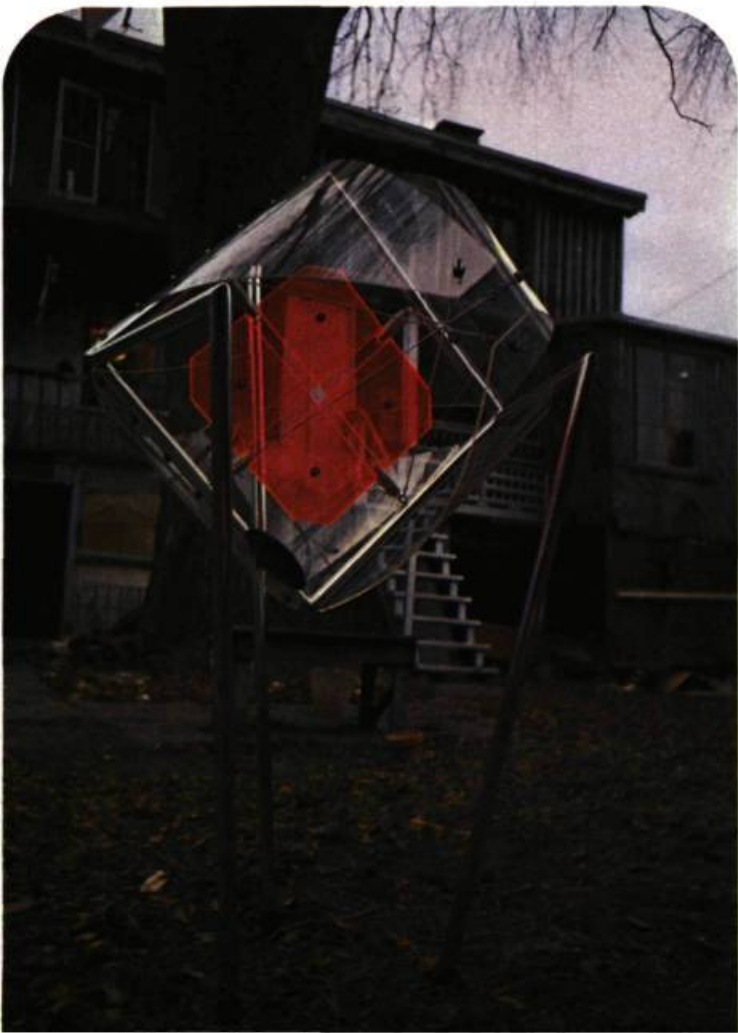


Lucien GOBEIL  
Une seule sculpture qu'on peut  
placer de différentes façons.

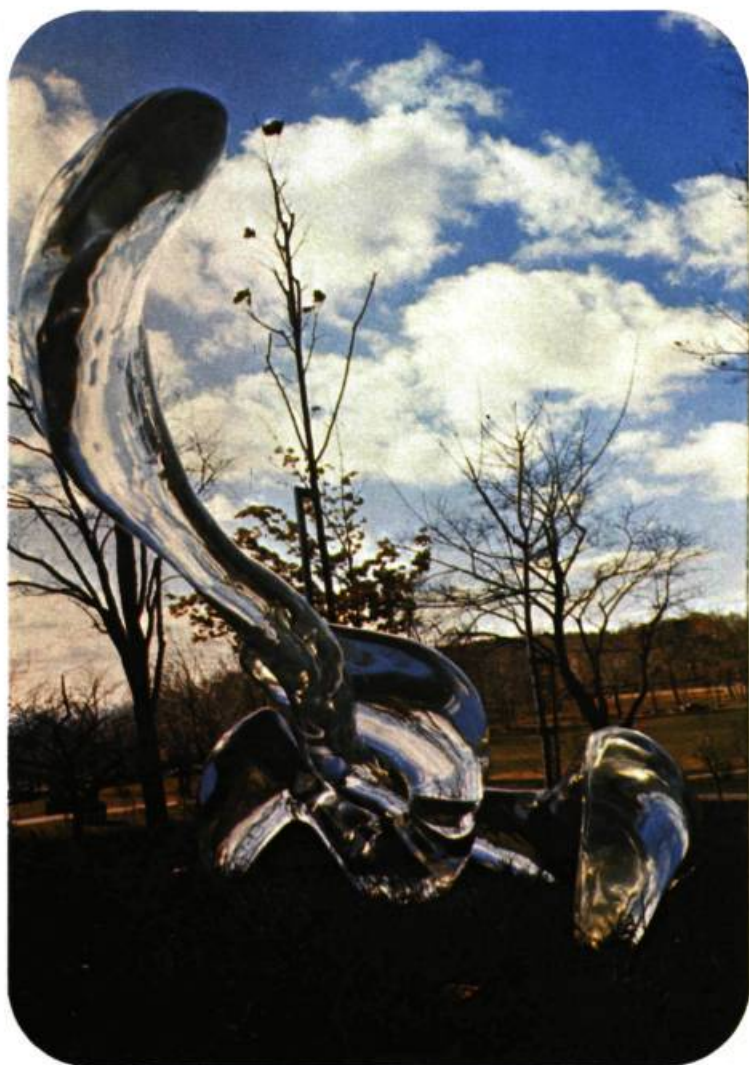




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- 1. Michel LUSSIER
- 2. Jacques DAVID
- 3. Lucien GOBEIL



and which has always been neglected. To index the existing means, to know the individuals who are available, to take advantage of all the initiatives, to convince the directors of enterprises or laboratories that their collaboration could be useful to the development of their own industry or the advancement of their own research work, to do away with prejudice, there are a few priorities to be included in the inventory. Already the first meetings have had favourable results: chemists, electronics technicians, designers, architects, and musicians enthusiastically accepted the idea of an interrelation of the arts and technology. Thus Création intends to be primarily an exchange platform.

For the time being a committee of nineteen members is contributing to successfully completing this first step. It is composed of: Serge Garant (music), Paul Buissonneau (theatre), Gilles Carle and Raymond Brousseau (cinema), Archvir Gundjian (electronics), Jeanne Renaud (dance), Gaëtan Beaudin (ceramics), Jean-Pierre Beaudin (photo and graphics), Michel Leblanc (architecture), Claude Goulet (chemistry), Pierre Gauvin and Jean Labbé (audio-visual), Marcelle Ferron (painting), Peter Gnass (sculpture), Gérard Beaulieu (sciences), Michel Brulé (sociology), Jean Saint-Cyr (industrial design), Maurice Demers (cultural animation), Roland Giguère (engraving, poetry). The committee was joined by advisors: Marcel Rioux (sociologist), Pierre Champagne (jurist), Jean Zalloni (technical advisor), and Luc Durand (architect). About sixty other persons select, support, and even orient certain initiatives.

#### An exchange bank

When a great volume of information will not stop coming in and will be systematically catalogued, indexed, filed, and analyzed, that is to say, when the first phase will have taken on sufficient volume, a simple telephone call to the Création group will permit for example, even an unknown artist to put forth the problem that is hindering his creative process. He will then be provided with the information (documents, references, etc.) that can enlighten him; he will be introduced to another artist grappling with similar difficulties; he will be introduced to one or several technicians able to propose solutions; he will be shown what industrial company could best help him to successfully conclude what he is undertaking. In short, there is no longer a question of remaining isolated.

This abundant and varied information will contribute to modifying the very work that the artist intended to produce. In fact, an organization like Création could serve as a link. The universities are in possession of precious information that is not widely diffused, and is consequently rather inaccessible. This has to be classified and it is fairly impossible for one person working alone to do. Marcelle Ferron and Gérard Beaulieu envisage an effective collaboration with the University of Quebec. How? As a satellite of this institution, Création would benefit from certain material advantages (computers, space, etc.) As a liaison agent between industry and the university, Création could play an active role in the organization of exchanges and projects. Everything is to be gained from such a project. According to Gérard Beaulieu, industrialists would be astonished to discover the vitality and originality of the creative spirit of twenty year old youths: "They are not unaware", he assures, "of the problems of the contemporary world. They have something to say and they ask only to tackle real difficulties. We should be able to organize competitions on themes like the environment of a student residence, the development of recreational parks, etc."

#### Why not?

And finally, why set up an organization like Création? Marcelle Ferron replies, "to gain a veritable popular culture, to do away with the artist-idol, so that art can actually go into the street and the street can become more beautiful, to live better, and then, why not?" Gérard Beaulieu adds: "It is a question of an extensive movement, firmly rooted in the social clan", in other words it is above all a collective service whose goal is to favour creation in all its forms. It is open to all those who by their work reveal original ways to creation.

Utopia? A golden dream? Certainly, but... but we can compare the efforts of the Création group with other attempts at integration of the arts and technology: *Intermedia* in Vancouver, *Intersystem* in Toronto, *Experiment in Art and Technology* (E.A.T.) in New York, then in Montreal. It is true that it is hard to compare their resources and objectives. These organizations address themselves in fact only to recognized artists and technicians, Création aims at the widest and most inclusive participation. Finally, is it completely impossible to bring together all those who have something to invent?

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

## Some young sculptors decide to use plastic

By Nicole ROBERT

*Plastic, a twentieth century phenomena, is a world apart. Its appearance answers an increasingly pressing human need, a desire for refinement and getting back to basics, a need for space and light.*

*We are already familiar with the use architects and designers have made of plastic. A few young sculptors are deciding to use it.*

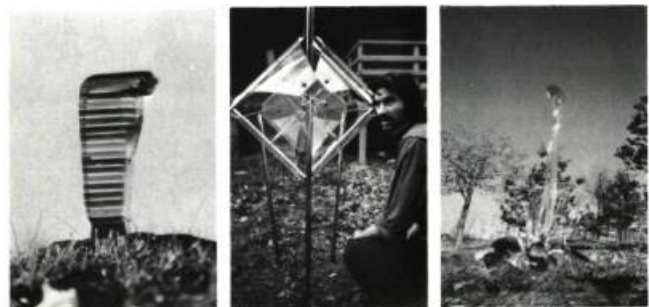
MICHEL LUSSIER, 22 years old, tried working with this new material. He found that the transparency of plastic can give an inner dimension to form. Inside his sculptures we find an aspect of the exterior structure, an aspect an opaque material would ordinarily conceal from us. This is creating a form within a form. The illusion of light renews our perception of the conjuncture of the contents with the container. A large-scale work can even integrate its environment.

His technique can be divided into three phases: first, the lamination, the superimposition of coloured acrylic surfaces pressed together. In his work the lamination is horizontal but it can also be vertical. At this stage another process may be used, the casting or formation of a mould in which resin, polyester or acrylic may be cast. It is thus possible to obtain very diverse forms and inner angles.

The second phase is the cutting of the plastic block that is thus formed from the sheets that have been pressed together. The cutting is done by means of files and saws.

Then comes the polishing, the last and longest of the operations; ten different abrasives are needed to obtain the desired transparency.

Michel Lussier tells us that working with plastic led him to change his vocabulary of forms. Because of transparency, the form must be considered not only in terms of its contour or space, but the potential of the inner forms must also be taken into account. Moreover, this leads to research dealing



with the electro-luminescence of plastics, that is to say, the incorporation of the use of an electric current with the plastic that will give it its colour and make it vary as the frequency of current changes. Thus, the electrical current colours the inner forms and then in turn travels towards the exterior contour causing the entire form to appear.

JACQUES DAVID, 24 years old, who took part in three symposiums in Longueuil in 1969, in Haute-Rive and in Quebec in 1970, uses plastics in a different way. He integrates another material, chrome steel, into plastic. He chose plastic for its special properties, which other materials do not have: its transparency, colour, and especially its flexibility and dynamism. He puts this flexibility of plastic to the test by creating stress with metal wires that evoke forms and produce a play of graphism.

Thus his technique calls on no artificial means. He uses purely physical phenomena such as stress, suspension, the centre of gravity and the point of attraction.

His total form is the result of a conflict between the metal and plastic materials, a conflict that is never definitive, where one draws the other, where the other resists or yields.

He begins with sheets of acrylic cut to the desired size that are unworked and untreated. The total integrity of the material is retained. The sheets are fastened to a selected centre in the metal by means of a vice. At each end a system of links brings the plastic back towards the interior, thus



producing more or less swollen forms, that seem to be inflated. The tension the metal exercises on the plastic is what creates the forms. The use of these physical phenomena produces a very pure result; the plastic bends perfectly, the stress of the metal wire produces a perfect line.

The plastic is most often transparent white which shows the curve of stress of the acrylic sheets, the play of lines of the wires, and the edges of the sheets, and which leaves all of the inner forces of the total form yet to be discovered. The spot of colour creates a point of reference.

Jacques David considers plastic to be one of the most beautiful of materials; it is beautiful in itself.

LUCIEN GOBEIL, 24 years old, was looking for a sensual material that could contribute to the effect of his forms. The luminosity of plastic attracted him. When transparency is fully exploited it produces a new effect. It breaks the perspective, dominates the colours that surround it and creates an environment. Plastic gives form a greater sensuality, creating an immense object that we want to touch. His sculpture is formed of two independent and inter-connected parts. They can be arranged in different ways if the owner so chooses. The plastic is left transparent.

Lucien Gobeil used a casting technique to execute his

sculpture. There were several stages in this plastic work. First, a drawing, then a wooden model were made. The model was then reproduced to the desired size. The work was a large one, which required several hours of work. Beginning with this wooden work, he made the mould in which he cast the plastic. This stage was done industrially, where for the first time such a large work of organic form was cast. The work was then baked to 200° in an oven that was hermetically sealed to avoid the formation of air bubbles. After the heating, he began the polishing of the work, then the sanding, which represented one of the longest, but also one of the most satisfying stages, for it was at this time that the smoothness of the work was created. The finishing work was done by polishing with a cotton buffer.

Lucien Gobeil remembers his dealings with industry as an enriching experience. The personal contact with men who were working with a material in an entirely different way than usual, their discovery of a new world, their desire to see and touch the immense form, made him feel the experience was more valuable than an exhibition in a gallery.

He is now interested in blown glass which he works with a technician, and he is thinking of a study project in various glassworks in Europe.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

## The Fernand Leduc Retrospective

By Laurent LAMY



At the Musée d'Art Contemporain at the end of 1970, one hundred paintings made up a coherent, enduring, and dynamic retrospective — an evaluation of twenty seven years of work.

Fernand Leduc calls to mind the beginnings of modern art here. A friend of Borduas, he belonged to the group of Automatists and in 1948 signed the *Refus global* with Ferron, Mousseau, Riopelle, Barbeau and others. With Molinari, Tounsiant, and Juneau he founded the group of Plasticians. It follows that if we go back to the origin of the two most notable movements in the evolution of painting in Quebec, we find that both times Fernand Leduc was an important element in the formation of the group.

From the Surrealism of the beginning of the 40's, he soon went on to Automatism where gesture is all important and where the accidental is primordial. In these canvases, the traditional criteria of depth are still applicable since objects float in a three-dimensional space. These are abstract landscapes with dark, thick tones which gradually, towards 1950, begin to close. The touch becomes heavier, more constructed; then, massive, it eliminates the possibility of being guided by a perspective.

During the entire Automatist period, the almost austere rigour which is a fundamental trait of Leduc is displayed only in the choice of rather leaden colours.

But the dull colour soon lightens. The evolution of Leduc during the years 1946 to 1955 appears completely natural in the retrospective, it progresses from canvas to canvas. The construction, the touch, the colour, everything falls into place. The same inspiration leads to really geometric canvases in 1955. With a steady progress, plane surfaces tend to occupy all the space, leaving fewer and fewer openings. The subject and the accidental have completely disappeared in canvases like *Porte d'Orient* (1955). The gestural treatment has been gradually replaced by "pavings" (to use Leduc's own words) which block up the canvas, eliminate depth and give the canvas back its original two-dimensional quality.

At that time the personal itinerary of Leduc took a very clear direction towards geometrism. He definitively broke with Automatism. Moreover, Leduc explained himself why this break occurred at the time of the *Space 55* and *Plasticians* exhibitions:

"The stain theories of Borduas only prolong the past illusions of perspective and depth in the unlimited expanse of space, and that is their only margin of life (...) This is where we oppose the enthusiastic apostolate of Borduas: his way is not necessarily ours."

Today we can properly appreciate Leduc's critical look at his work since we believe that the best of his pictorial adventure did not occur in his Automatist period. With time it is

clear that Leduc was more or less ill at ease with this form of spontaneous creativity which led to shimmering variations that were relatively easy to obtain. Leduc was too deliberate to be completely himself with this form of expression.

Beginning with one of the first geometric paintings in 1955, with *Point d'ordre* in particular, a composition of right angles with broken colours, he started to study irregular geometric forms. After a few canvases which were to recall Herbin and Delaunay, he suppressed the curve which always tends to create a centre and a depth. The painting is composed on the surface where the oblique lines create triangles whose points project on straight planes which refer to other points. That is the source of the vitality of the canvases of this period from 1956 to 1958, in which the forms become simple in order to attain a greater visual efficacy. This controlled dynamism, obtained by articulations of oblique forms is supported by the lively colours of planes which intersect and criss-cross in triangles, trapeziums, and parallelograms; the triangles play the part of active forces, the irregular figures become areas of balance. The points are poles, the strategic areas of the canvas that orient it, creating opposing rhythms, ready to confront each other. During this period, a 1957 canvas proves to be premonitory since it prefigures the era that will follow only much later, in 1964, when rounded forms, and the optical effects of the positive-negative contrast of colour will flourish.

Until then Leduc had been working only with surfaces. Beginning in 1960, a new element was inscribed in the composition: the line. Unobtrusive in the beginning it was only an accessory to the picture: it comes in counterpoint like a variation to accompany a movement. Inscribed on the coloured planes at first, the line takes on increasing importance to the extent of existing for itself on the canvas, which is almost completely stripped of its triangular elements as in *White* (1962).

This was a turning-point in the evolution of Leduc, who then settled into a research where forms lose their rigidity. The contours and angles softened while the colours were reduced often to a binary chromatism which the painter exploited in 1964 and 65. The connecting line of the two coloured surfaces which formerly coloured the picture became enveloping, closed in on itself with flowing lyricism and a tender, always human sensuality. The forms thus created seem to answer one another in the same canvas; interdependent, as though issuing from one another, they relate to each other. From this constant dialogue, issues a dynamism that is exacting for the eye because, although the forms are separated, they virtually tend to meet. Moreover, this movement is supported by the optical effects of strongly contrasting colours, yellow-red, blue-red, violet-green, rose-blue, mauve-brown.