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TO SERVE THE FUTURE
By Andrée PARADIS

At the present time, can we really question a culture (language, art, literature, architecture) and observe the forms of social organization, without feeling the need of direct experience? Art is action. To act upon the one who perceives, to awaken, on the one hand, the knowledge of the destructive forces which threaten collective life and, on the other hand, to insist on the dynamic changes which are continually taking place, on the availability of the resources which regenerate. Art exists only if it allows the intensification of exchanges and human relationships, only if it recreates life.

Life, City, The City in the Museum, many books on the City, sociologists, philosophers, art critics, town-planners, economists and many others are studying the problem. Why this explosion? Because there is an immense body of work to be done, a complete reorganization to be undertaken beginning with the forms of thought, a real cultural transformation to be assured and "All the future of man on earth", according to André Wogenscky, "depends in very great measure on what town-planning and architecture will become, on what will be the organization of our physical environment". The City, as it concerns us, is this first priority of a very great problem. To think of the City is to think of Life. The study recently published by the Club de Rome, an association of thought and research on the future, with the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), speaks of a state of emergency. While keeping a cool head, there is reason to be troubled about the futility of so much effort, produce of intelligence, of courage, of imagination, to resolve the difficulties which the modern city, the destruction of nature and the demographic explosion present.

It is above all necessary to recognize that the harm is deeper, that it comes from a fundamental separation approved by the majority of the scientists and artists of the 20th century, and which is still badly perceived in the whole. How does Jacques Monod define this sickness of soul in Hasard et la nécessité? "Modern societies, woven by science, living on its products, have become dependent on it like an addict on his drug. They owe their material strength to this founding ethic of knowledge and their moral weakness to the systems of values, ruined by knowledge itself, to which they still try to refer. This contradiction is fatal. It is this which is digging the abyss which we see opening at our feet. The ethic of knowledge, creator of the modern world, is the only one compatible with it, the only one capable, once understood and accepted, of guiding its evolution."

Tomorrow the ethic of knowledge will probably be the only acceptable one because it rests on respect for creative man, guardian of the sublime and of the demand for going beyond the ordinary. It could thus allow the man who accepts it lucidly and who uses it, to pursue his old dream: to build the future. (Translation by Mildred Grand)

CHANGE LIFE . . . CHANGE THE CITY

By Bernard LÉVY

Change life . . . change the city. The alternative is beautiful. Change the city: the choice seems clear. Almost protected from vain speculations. At grips with the actual. Hurried. Too much? Perhaps. Perhaps not. And if we were to change the city . . . life, our relationships — our caste relationships as well — would they be improved more easily?

Change the city: what a wager! And yet, who has never built his city? The offices of architects are filled with designers who are only waiting for a signal to accomplish their city, or failing that, to transform the city in their way. Plans of all kinds are accumulating in drawers or on the shelves of libraries: from the rediscovered primitive village to the cybernetic city, from the concrete city to the inflatable city. Innumerable reasons — calculated or not — support, justify, legalize ideas and intentions beyond any suspicion but not less to be dreaded and feared. Doctors, sociologists, philosophers, geographers, mathematicians, historians have added their theories to a concert which tends toward wholly possible babelisation. Economists and politicians also
involve themselves, with more success, if not with more luck. A sign, a signature are enough to cause whole walls to collapse to bring it about that concrete — lyrical or not — should raise a tower in the heart of the city by one more storey. To build. To destroy. Wider avenues, dormitory cities, automated cities: they open, they close a street, they move a thousand and one objects people elsewhere. What shall we say of this?

And even if this were to be in order to create green spaces or to limit air or noise pollution, can we qualify these decisions otherwise than arbitrary? Can we speak only of changes?

Change the city: the proposition involves many demands. Simple structural modifications, techniques, technological or legal changes are not enough. A capital movement is lacking: that of the population. Without this fundamental element, the quality of life will remain only an expression for abstract idealists; beauty and ugliness will still be simple effects of conditioning and of what? And art? Apart, foreign to all acts of everyday life.

The architects and the urbanists. They are sometimes present at the launching of pilot or experimental projects: certainly one must approve or simply work in the name of progress ... the guinea-pigs are not consulted much.

The citizen has no opinion, it is because he concerns himself little or badly, in this sense that he is assailed by an amount of secondary information, from which he cannot separate the chaff; besides, he is still too much isolated to demand explanations. In sum, he is accused of not desiring what he is ignorant of. But how should he suspect the existence of conditioning and of what? And art? Apart, foreign to all acts of everyday life. Not lived at all: a matter of specialists.

Certainly the city is changing, it is changing in appearance — but without us. Building or industrial promoters as well as public powers carry out profitable and spectacular projects (massive displacement of middle classes, renovation of prestigious commercial complexes). We are sometimes present at the launching of pilot or experimental projects: certainly one must approve or simply work in the name of progress ... the guinea-pigs are not consulted much.

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**Urban Awareness**

B.L. — It is exactly during the course of this debate that it will be necessary to analyse these ideas. For the last few years urban awareness has been making itself felt: what do you think of it?

M.L. — We are witnessing a renewal of the power of public opinion in North America. It is enough to see the revival of the Democratic party in the United States; to take note of the stopping of the Spadina highway in Toronto, to appreciate the value of the awareness of the citizens. From now on, committees of residents have the right of veto on programs of area renovation. These same committees can even plan such programs and follow their fulfillment step by step.

M.B. — This awareness, which is going on right through city-planning, properly speaking, arises from the difficulties caused by regional planning. In Quebec we have lived through an era where the citizens believed in technocrats. The well-known defeat of their enterprises is at the origin of an awareness of the public which is perhaps not yet very clear, but is still real.

M.R. — It is a matter of an anti-nineteenth century attitude. The predominance of transport over habitat has become tyrannical in the 20th century. Cities are no longer cities but highways. There is no longer a question of urbanism under these conditions. Thus committees of residents constitute a capital phenomenon. The city should arise from decisions of its inhabitants. The idea is still new and I am not sure that it is popular yet. Y.G. — One must distinguish that one can speak about citizens' committees as true accons which Speculators still succeed often in twisting the law. The few successes of groups of citizens are not very satisfying. Public protest is not a sufficient guarantee. Perhaps it is necessary to think in more radical terms.

M.L. — Can the population act otherwise than by protesting? It is not aware of realities other than those which it has in sight. To the question: "What do you want?" it answers in a negative way: "We don't want construction or highways ..."

B.L. — Perhaps the population is not aware of its actual power, and, in consequence, does not express itself. It is not aware of its true consciousness. The few successes of groups of citizens are not very satisfying. Public protest is not a sufficient guarantee. Perhaps it is necessary to think in more radical terms.

M.R. — The two phenomena are parallel. If the people were aware of their power, we cannot see very well what they could demand. On the other hand, we know very well what they do not wish to have.

M.B. — We can talk with the public can talk precisely what seems to be its good and which is its bad. That means that an entire population can live in the most complete Utopia and think, for instance, of rural life, of paradises, of a certain prehistoric age ...

**Toward The City State**

B.L. — Urban awareness is not global but partial at the moment.

M.L. — Double awareness: awareness of the realities which one can build up and awareness of the power to limit these realities. It remains to put in place mechanisms, mirrors which allow the population to look. These mirrors ought to offer a richer reflection than dull reality.

Y.G. — Human, inhuman, that is what we should clarify. Utopian: what should one consider? Architecture? Planning?

M.B. — In the absence of global planning, we must realize that to speak of the city is a technocratic danger. We have an illustration of it in Paris and the French desert.

B.L. — Let us come back to the mirrors. They give back the images of a city and a society completely compartmented. Even enlightened, urban awareness has trouble in injuring every-
Architects in the Service of Everyone

B.L. — We are speaking of the urban phenomenon and up to the present there has been almost no question of housing, habitat, architects, urban planners... A.P. —... And not even of art! M.R. — These elements were contained in what we said. We did not name them. Perhaps this is a defect.

B.L. — Perhaps it is because the city should be a work of art.

M.R. — Yes, but not only that.

B.L. — What would be the place of the architect?

M.R. — But first what is an architect? It is generally a master of works who collaborates with another specialist — the urban planner — who is often also an architect. The city-planner often forms an idea of the city and an idea of the habitat without concerning himself with knowing if these images correspond with the needs of the inhabitants. There are historic examples like that of Le Corbusier with Pessac. In the twenties Le Corbusier built in a style which was ultra-modern for its time, a workers city near Bordeaux, at Pessac, with terrace-roofs, pilings, windows in the length, etc. Workers and their families were settled there. Only lately, at the time of an inquiring, it was observed that these houses now had pointed roofs which contained attics and that the pilings have been used to enclose garages. Very simply, the people reconstructed their ideal house. There was a disparity between the mind of Le Corbusier and that of the inhabitants. Who is right?

M.B. — Has the architecture of transition been developed?

M.R. — Yes, not only for offices but also for the building of homes.

M.L. — Flexible architecture also constitutes a form of architectural transition.

M.R. — It is a matter of an architecture where the divisions are mobile, which permits the architect to choose, if necessary, another choice of the city-planner. The Pessac had possibilities of extension, the result would have been better on the aesthetic plan.

B.L. — Would such ideas limit the mobility of the people?

M.L. — People move very often in North America. However, these moves are not all linked to a simple dissatisfaction, but rather to civil changes in the family: marriages, births, deaths.

Y.G. — It is easier to change houses than to modify the one we occupy. At present, at least.

B.L. — Then the architect has only a rôle as advisor or as critic. Since everything is preconceived, prefabricated, he has no more to do than to make his selection.

Y.G. — Actually, the architect is the victim of the financier. At this moment, the supply of apartments of one or one and a half rooms exceeds the demand by 30 to 40 per cent. On the other hand, more than 70 per cent of the families in Montreal would need two to three extra rooms. There is the whole gap between the interest of society and that of the promoters.

B.L. — Therefore there is reason to question the social order.

M.B. — For me, it is first of all a matter of the principle of development: either the principle is economic and only economic or else it is economic and also ecological.

M.L. — The State can control land speculation if it wants to. It would be enough that a people's will should strongly urge it to do so. That would involve the prohibition of building on undeveloped land, the control of pollution in the centre of the cities... There would be many other consequences.

B.L. — I am impressed by the importance you give to the question of the architect.

M.L. — I am simply saying what would be the powers of the State. There are other means of arriving at strong control: experimental projects, polling, analysis of needs, etc.

B.L. — Computer society?

M.L. — No, not at all.

M.R. — The great danger would be to hand over the cities to the computers.

B.L. — Would not the cybernetic city — I am coming back to that — offer to each the freedom to modify his urban space as he wished?

M.R. — That would be much too dangerous.

A.P. — The ideal city would be rather a city where we hardly have any need.

B.L. — That is difficult, perhaps.

Y.G. — No, because we are witnessing more and more a curbing of consumption of goods. We prefer to renovate houses rather than to demolish them.

M.R. — That's understandable: people know what they have, they do not want to be suggested to them. By destroyin an area, even a very unhealthful one, we destroy an organic city which exists and which we replace by a system without organization.

M.B. — We are living in an Utopian society.

Y.G. — If we examine planning programs, whether they be urban or not, we perceive that they cannot be anything other than a system for a territory of which they develop only scattered areas which will serve as models. This is truly the step of an Utopian thought, which, for a long time has introduced these sub-universes to us. How can you expect people to have confidence?

Y.G. — It seems to me that we are at the end of our accomplishments lead us inevitably toward new Utopias?

M.L. — Perhaps not if we grant that the city is a zone of converging where a whole series of systems which can be compared to servo-mechanisms isolate us, gather us together, protect us, expand us. It is for us to increase the rate of profit, for us to humanize it. It is for us to increase our freedom to modify our urban space as we wish.

M.R. — I believe that the super-imposing of all the networks which make up urban life condition the liberty of the city dweller. Professional systems of leisure, family systems: they all go along in different directions. There is one of the fundamental differences between the city and the parish. In the city, one can very well have no connection with his neighbours but many relationships with people through the channel of the systems.

The Human City

M.B. — It seems to me that we are at the core of the problem: problems of habitat, culture and territory. We generally evade these real problems because we do not know where we are going: it is certain that they arise in terms of territorial organization. We are not in a world where individuals share several areas: we exist at different levels. Certain of these relationships are those of the street or the district, others are relationships of the city, the province, the country. One cannot prevent oneself from realizing that we are heading toward a world where territorial functions tend to polarize around the very specific needs of the professional milieu with other "ad hoc" countries. We are going toward a sort of structure where these professional relationships will determine our preferred relationships, our most important links with other human beings.

It is impossible not to see that this is a constant threat. And, since we are discussing the problem of habitat and culture in terms of territory, we cannot eliminate the dimension of a continued attendance of a same number of persons or of a same group, if we wish to speak of humanism or of humanity. The recognition of the other can be accomplished only on that condition. I do not intend to defend the parochial ideal or an outline of fascist life where people would be regimented. I believe it will be necessary to find a formula which will favour interaction between individuals to the greatest extent. But it is important that a part of this interaction should come about in a certain degree, and at a certain level, with the same individuals.

M.L. — I have another definition of humanism. I think we will have attained contemplative humanism when we have the power of no longer using our power; to abstain from creating buildings of 30 stories and to limit ourselves to 10 stories, to dispense with a thousand technological follies, to reach a certain moderation. Thus the urban fabric will be densified and profitable from a human point of view. We will then be able to devote ourselves to intellectual tasks, to creative tasks.

B.L. — Is this how you foresee the urban future?

M.L. — I don't know. Is there a distinction between the goal and the step toward it? In this case, creating the city becomes the finality of the city. It is not a heaven which must be reached by passing through the purgatory of present technology. To discuss the city is food for a certain way, to attain the finality of the city.

Y.G. — We rarely speak of the individual. For me, any definition of the city and any finality of the city must consider the individual in the very first place. The community is an aggregate of individuals. That, to me, is fundamental.

M.B. — I believe that I have already explained myself on the matter of urban finality. I would like simply to emphasize, in ending the danger there would be in following political ideals which would lead us into ways which are a little backward, those of bureaucracy and at a certain level with the same kind of supreme organ which ought to solve all our problems. What I am against is the absence of critical attitude toward the increasing of this phenomenon.

M.R. — The city is the privileged place of production and consumption. One of its finalities would be to plan this production-consumption for man, and not for the city-object. This inversion of rôles will perhaps create a new urban system. Although we can foresee it with difficulty.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
Five o'clock Friday night. Get out of the city. All with the same hurried gestures, there are a thousand of them, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, sometimes more, in search of a little less brick, asphalt or concrete.

Sun, space, pure air, greenery: magic words. So away they go, not too far in spite of everything, looking for nature to be found again. Or failing that, to be re-invented. Get out of the city.

There are those who do not leave. Spring, summer, autumn, winter: they are relentless in making household plants survive under difficult conditions. And why apply so much effort in the face of essential conditions of light, water and space which are insufficient or mediocre? For nothing, for perhaps one flower. For nothing also is the Sunday walk in the greenhouses of the botanical garden in search of a permanent spring.


Flee the city. Yes, but to find it again better. And we are at the heart of the problem. Condemned to live in town — with the city? — we must certainly recognize that beyond technological developments there are other things particular to the biological being which is man, special to his nature, and to nature.

Let us make no mistake. It is not a question here of good feelings about generous and benevolent nature — nor does the subject relate to floral decoration either.

An investigation undertaken in 1968 in several western capitals showed that the dream of the average citizen was concerned with using the advantages of the city and the happiness of the country. In short, the city-country is to be created. To reconcile these two extremes is Utopian. And yet means of softening the city do exist. Certainly, but how do we introduce more nature into the city? How shall we integrate vegetation into the city at the beginning? This comes back to determining the conditions of the green infiltration. This is the whole theme of this study.

Montreal is only in the tenth rank of big world cities for its green spaces. And yet — who would have believed it — the metropolis of Canada benefits from a privileged geographical position. It is situated on the forty-fifth parallel. Thus, compared to London and Paris, located more toward the north, Montreal and their rates of growth. A big, growing urbanisation determines a micro-climate, similar to that of more southern zones, and turns aside the downpours of the surrounding areas, to the advantage of the metropolis. We can no more fear a drought upon which it acts like a powerful poison. Well, green plants would render it inoffensive since they would accelerate its oxidization by using it as a gaseous fertilizer.

The first beneficiaries: the trees. These, in effect, would be the first to increase their boughs, and their rate of growth. A big, healthy, leafy tree is much more fit to deaden the noises of the city, to fight air pollution and to produce more oxygen than any other small plant. On an equal area, it creates a green volume — its foliage — much more important than shrubs or grass. The maple and the locust with three thorns would be the best adapted in Montreal.

Sun, rain and even pollution: here united are the ideal conditions for a green infiltration. It is observed that in order to curb the force. Vegetable windbreaks, naturally (trees again), but themselves protected by special architectural structures.

In reality it is therefore a global modification of urban planning which could bring about a penetration of the plant element in every building. Without considering the possibilities of pressure. Cross streets and skyscrapers change winds into violent air currents, which prevents all vegetation from growing normally. The general direction of the winds in Montreal is oriented west-south-west. It would be enough to set against this some successions of pressure. But the wind can be enough to set against this some successful evolution. The heating apparatus, of course, is far from the plants.

Do you know that there still remain in Montreal a few parcels of land, last vestiges of the wild woods? Most of these zones are intended for urbanisation: most of these little woods could form ecological reserves, places for walks and rest.

Still another word, another paradox. Along the highways, at the traffic circles, we could replace the beds of yellowing grass by real groups of trees, except at places where lateral visibility is insufficient. This change would lessen the atmospheric and noise pollution of the autoroutes.

City-country or country-city: will the choice be only ad-libbed? We have spoken here of a possible city-country, that is to say of a possible city-flower, city-tree, green city, concrete protected the trees, pollution nourishes them. Paradox? Heresy? Indeed.

Then flee the city? No. One does not escape the city, that is to deny the possible balance and to lose the initiative still offered thus to by a human city, that is to say an environment of life.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
THE CITY IN THE MUSEUM
René ROZON interviews Melvin CHARNEY

From the eleventh of June to the thirteenth of last August, The Museum of Fine Arts of Montreal presented a startling exhibition, Montreal, More or Less, which was to upset more than one traditional scheme. Because its theme, the arrangement of the city, is not normally considered among artistic motives. And its contents — to which we shall return — were to be found outside the conventional boundaries of a museum known for its artistic austerity. Finally, wishing to appear as the reflection of a metropolis in development, the exhibition was at the same time, through purely visual techniques, a radical denunciation of an outmoded conception, and yet at the same time prevalent, of urbanism, that is to say recourse to the primary notion of addition (new projects) and substraction (demolition).

The enterprise was new and ambitious too. It necessitated prolonged analyses, probes and discussions; it sought the collaboration of artists, architects, town-planners, different action groups, without omitting the participation of the provincial and municipal governments (which withdrew as a last resort!), Balance sheet of this effort: a collection of documents (among which were posters, photographs, comic strips, advertising, different plans of the city); audio-visual productions (including the film Urbanose, a documentary series in ten parts, produced by the National Film Board); urban games (allowing the public to modify the appearance of the city at will); neo-realistic paintings (ordered by telephone): multiples (which the visitor could unhook and carry away with him!) bidimensional pictures (which the spectator had the leisure to cross) linked by a labyrinth formed of fences (an illusion to the mazes of big cities).

In the short space of two and a half months, they succeeded in bringing this project to fruition, — huge, it goes without saying, and difficult to coordinate, so complex was it, in full summer (considered as out of season) the museum registered more than 52,000 admissions, a record number. In attendance, for several years, for a single exhibition. The exhibition was really stimulating and thrilling to visit. It was, however, not without gaps and raises many contradictions. We have noted a few of them and have submitted them to Mr. Melvin Charney, archivist and assistant professor in the Faculty of Planning of the University of Montreal, who was on this occasion the advisor and the co-ordinator of the exhibition.

VdA — The problems raised by the exhibition and linked to its planning — underprivileged wards, uniform and inhuman skyscrapers, pollution, green spaces, as well as the application of an adding and subtracting principle to urban areas are found in every modern big city, from Tokyo to New York, from Paris to Mexico City. Was the integration of these matters found universally going to allow the exhibition to attain its objective, that is to say to set forth the special quality of Montreal?

M.C. — From the beginning, I must specify that if there is confusion as to the goal which we intended to reach, it is to the title of the exhibition that it must be attributed. A title which certainly alludes, as you have mentioned, to the adding and subtracting concept of the planning of the city, this same title encompassed in the beginning a double meaning: the exhibition was going to deal more or less, that is to say yes and no, with Montreal. Alas, badly translated into English (Montreal, plus or minus?) and badly punctuated in the two languages (comma and question mark), this second level of meaning was unfortunately going to disappear. It is with the aim of re-establishing the duality of the initial concept of the exhibition that I have taken the liberty of titling the introduction to the catalogue Montreal . . . plus ou moins/Montreal . . . more or less.

This having been said, when a city like Montreal becomes the subject of a public exhibition, one must never lose from sight two levels of reality impossible to dissociate by reason of their interaction: in the first place, the elements which result from the extent of its territory and from the density of its population, elements which join inevitably with other cities of the same caliber; and second, the way of life particular to the city in question. In this exhibition, they took note, as it should be, of this first aspect, but they especially stressed the second. That was a way of emphasizing the context, which they have too great a tendency to forget. In which this fire first aspect, but they especially stressed the second. That was a way of emphasizing the context, which they have too great a tendency to forget. In which this

The Green Spaces group exhibited a survey of the acres of green space available in the city. For example is not the fact that at Montreal we are completely deprived of this spirit which threatens the present planning. M.C. — But I did not choose a priori to mount this exhibition in a museum devoted to fine arts. On the contrary, it was certain that the Museum of Fine Arts of Montreal which approached me to discuss the possibility of taking in hand and carrying out this project. Besides, does a neutral ground really exist? For if an institution other than artistic had made me a similar proposal, the exhibition would have been different, although, there too, it would have been necessary to take other impetuses into account.

Moreover, before arriving at the definite form, different projects had been studied, precisely with the intention of going out of the confines of the museum, so as to integrate the exhibition in the everyday life of Montrealers. For example, I suggested to a theatre group that they should find an unoccupied house and install themselves in it to play the roles of a typically Montreal family, while the public would have the right to come in and visit the fictitious tenants. Another aspect of the same project: they had the idea of showing a history of Montreal in the streets, by placing posters specifying the state of the building, its rent and its real owner on several buildings, among which was the house on Clark Street in Mile End, which left an impression of the poor. The majority of the population lives far from the center, in suburbs. That is why there are so many green spaces. Nonetheless, it is a ghostly, sad city. Let it be said in passing, the policy of the federal government of Canada in the matter of dwellings is in the process of committing the same errors by exiling the population of urban centers to suburbs. I therefore believe that by its presentation, Green Spaces has given rise to an uneasiness coming from the fact that we are neglecting the public and communal aspect of our city. The citizen, real capital element of every urban mass, is not always favored by the urban aesthetic. The urban aesthetic

M.C. — With the help of this measure which would not be marginal, but in perfect accord with the predominant character of the city as indicated earlier. Thus, from a problem which is found universally, like green spaces, one can arrive at bringing about specifically Montreal urban centers to suburbs, but she is at the same time different from them. She has her own heritage, her own story, and there is a way of life here which persists to this day and which gives its pulse to the city, her unique rhythm. This is what the exhibition tried to demonstrate, with the goal of making the public aware of the practical and instructive scope of its theme, would the exhibition not have been more effective if it had been presented on neutral ground, outside of any artistic consideration?

VdA — On choosing to present an exhibition about the city in the framework of a museum, devoted to fine arts, organised and participants find themselves by the very fact in the impossibility of dissociating themselves completely from the environment. The Green Spaces group emphasized the context, which they have too great a tendency to forget. In which this
an important monument in the evolution of the architecture of the city.

Another method of setting up an open exhibition had been contemplated with the assistance of the Central Council of National Unions of Montreal, which was favourable to this project. A formula of compromise: the CCNU first suggested to hold the exhibition at the museum, and presenting it later in different areas of the city. Unfortunately, the CCNU had to withdraw.

In the face of the impossibility of wholly fulfilling these projects, I realized that the only way of coming out of them, if we really wished that the exhibition should come to pass — and moreover there remained little time after all these steps — it was finally necessary to make maximum use of the actual resources of the museum. Just the same, we succeeded in maintaining certain elements of the exhibition outside the museum: Green Spaces organized visits by bus for the public across the city, and Mauve, a feminist group, besides displaying an environment in a window of Dupuis Frères department store, was getting old in another place.

Certainly, the museum, by its very nature, is not reality itself, but the reflection of reality. And the reflection of reality is art, one cannot escape from it, and it was necessary to admit this. But to be in a position to reflect it adequately, we preferred to assume this reality as it had been put forward — and it is a big task — why, in spite of the limits imposed — including budget and limited staff — we have never had an exhibition so committed, so political, in the history of this city, and so much developed on an artistic plan. Did you know that to create an exhibition of this kind on Montreal, its established order, in the field of artistic creation as in that of the conception and the organization of an exhibition, and to reconstruct the whole from reality, from the actual life of the people who live in Montreal, which has been too long unknown? Nevertheless, it is in this reality that we rediscover what is unique in Montreal, and it is to the extent that we will be able to be inspired by it that we will be able to communicate with the people who live in it, and thus lead them to reflect on their own life, one of the important roles, it seems to me, of the art of our time.

VdA — Salle Zéro, Point Zéro and Alternatives, made up of citizens aware of urban problems, participated in the preparation of the exhibition. They faced up to many problems, a very valuable step, but without offering solutions to solve them, sometimes leaving the visitor puzzled. On this matter, has the exhibition not missed an opportunity to enlighten the visitor and inspire him to take means of positive action to solve the problems raised, in order to better his lot?

M.C. — The real problem in Montreal, as in most large cities, is not the formation of small autonomous groups, which are in the last resort powerless, but the formation of a common front to exert pressure effectively on the authorities who do not always take into account the real needs of the citizens. One of the aims of the exhibition was to make people conscious of the very existence of these different action groups taken individually, as well as of the diversity of their purposes. But, indirectly, the visitors, while going through the exhibition, were forming in spirit a kind of common front: they no longer felt isolated or lost and they realized that there were other people concerned with the same problems. Besides, I do not believe that it belongs to a museum of fine arts to suggest ready-made formulas to the public. Because the field of action of the visitor is elsewhere, it is political. The best one can do within the context of a museum is not politics, but rather to educate the public politically, to sensitize it to the necessity of acting, while hoping to incite it and promote in it this desire to effect the necessary changes in the priorities of the planning of Montreal.

VdA — The choice with most defects are utopias. There are, nonetheless, some cities which are beautiful and captivating. And Montreal is one of those rare, attractive cities on the North American continent. The exhibition seems to have neglected this positive side. If certain policies of planning of the city of Montreal leave something to be desired, others have been clearly successful, as witnessed by its public transport system (the subway line and its stations), the conception of the underground urbanism of the downtown area (one of the best examples in North America) and the preservation of an historic town area that is unique in Montreal, and it is to the extent that to create an exhibition of this kind on Montreal leave something to be desired, as it will be, to the eyes of the visitor. But the real Old Montreal is found in the corridors which replace it are controlled by policemen in uniform in the service of private companies.

As for Old Montreal, it is the historical Disneyland of Quebec. From a section falling in ruins and practically uninhabited, it became, once renovated, a privileged section, with shops, restaurants and luxurious apartments. But the real Old Montreal is found in the dramatic case of the Spadina highway. But not in Montreal where we are in the process of introducing a highway right in the centre of town. That is pure genocide!

In what refers to the aforesaid subterranean city, it was never planned, but was going to be born by accident, like all good city plans across the world. On the other hand, it must be said that this underground city favours purely financial interests: it does not belong to the citizens, but to the owners of the buildings which shelter it: the idea of the street no longer exists in this case, and the corridors which replace it are controlled by policemen in uniform in the service of private companies.

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A caricaturist, aggressive or political, speaks to me of a sick city, in the grip of sombre socio-economic realities. Pierre Dupras illustrates a struggle between two contrasts with the immediate environment. At the east of the Jacques Cartier bridge, the Quebec provincial police defend law and order in glass headquarters, without counting the many and luxurious towers of dwellings, such as the Dupuis store. To plan the future, it is necessary to sacrifice some so-called historical monuments. Besides, what I see today will be a memory in 1980.

The sidewalks overflow, supporting an incredible weight. A downtown area where are counted 150,000 foot-tickets. A dull noise, I go through the turnstile, my ticket is scanned. The service on Sunday is lessening. Even if, in rush hours, one must jostle in the trains. The service on Sunday accentuates the operational deficit. The figures of the Transport Commission tell the story: 843,000 passengers in 1970. At the beginning of 1968, there were more than 904,000 people each day. Thirty-five percent of the people move by car against twenty-five and a half percent by public transport. Just the same, the MTC has already won one battle, that of the centre of town: seventy percent of users travel by it.

The Rebirth of Concrete

I am listening to the guide, a geographer. My eyes look upward. A centre of town which is reviving. We believed it given up to an apathy of several years, in the example before the planners of space. The mountain at the heart of Montreal, I feel the crossroads: the skyscrapers of the Bank of Commerce, IBM, Bonaventure Place, Château Champlain, etc. The sky is disappearing, sees itself conquered by masses of concrete. It resists little before the planners of space.

In another new movement, from now on we are moving toward the east, in contrast to seasonal moving. Place Desjardins will share the two sides of St. Catherine St. with Place des Arts. Farther along, the Chinese quarter awaits the white invaders, federal officials who will be accompanied by police blocks. The old Latin Quarter will be revived with the downtown campus of the University of Quebec. The Dupuis store will aggravate the epidermis of public squares. And, down there, opposite the living centre of Montreal, the Radio-Canada building contrasts with the immediate environment. At the

percentage doubled, then, in 1967, climbed to sixty-four percent. More than 650,000 vehicles of all models travel in the streets each day. The residential boulevards are disappearing, invaded by a tide of drivers. The swift Bonaventure road, the LaFontaine bridge-tunnel are built. Bonaventure, LaFontaine: names which recall a more tranquil stage: the highways of the Thousand Islands, of the St. Scholastique airport. Still others, like eat at the centre of town, the tourist, negligence. And the ancestor common to all these roads: the metropolitan boulevard. Daily, morning and evening, each hour, 9,000 vehicles pass there in both directions. It is no longer equal to the task: it has become fatal for those who dare to speed.

Montreal: a road network of more than a thousand miles with highways, downtown arteries, residential streets and others. An odd administrative jigsaw puzzle. A nightmare in the parking of automobiles, those devoures of space. We even take possession of building lots in Old Montreal. History yields to parkings, it occupies nearly sixteen percent of the downtown area. More than four million square feet!

A Solution?

1967. I smile, hesitate, then deposit my ticket. A dull noise, I go through the turnstile, a wait of a few seconds and the subway: Five words on its square tile, joy is erased with routines. They promise me many developments in order to appease my impatience. Ten years from now they will go from sixteen stations to thirty-six. The user will travel rapidly between Verdun and Anjou, without neglecting the site of the Olympic games. The small sectors forgotten by the subway. And yet, the curve of use is lessening. Even if, in rush hours, one must jostle in the trains. The service on Sunday accentuates the operational deficit. The figures of the Transport Commission tell the story: 843,000 passengers in 1970. At the beginning of 1968, there were more than 904,000 people each day. Thirty-five percent of the people move by car against twenty-five and a half percent by public transport. Just the same, the MTC has already won one battle, that of the centre of town: seventy percent of users travel by it.

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A Few Lines Are Not Enough

What remains to be said, to be sensed, of Montreal? Many, many things. A few lines are not enough to tell everything. What shall we think of its political and legal institutions, of its clearly inadequate facilities for leisure, of this unique fact of a mountain in a city? Of a Mount Royal proudly parading its green spaces in the face of asphalt? Geographers have granted it a quick glance. For myself, my two eyes are not enough. I feel that I am blind. An architect has presented Montreal within four walls in order that its inhabitants may recognize each other. A fog hides the perspectives from me, a deafness hardly allows a few noises to penetrate my silence. I nonetheless begin to understand. Montreal is more than a city, it is an environment offered to all the senses.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

CLAUSE TOUSIGNANT

By François GAGNON

An exhibition by the Exterior Services of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

An important retrospective exhibition of the works of painter Claude Tousignant of Montreal comprising fifty works (40 paintings and 10 prints) produced between 1951 and 1972, will be presented in twelve centres across Canada from January 1972 to November 1974, and also during October 1973, in the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris.

*Itinerary of the exhibition, 1973-1974*

**January 12 - February 11, 1973**
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

**March 15 - April 30**
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg

**May 25 - June 24**
Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal

**July 15 - August 15**
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver

**October 1 - October 31**
Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris

**December 1 - December 31**
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton

**January 15 - February 15, 1974**
Memorial University, St. John's, Nfld.

**March 1 - March 31**
Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax

**April 15 - May 15**
Confederation Art Gallery and Museum, Charlottetown

**June 1 - June 30**
Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton

**July 15 - August 15**
Undecided

**September 1 - September 30**
University of Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke

**October 15 - November 15**
Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison Univ., Sackville, N.B.

A series of exhibitions from one museum to another, even if not planned, can sometimes include instruction. Thus, an important Claude Tousignant retrospective, organized by the National Gallery of Canada will follow the Borduas and the Automatists exhibition, Montreal 1942-1955, presented last year at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal.

In a few months, the opportunity of re-living one of the important movements in the history of contemporary painting in Quebec will be given to visitors interested in the two showings. Claude Tousignant has been, with Guido Molinari, one of the chief contributors in the dispute over automatism and the drafting of plastician proposals.

One cannot miss perceiving, looking back in time, that Automatism appears in history, clad in a theory of pictorial abstraction, badly adjusted to the works which it was supposed to defend. The questioning of the representation of things and persons seemed so radical to the automatist painters and to their public, that to explain it they resorted to an exclusively plastic vocabulary. Thus, Borduas' gouaches of 1942, if they were titled "Surrealist Painting" on the invitation card, were designated first by the title "Abstraction", followed by a single number which told its place in order. Reporters' commentaries inspired by the exhibition of these gouaches in the Hermitage Theatre, the same year, also spoke only of abstraction, calling upon music which evokes moods without, for what it is worth, suggesting precise forms, proclaimed the virtues of a single plastic language of lines and colours and tried out frenzied verbal transpositions, these alone being judged capable of taking account of going beyond all significance, they believed, in their experience. And yet, several of these gouaches were still obviously figurative. It is without effort that one can now detect in them here a bird, there a woman's head or a torso or even a Harlequin. Much more, when Borduas brings about during the year 1945 a significant return to representation, as in La Femme au bijou, L'âme enchantée or Le Nu vert, etc., he continues no less to give his canvases numbered titles, such as 3,45, 4,45, 5,45, which are really the dates of production and should be read, "made in the month of March, April, May, 1945."

At the very moment when the representation of objects was abandoned, as in most of the gouaches of 1942 and of the oils of 1943, more definitely from 1946 with Borduas or in the first canvases of Fernand Leduc (1944), of Pierre Gauvreau (1944) or in the water-colours of Riopelle (1946), the notion of object and, correspondingly, that of sign standing out on a background was maintained. The object had lost its conventional form but kept its structure as an object. We were far from the explosion which American action painting had caused it to undergo, except with Barbeau, perhaps (the astonishing Tu­multe à la mâchoire crispée is from 1946), but we know what difficulties Barbeau had in maintaining this type of suggestion in the face of the plastic agreements implicit in the automatist group. Even non-representative, the automatist propositions were less abstract than one would have liked to believe.

Having taken its point of departure in spontaneity, Automatism was perhaps influen­ced to neglect the fact that the spontaneous, like instinct, is structured and includes its determinants. The non-premeditation of works, which was the fundamental principle of auto­matist productions, involved the fact that the process of the destruction of the concrete appearance of the figure, their structure as object in a tridimensional space, risked being maintained, even unknown to the protagonists.

The old space box, inherited from ancient habits going back to the Renaissance, resisted the assaults of non-figuration and the Parachutes végétaux were at their ease there, like
the soft watches of Dali.

It is in the last point that criticism of Automatism by Plasticism takes on all its meaning. The abstract character of automatist production was challenged first by the plasticians, then in the name of a new structure by Claude Tousignant and Guido Molinari. If one wished to achieve a truly abstract painting, it was necessary to renounce not only representational, but also any representation on the one hand and of all suggestion of tridimensional space on the other. From 1956, as a joint Molinari-Tousignant exhibition demonstrated, the stakes were down. A strictly bidimensional painting is proposed, without objects, and from that point it develops along

One by one, what Matthew Baigell called “depth clues” disappear. The superimposition of one element upon another, which so clearly suggests depth, is avoided, the surfaces simply being placed side by side. Impressions of gravitation, of distance or even of orientation (left and right field), on account of the references which they make to natural space, are prevented. Making use of circular surface, Claude Tousignant surely shows that he intends to avoid the traps of the rectangle in which one spontaneously distinguishes a top and a bottom, a left and a right, and on which the planes situated near the bottom of the picture risk appearing nearer the viewer than the planes situated in the top. For planes of different dimensions distributed on the surface painted in such a way as to form the illusion of atmospheric space, a plane of large dimension having a tendency to come forward and to seem closer than a smaller plane placed at its sides, are substituted bands of equal width, following each other in vertical stripes in Molinari’s work, or in concentric circles and in oval bands more or less in length in Claude Tousignant’s. Plays of texture on the planes are also eliminated. A textured plane situated on a plane which is not textured. The surface of the paintings of the plasticians is, on the contrary, treated with a painter’s roller, in such a way that even brush marks should not alter the perfect flatness of the surface of the picture. Finally, for the tonal colour which retains variations of shade according to whether one adds more or less white or black to the same tint, they substitute a saturated colour, avoiding all play of contrasts which, for example, would cause a bright red area to stand out on a pale blue background. This exclusive use of saturated colour brings out such a quickening of the pictural field that one might believe it, in reference to Tousignant, an op painting. This is an unfortunate interpretation, because it reduces to a secondary effect the whole of his production, which turns on more crucial research.

While rejecting the plays of the third dimension, Plasticism first discovered the fundamental idea of the series and then began a new research in the field of lyricism per excellence, pure colour. In effect they replaced the object with the series, more coherent with what science teaches about the structure of the universe, a vast undulating field ruled by the repetition of recurrent series, opposed or progressive. Thus, instead of following each other at the pleasure of I don’t know what fantasy, as in the paintings of the American Gene Davis, for instance, the concentric bands of Tousignant obey a system of succession which a prolonged and attentive contemplation can rediscover.

But at the same time what has become for Claude Tousignant the essential principle of pictorial research, the problems of spatial structure having been put in place once for all, is colour itself. It is especially colour that we risk allowing to escape from our considerations, as criticism has sometimes given the example, being occupied with the only definition of the space structure of the plasticians. With the pre-eminence given to colour, it is all the dionysian lyricism which we would be tempted not to see in this painting strictly defined structurally, which is reinvested with its full powers. Let us wish, in ending, that the Tousignant exhibition will offer a brilliant demonstration, I was going to say accelerated, of the energetic quality of pure colour.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
students, the school welcomes that year, a
graphic arts professor to whom Philippe
Beaudoin will soon give the artistic direction
of the school: Albert Dumouchel. For Pierre
Ouvrard this is the beginning of a friendship,
and an influence which will remain unfailing.

Four young bookbinders graduated from the
École des Arts Graphiques in 1947. Ian
Trouillot, on a scholarship from Haiti, goes
back home. Louis Grypinich starts teaching
his craft. Jean Lariviére specializes in
Ottawa in the restoration of old books. In 1949,
Pierre Ouvrard opens a bookbinding studio
with Marcel Beaudoin who graduated one
year after him. This took much daring, a sort
of calculated risk because America, as opposed
to Europe, had few bookbinding craftsmen.
In Quebec, where this art has been passed on
count only a few well-established studios: the
Chabot studio in Quebec, that of Vianney
Bélanger and The Gazette bookbinding de-
partment under the direction of Ernest Bou-
dreau in Montreal. A few well-known iso-
lated craftsmen such as Louis Forest, Gérard
Perreault, a few amateurs of high standing
such as Mrs. Carl Sarn, devote themselves
to interesting research. However, Quebec, as
a whole, is not ready to support these two
new bookbinding partners formed to new ideas
by Albert Dumouchel and the great currents
of contemporary bookbinding.

In 1949—1950, the less start to
arrive from such as François Hertel, Roland
Giguère who brings for binding the first books
of "Les Éditions Ertq"... The Ouvrard and
Beaudoin studio will last two years: a fire
destroys the premises leaving thousands of
dollars of debts. Pierre Ouvrard will open his
studio with a new partner: Philippe Beaudoin
whom with he had kept close bonds of friendship, as he had done
with Albert Dumouchel and Lionel Jolicoeur,
who had taught him the techniques of book-
binding. He has today reached the objective
set as he left Pierre Ouvrard, bookbinding craftsman
— as he likes to be called — has equally the
respect of tradition and a passion for research.
Leather is always the basis of his bookbind-
ings, with the exception of a few experiments
which he has made in collaboration with
Albert Dumouchel and Lionel Jolicoeur, who
had taught him the techniques of book-
binding. He has today reached the objective
set as he left the École des Arts Graphiques,
to devote the major part of his time to artistic
bookbinding.

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JIM RITCHIE: ANATOMIES IN MARBLE

By Jeffrey ROBINSON

Jim Ritchie comes back to Canada in October for his 13th one-man show, his seventh in Montreal, this time at the Waddington Gallery. He has been an every-other-year commuter from Vence on the south coast of France to Montreal for over a decade.

"I left in 1959 to live in France. Most of my work is done here although I also do some work in Carrara, Italy. Why I'm working outdoors all the year round, the fact that I can work with the stone. With it. I work with the stone. There are lots of problems working here because I want to show in Canada. After all, that's home, Shipping and customs are, every-other-year, a huge problem. Yet I believe that working outdoors all the year round, the fact that I can work with the stone. With it. I work with the stone. I like it because it has a luminous quality which is ideal for my work. But the work is still the important thing. I've recently just completed my work to date from a three-ton block of white Carrara marble. The piece completed weighs about 3000 pounds, is almost five feet tall and is called Life."

The word "life" seems to be apropos as Jim Ritchie has made sculpting his life.

"It's something I've been doing all my life, although I didn't start selling until 1949. It was the Galerie Agnès Lefort, on Sherbrooke Street, where I made my first sale. And it's interesting because looking back nearly two dozen years, I can see how far I've come and also how far I've yet to go. And maybe that's why I work as much as I do. I'm a compulsive worker. Seeing where I've been shows me where I'm going. The more I do, the more I can do."

And just where is he going?

"To THE sculpture. It's like writing THE novel or painting THE oil. It's the thing that every artist I guess strives for. I'm trying to do that and I don't think I'll produce the quality that I insist on producing. What I in affect am doing then is destroying each day's previous sculpture to make a slightly different one until there's nothing more to do and the piece is complete."

Many people seem to be impressed with the stones themselves but James Ritchie feels the sculpture is the important thing. The stone itself is his catalyst for what will come.

"I let some stones sit around for many months before I start work with them. I have to get a feeling for the stone. We build up a relationship, if you will, the stone and I. But the audience should be concerned with the work. That's why I work as much as I do. I'm a compulsive worker. Seeing where I've been shows me where I'm going. The more I do, the more I can do."

Putting together a show means almost two months to turn out 15 pieces. It's very time consuming, it's the final filling and polished finish. It's the quality of life, the fact that I can work without shipping and customs being a problem. Yet I believe that working outdoors all the year round, the fact that I can work with the stone. With it. I work with the stone. That's why I work as much as I do. I'm a compulsive worker. Seeing where I've been shows me where I'm going. The more I do, the more I can do."

ANNE KAHANE: A FLOOD OF PINE

By Alma de CHANTAL

A warm light flooded the studio of Anne Kahane on this lovely autumn afternoon, accentuating the festive mood which already prevailed, since, as she immediately told me, she had finished the mural destined for the new buildings of the Canadian embassy in Pakistan the day before.

It is doubtless unusual that an artist living in Montreal should produce one day a work of monumental dimensions intended for a country so far away. That was possible because there is a policy of the federal government, Anne Kahane explains, which allows the Ministry of Public Works to allocate to works of art a percentage of the budget of the costs of the construction. A firm of architects of Winnipeg, responsible for the erection of the embassy, then communicated with the artist; she submitted sketches and a maquette to them and the project was accepted. Happy that they gave her this commission, she contemplated this work with a special enthusiasm. "This was for me," she said, "a unique opportunity, truly exceptional, of producing a work of monumental character, which would then be installed on an immense wall measuring 34 feet in length. Without this commission," she added, "I would certainly have never been able to achieve a sculpture of this dimension."

At the heart of everyday life

And six months later, following intense labour during which Anne Kahane obtained the constant aid and collaboration of Jean-Léon Deschênes, one of her former pupils,
the finished work entirely occupied the available space in the studio of the sculptor. It also took up the other rooms of the ground floor, bringing about the strange sensation of a dwelling created and arranged exclusively in terms of a work of art, which exists and breathes only by it, a live presence in the heart of everyday life.

The impressive dimensions of the sculpture, 29 feet long, 5 feet 10 inches high and 10 feet deep, obliged the artist to divide the work into three distinct sections which would be reassembled only upon arrival at their destination. Moreover, Anne Kahane will go to Pakistan, which pleases her greatly, in order to supervise personally the installation of the sculpture in the entrance hall of the embassy situated in Islamabad, the new capital of the country. And it will be only at this moment that the artist will really be able to perceive the work in its totality, to evaluate the visual impact and the degree of integration of "The Sea" in the architectural whole, in the setting and the surrounding environment which will be its permanent home.

"We are all born of the sea."

Of an abstract character, this work displays itself in a horizontal fluctuating order, an immense surface of shadow, caverns of secret life alternating with the impact of light, blends harmoniously with the ensemble of the forms, smooth and gentle to touch like pebbles polished by the waters of the sea. Here and there, crevices, slits and cavities of different forms, carved in the depth of the wood at irregular intervals, break up the flat surface and will create, when the sculpture is fixed on the wall, wells of shadow, caverns of secret life alternating from gray to deepest black. In so doing, the artist inserts, in opposition to the three-dimensional demands of the sculpture, an original graphic language of a subtle refinement which will surely charm the oriental soul. Questioned as to the interpretation and the possible reactions of the Pakistanis with regard to her work, Anne Kahane will reply simply: "They will see it through their own culture."

The sculptor will speak to us at length of the sea, of her preference for the coasts of Nova Scotia, of the perpetual movement of the waves and of their continually changing forms, of stones and shells carved by the action of the water. This world literally fascinates her. "We are all born of the sea," she will say at a certain moment with profound conviction: "It is all that I wanted to express," and her look rests for a long time on each of the components of the sculpture; a long silence follows, almost tangible. "It seems to me", she suddenly said, "that I see my sculpture today for the first time." Then she had an understanding smile, a fraternal gesture towards her pupil, who had as their central theme a disjointed body, projected in space, suddenly immobilised in its dizzy fall. Almost all these works were produced in wood, pine and maple, the idea of construction, cabinet-making, which belongs specifically to wood, interests the artist greatly. She would like to make furniture and would be pleased to see, over her work-bench, a sign with the inscription "Cabinet-maker."

Window of two Worlds

Since 1951, Anne Kahane exhibited her works regularly in Canada and abroad, received the Grand Prize for Sculpture in the Artistic Competition of the Province of Quebec in 1956, participated in the Biennal in Venice as well as in the Universal Exposition in Brussels in 1958 and in Man and his World in 1967; her sculptures are found in several museums of this country, in private collections and in public buildings, such as Place des Arts in Montreal.

A retrospective, grouping her works of the last fifteen years, took place at Sir George Williams University, in 1969. A professor of sculpture at this institution, this new activity gives her satisfaction; teaching encourages varied human contacts which are valuable to her. She will willingly say of her pupils: "They teach me more than I can teach them."

 Mentioning some great names in contemporary sculpture, Anne Kahane will emphasize particularly the work of Hans Arp; Brancusi and Henry Moore, among others, interest her as well. These affinities will be reflected in a subtle way in her own work.

Two recent works having as theme The Window will reflect her preoccupations and orientation. "Is not the window the meeting point of two worlds, the exterior and the interior? It is an interesting world to explore where each will see what pleases him." The sculptor wishes to pursue her research in the silence and the solitude of her studio, apart from short-lived movements and styles: "I love this solitude . . . the artist is a being essentially alone", and she will add, "It is often because one does not understand what he is trying to do, and this contributes to his isolation."

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
The geography of Bill Vazan

By Gilles Toupin

The limitations which the artists of former times knew are henceforth abolished. There are no more boundaries, no more preconceived ideology; only a great forward-looking force which takes root in the very mysteries of creation and of man. Art is chaos, and its expansive consciousness makes of it without ceasing, during the course of its historic evolution, the anarchy of chaos.

When I look on my work table at the photographs of the many facets of the work of Bill Vazan, it appears evident to me that this artist continually explores the universe. There are postcards which he has sent me, the book of the Ligne mondiale, photos of works of exterior and interior, summaries of videographic achievements, etc. All means are good for him to attain knowledge and dreams... These different tangents of the work of Vazan could make us believe that he is on the lookout for a style which he has not yet found and that his paths of exploration with contradictory appearance, which go from the picture painted on an easel to a form of conceptual art, present no personal identity. This is not the case. His progress has no nonsense about it but possesses, on the contrary, certain unifying principles which we shall try to outline.

Three years at the College of Art of Ontario, one year in Paris where he attends the École des Beaux-Arts without much conviction; to prefer later to hitch-hike through Europe, his return to Montreal in 1962 where he rediscovers in a hospital bed, after ten years of abstinence, the joy and the need of creating. A few water-colours, some drawings, will lead him in 1963 toward those oil paintings furrowed by threads of iron like fields of chains which already unconsciously reveal certain structures organization which remind us of bird’s eye views. In 1964, small black structured signs on a white background suggest, this time, mock-ups of urban planning as if it were a matter of real

Like him he seems to move silently with works mushrooming from one ocean to the other, perhaps silent and looming at first, but soon standing firmly against the Canadian background proud and somewhat defiant. Like Zadkine, he has a deep sense of space and height, using the earth as well as the sky to give a feeling of mobility to his work. Well aware of the relation that must exist between the architectural and the sculptural for works intended for public buildings or similar projects, his work is conceived bearing this in mind. Like Paolo Soleri, the structures of the future intrigue him, and it is clear that he has given it some thought. From what he has done recently, it would appear that he agrees that the functional can and should have aesthetic qualities as an essential condition in its conception or design. With a reputation which is reaching further and further with time, Art Price has done and is doing far more for the Canadian image than we have given him credit for so far. It is Lynn Chadwick who told me not so long ago: “Look out for Price, he will outlast and outgrow a great many.” This he may well do. In the meantime we must recognize that he has contributed significantly to transform the generally mundane, large-sized public buildings or utilities into something more aesthetically dramatic.

If some of his early work seemed conceptually confined within a national context, that of more recent years is clearly addressed to a much wider public, well beyond our boundaries. It is a modern language in which the parochial has no room. It seems to be a fairly accurate reflection of this era where the technological accomplishments and its accelerating progress have shatted the aesthetic qualities of the thirties. It is also a projection of the contemporary man’s way of thinking, of unlimited possibilities. It is not easy to say it and it takes courage to do so. Art Price obviously has it. Regarding the future, although this has not been finalized yet, Art Price is looking into the possibility of executing sculptures in precious metals such as gold and silver. Somewhat similar in concept to those created by Georges Braque and Salvador Dali some years ago, these will be done on a relatively small scale. They will differ from those of Braque and Dali as they will not be conceived and intended as jewelry but strictly as miniature sculptures standing on their own. Should the project materialize, it should be interesting to see the results.

The road Art Price took from the beginning was a hard one. Painter, illustrator, film director, stage decorator, he came to sculpture gradually. The beginning may seem to some like a form of hesitation. I do not think it was. Circumstance would be a more appropriate word. Looking back at what he has done and on his own admission, it becomes obvious and clear that Art Price knew what he was doing, what he wanted to do and which path he would follow to do it. From this retiring man, one could not expect sudden impulses or surprising flamboyant gestures. Every approach is rational, properly analyzed, and never accidental. Spontaneity resides in the conceptual approach but not in the execution which bears clearly the stamp of an artist in absolute command of his material and never the other way around.

The great simplification seen in recent works reveals without the shadow of a doubt that every approach is rational, properly analyzed, and never accidental. Spontaneity resides in the conceptual approach but not in the execution which bears clearly the stamp of an artist in absolute command of his material and never the other way around. The great simplification seen in recent works reveals without the shadow of a doubt that every approach is rational, properly analyzed, and never accidental. Spontaneity resides in the conceptual approach but not in the execution which bears clearly the stamp of an artist in absolute command of his material and never the other way around.
town-planning. Curiously, the following year (without his forgetting his previous research, as we shall see later), Bill Vazan proceeds to hardedge. Large pictures which resemble impressions of the man in aluminium colour. From these pictures, the idea of another possibility of exploration was born by chance, as often occurs in a work of art. While playing with one of his daughter in the sand of Wells Beach, in Maine, he saw her write her name on the beach with a stick. At this moment, in the cavity of the sun, the artist Bill Vazan, joined the objective ideas of his external works. Is not the whole Milky Way or the Galaxy of Andromeda there, buried in the interior grasping which the public had the occasion of seeing at the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal at the time of the exhibition, in 1969, and at the Art Gallery of Ontario, at the end of the following year. The gummed tapes which ran slanting on the floor and the walls created an impression of a fall in space and indefinitely opened the architecture of buildings, somewhat in the man in Michaelangelo at the time of the sale of the Pieta of Michaelangelo. It is there that what I called this problem again. While filming the city in redefinition of the concept of a work of art, the _Ligne mondiale_ takes up again the themes of the first works of Vazan which evolved around an imaginary topography re-created in his pictures of 1963, 1964 and even those of 1972(1); it also resumes this capture of possession created from works of the exterior. The work of art always remains a sign of semi-logical culture. (We shall see as well that with Vazan this sign upholds certain linguistic preoccupations.) All the persons who cooperate in the work — I who am writing this article, for example — become one of its manifestations. The _Ligne mondiale_, by its ecological and geographical overtones, establishes a link between man and nature. All the landscapes through which it passes are seen included in the development of the work, thank to the skill of the man in making a line almost straight, and therefore civilized.

The work of Vazan, with or according to geographical maps, stems directly from this play between nature and culture. They are therefore linked to this passion of Vazan for this other line which is the visual presentation of geographical maps and they are preserved in the personal semiology of the artist. (2) The idea of the _Ligne de vie_ arises directly from the experience of Prince Edward Island where, with Wallace in Vancouver, Vazan placed Canada within parentheses.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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1. Moreover, it is this work parallel to the creation of easel-painting which makes us respect an internal contradiction in the work of Vazan. The place of creation established a redefinition of the characteristics of the object of art while refusing the traditional limitations in the canvas. While admitting the destruction of the limitations and of the material boundaries in the elaboration of the work, nothing prevents the artist from coming back to more limited space preoccupations. The content of Vazan's recent pictures is in close relation with his topographical tendencies. They are formed of colour, very short lines (about one inch), placed side by side so as to create zones of the whole similar to weather maps. They are therefore linked to this passion of Vazan for this other line which is the visual presentation of geographical maps and they are preserved in the personal semiology of the artist.

2. The idea of Vazan's _Ligne de vie_ arises directly from the experience of Prince Edward Island where, with Wallace in Vancouver, Vazan placed Canada within parentheses.