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ENGRAVING IN QUEBEC... WITHOUT A HISTORY

By Gérard TREMBLAY

In the history of humanity, the art of engraving is certainly one of the most ancient. Previously, prehistoric man used to engrave with flint on the walls of his cave the form of the animal he was going to hunt. Engraving and sculpture seem to have preceded the other forms of plastic art; while making use of material in the natural state — stone, wood, bark — primitive man began to inscribe his system of signs and created for himself a visual language which would provide him with a greater communication with his fellows.

Much later, with the appearance of paper, the engraved image, before the letter, rapidly became a means of communication with the greatest number who did not yet know how to read.

The art of the engraver is a major art, primordial, and not, as many believe or claim, a simple technique for reproducing an image in numerous copies. In the hands of artists, engraving has been for a long time, has always been, a genuine means of expression.

In Quebec, for only a few years, engraving has occupied a more and more important position. The first prints made here were produced in very few copies and available only to a small number of connoisseurs. During the last few years, we have been witnessing an astonishing proliferation of the arts of engraving and the production of the engravers is, we believe, of a quality no less astonishing. The quantity of engraved works then poses the problem of their distribution to the public at large.

Some attempts have been made in this direction by studios of engravers, by guilds of graphic works, by groups of artists. L'Association des Graveurs du Québec was formed parallelly, which tries to find solutions to this same problem by uniting the greatest possible number of Quebec engravers and by increasing the activities tending to promote the arts of engraving. The principal aim of the A.G.Q. is to inform the public of the existence of engraving in Quebec and of its vitality, to give information on the techniques used in the production of the works in order that we may be able to distinguish an original print from a simple reproduction or a facsimile, and finally, in time, to make engraving accessible to all and not solely to a small group of enlightened amateurs.

The popularity and the success of the A.G.Q. booth at the Salon des Métiers d'Art in the course of the last two years allow us to think that our aims and intentions are entirely realistic and achievable if we can but continue this action of becoming sensitive to an art which, in Quebec, does not cease to assert itself and to blossom.

(Translation by Mildred Grant)

ÉDOUARD LACHAPELLE, A NAIVE PAINTER?

By Edwige ASSELIN

Bear in mind that the aim of painting is to render the invisible visible, and that with such a goal, it is not astonishing that painting should be a foolish thing at which one can simply laugh. (Édouard Lachapelle, type manuscript, September 1971)

An exact definition has never been found of those who are called for want of a better name, the Naive. Naivety is a state which goes against logic, which, itself, records the acquired and makes it coherent. Naive art, autonomous, does not develop by a succession of the acquired; contrary to other forms of expression, it passes through history.

The naive painter cannot lay claim to logical structures where he loses his own character. Let us bring out certain common traits which distinguish him from others painters: he does not have the culture which involves judgment, but that, more subtle, which awakens sensitivity; he paints what dreams of or what is nostalgic to him, in simple life, daily deeds, a friendly world, the dialogue of flowers, children and simple pleasant celebrations.

He has also in common, with primitive artists, this unity of tone which makes it possible for us to think that beyond the concept of nationality man always has mutual aspirations.

Present art is becoming more and more intellectual, is tending progressively to dehumanize, to being no longer the expression of a man but the sensitive plate r collectivity. The artist no longer produces work, emanation of his sensitive self, but establishes a system of references (object found, chosen, assembled) to signify a state of collective thought.

Naive art passes through the event as a legend. If it sometimes undergoes the consequences of certain exterior occurrences, it, latter, curiously enough, are quickly absorbed.

The world of the naive painter rests on a series of principles and simple dreams. Technical skill varies, but it is a matter less of distinguishing the criteria of the trade than of thought. A naive thought almost always gives rise to an expression worthy of the same qualification.

Édouard Lachapelle, born in Montreal 1943, studied at Assumption College. He took a degree in arts at the University of Montreal. He has been drawing since the age of five, but it was only about 1965 that he began to make an almost daily activity drawing. His first solo exhibition, a matter of drawings in ink, took place at the library.
Saint-Viateur College, at the beginning of 1966. In November, 1968, he presented Les Poissons et autres marins at the Claude-Champagne Hall in Outremont, and then came the Hiboux exhibited at the same place, then at the Chasse-Galerie in Toronto, in May 1971. In mid-summer of the same year, the Centre du Livre, at the National Centre of the Arts in Ottawa, showed thirty-seven small works. The winter of 1972 found him in Morocco, where he painted a decoration in the style of the Thousand and One Nights, at the Al-Baamrane Hotel in Sidi Ifni. The work lasted three months with a salary of a Pantagruelic meal every day, given by the manager of the hotel.

Shortly before this Arab episode, Édouard Lachapelle became artistic advisor to the Marie-Calumet dance troupe. This group ordered a series of lino cuts on the theme of the legend of Marie Calumet from him. As he was much gifted in the work of engraving which satisfied his taste for minute detail, Lachapelle prepared sixty-eight subjects, printed in black and white and in colour.

Marie Calumet serves here as pretext. The person who actually lived at the end of the nineteenth century was a servant at the home of the parish priest at l'Île-Verte. Her love for the beadle entered into legend and she became the subject of folk songs. In 1904, Rodophé Girard created a new scandal by publishing her biography, which was placed on the Index by Monseigneur Bruchési. The author, for having written this impious book, found himself without work.

The series is of a graphism at the same time naïve and refined. Alone, a song illustrated in two versions, Une chanson et Trois points de suspension (more indecent!) is close to the legend. We find Marie Calumet with Julie, the niece of the painter, in different comical or burlesque situations, in historic or ethnic disguises or occupied in playing tidbits links.

Two engravings are especially beautiful, Le Fleuve noir et Les Vases à jeux, with very fine lines and lettering which serves as decorative motif. Linoleum not being suitable for lines and fine cutting, because it crushes and shreds too easily, these two works allow the artist to appreciate the artist's great mastery of the medium. Besides, graphism sometimes becomes fancy-work. "Be careful, you are going to fall into kitsch," warns the author of the danger.

Compositions with large surfaces and lines such as Une grosse Marie Calumet, placid, attractive, which fills the page fully, and Au Concert, where three pears serve as string instruments, demonstrate the versatility of the artist. Three engravings take up again a favourite theme of the author: Urgame paré et un santal, parée et Trois jeunes de suspension, and engraving with Lorraine Bânic and Henri Goez. On his return to Montreal, he was named director of the studio of the Rosemount CEGEP (1970-1971). During a second sojourn in Europe, this time in Geneva, he devoted himself exclusively to engraving. It was there that he created his Cantique spirituel, which was exhibited at the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris, last April, before going to Canada House in London, this month.

One proof, among many others, of the fact that our era, so materialistic and more and more paganized, is also deeply moved by the nostalgia of the spiritual and the sacred, is, it seems to me, that, for the first time in history, if I am not mistaken, artists have taken their inspiration from the Cantique spirituel of Saint John of the Cross. It was Manessier, about twenty years ago, who produced according to it a dozen engravings of such quality and so monumental that in 1970-1971 weavers Jacques and Laura Plasse and workshop Le Caire interpreted them in a series of admirable tapestries. And now André Bergeron takes an interest in his turn in the masterpiece of the Spaniard, and does it with success.

Lithography-Black-Night

The first element of his success seems to me to rest in the choice which he has made of lithography to accomplish the works which his reading inspired in him. Mellow, this technique allowed him, indeed, to create plates more vibrant than they would have been if he had used copper-plate or stoning, and which seem animated by a kind of breathing, the same serious and large breath as the verses of the Castilian. I shall also approve of André Bergeron for having refused colour. Does not the black of lithography better suit the translation of a text in which, it has often been noticed, the notations of colours are very rare, in which frequently the image of night comes back, this "noche oscura" which is at the very heart of the mystic experience of the Carmelite friar?

A privileged image, doubtless, this image of the night is only one of innumerable images by which he tries to transmit this experience to us and to cause us to perceive God. Stags, sheepfolds, flowers, wild animals, forests, pastures, meadows, merely in the first four stanzas of the Cantique spirituel, one gleaned this harvest of images. The temptation would therefore have been great for the artist to translate them plastically, but he did not believe in this, thank goodness! because he understood or felt that these pictures are precisely only pictures, make-shifts to which the mystic has recourse to express the inexpressible, and that to give them a reality, to embody them plastically, would have been to misjudge, and to lead us to misjudge, what they actually are. What shall we do then? We will be told by the study of the little book, the Poèmes mystiques de saint Jean de la Croix, that he had in his hands, and on the margins of which he wrote, with a fast pencil, the first thoughts of his lithographs such as they welled up in him at the reading of these stanzas.

In the Wake of Sketches

On pages 50 and 51, reading the lines "le visage penché sur l'Aimé...", it comes to us to appreciate the depth that in a hurry produces in a spontaneous little sketch, a form — a face, perhaps? — which seems to incline toward another form, placed below it in the lower left corner, while, in the lower right corner bloom the plants called forth by the Carmelite friar. Then, in these sketches, this first image changes completely. The flowers disappear, the reference, too precise, to a human being, vanishes, the positions are overturned, Bergeron having understood that the beloved — God — must have more importance than the creature which seeks him.

Thus, what asserts itself, in the final sketch, is a sort of omega, a traditional symbol, in Christian iconography, of Christ, end and outcome of all. We could multiply the examples. They would only confirm to us that the stages of the lithographer have always been accomplished in the same sense of a transposition, if not always a more figurative, less recognizable, of the images that the text suggests to him. It was on this condition alone that he was able to translate them well, giving them their meaning of a thing which is nothing in itself, it is not the means to which, for want of better, the mystic necessarily has recourse to communicate the incomunicable to us and to make us share his indescribable adventure.
Transpositions — Music

Thus André Bergeron succeeds — not in illustrating a text which it was not possible to illustrate, under pain of betrayal, to an even greater degree, that it was not necessary to illustrate to remain faithful to its spirit, to its message — but in holding up, in the face of such verses, the images which are a kind of transposition of them. Let us, for example, look at those which, in poem 1, answer the first line of the first stanza and the second line of the fifth verse; and we will immediately feel. I am sure, with what good fortune are expressed there (figure 3) the "nuit obscure" and here (figure 2) "the aurore aimable". An abundance of stars in the sky of the first lithograph, which shine through I know not what mysterious ray of spiritual light; a wide band of clarity which stretches to the horizon, in the second, and whose reflections already reach the earth and the clouds: these are two moments of the night, two stages of mystical life, two states of the soul in the presence of God, which Bergeron expresses in these two plates.

We understand, consequently, what he intended to make and what he made. It is not — fortunately — an illustration of the Cantique spirituel, which rejects all illustration. It is rather an accompaniment to his verses by a lithographed music. The work of Bergeron thus makes me think of the lieder by which a Schubert established a harmony parallel to that of the poems he illustrated. Musical, his book is such right from its cover (figure 1). I ought rather to say from its opening, where the unfurling of great organs creates the cosmic dimension on which is found the mysterious ray of spiritual light; a wide band of clarity which stretches to the horizon, in the second, and whose reflections already reach the earth and the clouds: these are two moments of the night, two stages of mystical life, two states of the soul in the presence of God, which Bergeron expresses in these two plates.

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THE SUMMER OF FERNAND BERGERON

By Bernard LÉVY

Fernand Bergeron has been living in Baie-Comeau since the autumn of 1970. He teaches French there, but, especially, he does engraving. Yet Fernand Bergeron originates from Montreal, where he was born in 1932. He moved to Baie-Comeau before settling on the North Coast.

In 1969, at the palais des Beaux-Arts in Baie-Comeau, where he was a student of the Pierre Ménard studio, he published a portfolio of his work, which was the title, was exhibited at the National Library of Quebec, where is achieved great success. Since then, he has shown engravings in Paris, in Basle and in Vancouver, with the group Tour d'oignon, and his plans to perfect his art in Europe, especially in Switzerland.

The recent work of Fernand Bergeron is strongly marked by his sojourn at Baie-Comeau. We no longer are interested in a geographic background, but in the crossroads of rural traditions and urban customs. It is in large part this contrast that Fernand Bergeron exludes in his last suite Les nuits blanches de Nini de Saint-Hilaire.

Warm Quebec: one can dream about it. Summer in Quebec: we can believe it. We can at least stop for the time necessary to examine the nine engravings of Fernand Bergeron, which are inspired by the same psychological phase and reconstruct in their way: dreams, memories and not-forgotten anecdotes. We quickly establish ourselves in the heart of this little world. And soon, just like one of the people, we take time to stretch out under an apple tree and enjoy it... the shadow of girls in the bloom of youth. The wit, let us not misjudge, is less ribald than bantering and mocking. Fernand Bergeron is satisfied to play the game of the seer — seen in different degrees. And the seer in Ailsay. C'était pas encore le temps des pommes. Ti-cul-boule-a-mites is not always the one we think.

Here are simple, real places, far from stereotypes for tourists: the North-Coast seen from below. Let us not confuse it with the shady side of the North-Coast under pain of completely missing the subtle humour of Fernand Bergeron. It is a matter of a country seen from inside: the taste is not the same. In this line of thought, we would easily compare Bergeron's engraving to songs: those of a Gilles Vigneault, or, better still, those of a Claude Gauthier. These engravings are like visible songs.

What remains of these songs if not a true, true, true country? For sure. Not that we are involved in an established sociological or anthropological fact enmired with arguments or with objective and precise signs, but rather in a kind of actual experience grasped at a certain distance and no longer that only of the artist but already our own.

Bergeron paints nature without being either naturalist or naive. He paints people and things in their essential, without caricature or a form of new neo-realism. Without being simplistic, either. He perceives summer in what is the most intimate and the rarest. He does not go so far as pastel tones, widely spaced, which try to contain the contradiction of a space which is too free and a time which is too narrow. Thus, the apple tree, the window, the waves of the water, the people, the will of the artist who are quickly familiar and party to a story that is too short, only punctuated enough by details to increase the flavour of it.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
new deluxe albums. We know that Graff previously published in 1967 Pillulorum and in 1970 Les Plottes, two albums which were exhibited across the country and which group the works of several artists of the studio. This time, each book, The spirit of L’Apaazadeau is playful, accomplished by one single artist who sometimes sought the collaboration of a poet, a story-teller or simply of someone who would add the art of writing to the art of the image. These artists are figurative and depart from reality, to be it transformed into a poam, a symbol, a fantasy. It is to concomitantly and clarify its components precisely. The image, like what is written, besides, maintains with the real particularly ambiguous relationships and pictorial realism remains more than ever a trap.

At a time when precision of line and of drawing could seem to be one of the surest means of achieving a faithful representation of reality, the drawing of the three following artists reflects, on the contrary, the mark of interior forces, imaginary worlds, in sum the escape from the exterverted proper to the image which comes out of this trap.

Carl Daoust, poet of the image as well as the word, invites us to penetrate the secret of a black box with a metallic clasp whose interior lined in mauve contains ten yellowed envelopes bound with a red ribbon and enhanced by an etched stamp. Each letter contains both the text and a little engraving dedicated to a woman who, however, has little connection with the content of the text or the picture, these “dead letters” being especially letters of recognition, Daoust tells us. The dry and concise style of the drawing gives the details of a cruel, indifferent and artificial reality while everywhere humour and tenderness are evident. While sometimes making use of certain idioms of symbolic and surrealist language, the thought of Daoust is different, at the same time more complex and concrete.

Before the Sept pêches capitaux, an album of engravings where imagination makes itself master, Normand Ulrich published Fantasmes which brings to its ultimate end the control of this ardent and delicate graphism. The latter entrenches itself especially in the shadows and the semi-darkness of a main subject and evokes in an impressionable little manner the least element is exploited and sometimes follows, in an original manner, the tradition begun by Cosimo, Botticelli and Vinci. The precision of the line and the abundance of themes elaborated only render more alive the reality of the objects, the persons and the human masses which swarm and which, one might say, move the times perhaps to escape their fate.

Fantasy and lyricism further characterize the moving waves of Lyne Rivard’s drawing. Humans, animals, plants and things of all kinds pour from a horn of plenty filled with moving waves of Lyne Rivard’s drawing. The precision of the line and the abundance of themes elaborated only render more alive the reality of the objects, the persons and the human masses which swarm and which, one might say, move the times perhaps to escape their fate.

Hannelore Storm is German and she is the only one to use the technique of lithography as a means of expression. Having lived a little everywhere, she tries to channel, in what she calls her “landscapes”, the spirit, the atmosphere of these countries, these cities and these country areas she has known and felt. While Seattle, for example, was for her hard and cold, Montreal is all melancholy, snow, intimism and poetry. Better than the Montrealers themselves, she knew Hannelore Storm’s En marchant vers l’atelier the especially human ambience of Montreal East, where the Graff studio is located. Sometimes mixing lithography and silk-screening she obtains violent contrasts. Here, in spite of the vaporeous movement of her pastels and her gray, green and red paint and medium both are more delineated than others and in the composition of the whole.

Silk-screening, in bright and varied colours, expresses better, for André Dufour, the profound nature of man. He wishes to touch on his basic needs such as dreams, liberty, sleep, T.V., pink elephants and chewing gum.
This series of nine pictures is full of humour as are the texts of Jean Gauguet-Larouche, poet, sculptor and friend, a native like him of the north coast. Les Primates à patates is the title of this book which causes to be born this banana being the monkey and the primate with the potatoes being man. The sounds, the words, as well as the colours and the picture itself, form an observation directed toward the world and research which aims at the original and the basic.

Pierre Thibodau, also, goes back to sources. He works with small, almost bacterial elements in the shape of sticks, spirals or simply rounded whose tones are in general pastel. The artists, who is only twenty-two years old, and who teaches at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal, now superimposes shapes and elements of enlarged objects on which great size and photographic precision bestow an astonishing vitality and strength. The eye, especially, takes on an inordinate importance, while it is for the artist "the sublime organ and it is the very moment to trace the very details of the moment by what one sees". What one sees here is also a tribute to the eye of the animal, of man, of the artist or of the observer.

The eye of the camera, it too, today, has all power. This attention to the world, of which Lichtenstein speaks so often, has become such as it is, but especially its deeds and gestures, its space-time actions. It is the ascendency of man. Clipping from newspapers, glued to the first page, announce exciting matches, anticipating being worthy of doing or not doing, the divergence between desire and goal, of this rich, strong work. Beer, alcohol, forgetfulness, solitude, yes, but above all a symbol, an identity, the joy of drinking and of living.

For Michel Leclair, the environment is nocturnal and of Quebec. As with Michel Tremblay, artisan of this new lease on life in the theatre and author of the text of Leclair's very beautiful book, the tavern and the bar are cross-roads and privileged places. They are the source of research and become, here, the principal theme. The ten silk-screen works in colour have their origin in the secret of the photographs which the artist takes himself unknown to everyone, of certain nooks and corners of the taverns, of the customers or of those who work there. Chez Fada, name of a club on St. Lawrence Boulevard, is the title of this rich, strong work. Beer, alcohol, forgetfulness, solitude, yes, but above all a symbol, an identity, the joy of drinking and of living.

Leclair seems to realize the world from a strictly positive point of view and reflects our environment in a clear and noncritical fashion.

Pierre Ayot, guiding spirit of Graff since its beginning and professor at the University of Quebec, is the urban artist par excellence, this city whose very culture is, as we all know, of a productive, continuing and consumer character. Accumulations, pile-up of objects, perforations, of gum balls ("two for a cent") also have certain connections in poetry, in the new novel, etc. The album or rather the magnificent box of candy that the artist offers to all of us this year, and which he titles Rose nanan comprises a multitude of sweet things of all colours. Ayot presents them in the form of photo-silkscreenings and even has their recipe given by Jehane Benoit. These tempting things are clad in a suspicion of mystery and elegance, sometimes losing their identity, to the benefit of mass and structure. The artist works with the latent and not yet perceived quaintness of current, new or worn-out objects, and finally creates a reality more subjective than objective.

The ambiguity of this reality is, in truth, what causes to be born this desire and this impulse to create in a thousand directions. We find here this variety of thought which give Graff all its vitality and all its richness. Far from setting a school, since anyone at all can come to work there, they have surely in common the compulsion toward technical perfection and the mastery without reservation of their trade. Let us mention, in closing, that the fabulous binding of each of these de luxe albums was carried out by Pierre Ouvrard.1


THE MULTIPLES OF MEDIA GRAVURES

By Luce VERMETTE

Creativity and originality, united with a great vitality, with a great dynamism, that is what characterizes the Groupe Média Gravures et Multiples!.

Objectively, these epithets can easily be applied to different artistic events. But how do they qualify those of the Groupe Média Gravures et Multiples, and, first, what are their achievements?
In November 1969, young Montreal artists united and formed the Groupe Média Gravures et Multiples. The primary aim of this group is to distribute their works by an organization managed by themselves. The group is presently made up of Jean Noël, Yvon Cozic, Gilles Boisvert, Lise Bissonnette, Michel Leclaire and Marc-André Gagné. Their field of action is vast and experimental. In this, they depart from the frames of traditional media. It is an art of integration by the individual, of environment and life in general. It is also the art of the transitory. The objects created are "parts of life" and live only for the time of their endurance, a very precious moment since it is no longer possible of being recovered. These visual and temporal manifestations demand the physical involvement of the individual and aim at bringing forth visual and tactile perceptions, which cause an awareness of forms, space and time.

One of the first showings of the Groupe Média was their participation at the Salon des Métiers d'Art du Québec, in 1969. Since that time, the experiment was repeated until last year. At the same time, the group project came to pass. Because, if each of the members individually followed his own research, the need for producing a group work soon became apparent. After several plans, Pack sack took shape. An exhibition of multiples and engravings — the whole comprising twenty-five copies — Pack sack is also a mounting in which spectators and members of the group take part. A travelling exhibition was organized; it went to Besse, Lausanne, Paris, Toronto, Winnipeg, Stratford, Rouyn, Sherbrooke and Montreal. The film that was produced about this event was presented at the quarters of the Groupe, last February.

In November 1971, the Groupe Média opened quarters on Sherbrooke St. in Montreal, with the intention of presenting its own exhibitions and receiving other groups or isolated experiments. Thus in January 1973 they welcomed Serge Lemoyne, who put on a happening, Party d'étoiles. The latter consisted of tournaments of hockey matches — hockey games of different periods — and the winners carried off trophies produced by the artists. Following this came the exhibition of slides, photographs and tapestries of the Moins de 35, then the slides of Jean-Marie Delavalle, the works of Jean-Serge Champagne and Claude Mongrain, and, finally, those of André Pagé. Groupe Média reserved for itself an exhibition — happening, at Christmas 1972, titled Noël, c'est pas un cadeau à 99c. It will also present, in May 1973, a group exhibition of works with erotic themes. This latter exhibition will be used in exchanges with other exterior groups. Because, if Group Média intends to present the works of its members at least once a year in solo exhibitions or in groups, it wishes, on the other hand, to send their works out and to execute exchanges with outside spheres, be it in Canada or out of the country, in that lies the proof of the great dynamism of this group, whose survival we ardently desire.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

TRENDS IN THE GUILDE GRAPHIQUE

By Luce VERMETTE

Founded in 1966 by Richard Lacroix, the Guilde Graphique was at the beginning only a co-operative orientated toward the publishing of Canadian engravings. To-day it is a professional establishment and a commercial enterprise, publishing and distributing the works of contemporary painter-engravers.

At the Guilde Graphique are produced, by the processes of lithography, silk-screening, etching, relief and moulded plastic, the works of more than thirty artists, among whom are Ferron, Hébert, Lacroix, McLaren, Molinari, Pellan, Savoie, Steinhouse, Tousignant and many others as eminent.

Presently the Guilde Graphique is announcing the publication of Kittie Bruneau's album, Entre chien et loup and of three silk-screens by Alfred Pellan. The Kittie Bruneau album comprises six etchings in colour, with a poem by Michael La Chance. There one finds a picture of the animal tribe in a strong and original work, where imagination and fantasy are dominant (La Chouette, La Licorne, La Chimère). Alfred Pellan's three silk-screens in several colours are related to the series Polychromées (Polychromée B, M and T); three female figurations, woven from a network of forms and geometric signs high in colour, give evidence of Pellan's involvement in the picturing of the human person, which he recreates entirely.

The high technical quality of the engravings presented by the Guilde Graphique is no longer a matter to be discussed. The work done by this body can compete with world production. Thus, on different occasions, and at biennial international exhibitions, notably in Paris, London, Cracow, Toronto, Santiago (Chile), Grenchen (Switzerland) and Ljubljana (Yugoslavia), works of the Guilde Graphique have represented Canada brilliantly.

In a parallel direction to its activity as a publishing and distributing house, the Guilde Graphique expands its action by organizing exhibitions in different museums, galleries and shops, and even in universities, schools and public buildings. The public can see the engravings of the Guilde Graphique in several museums and galleries, where they are permanently displayed, as well as at the exhibition hall of the Guilde, located on Saint Denis Street in Montreal.

By its concern for perfection and its production of works of high quality, the Guilde Graphique has raised the level of Canadian engraving, forcing other engravers to perfect their art if they wish to tackle the international market.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
and formed the corner of St. John St. and
Quebec had in it a statue of Saint John the Baptist
of the streets. The best known is the one
of the houses, niches which held statues
resound outside the churches. We know, for
instance, that there were in Quebec at the
earliest time of the chancel of the church which includes, in an
ornamental sculpture and
chancel. Without this need of
at the basis of a decor sculptured in the
entrance of the churches, the clergy
heard in the interior of churches and which
which the National Gallery of Canada owns and which must have come
from the Lotbinière church. This angel has been
credited by Gérard Morisset to François-
Noël Levassour (1703-1794) and dated about 1775. These exist several very similar others
among which, in particular, are those of
Charles de Bellechasse; these was a kind of
work which the sculptor used to repeat
with minor variations — in many places,
according to orders. It was a work done in
series, which takes nothing from its plastic
qualities.
Almost a century later, toward the middle of the 19th century, adoring angels were
used, very probably, on hearse. They are,
in any case, originally painted black. They too
are repeated in several copies and made by
the same sculptor whom we do not know.
A pair of those angels is in the National
Gallery of Canada. This is the same
iconographic type as the Levassour's, but
is another expression of its simplest expression. The drapery is
indicated only by wide lines made with a
gouge. The hands have disappeared.
The position of the lips is scarcely shown and the feet do not exist. Levassour's angel appears
to be a sort of the angels of the hearts,
like a work of scholarly art. And yet all these
angels fulfill their duty well, since they are
all produced in series. Among them there are
noticeable stylistic differences which, upon
the whole, come only from the different
training received by the sculptors. And, finally,
how Levassour's work in the Lotbinière church in relationship with European models.
It seems to us that it is a false problem to wish to establish at any price, in what
concerns the early sculpture of Quebec, a line of
decoration between a popular art and a
scholarly art. The early sculpture was born of
the precise needs of society; it is completely
integrated into the structures of

THE EARLY SCULPTURE OF QUEBEC,
A MANIFESTATION OF POPULAR ART?

By Jean TRUDEL

The term popular art is extremely difficult
define; it has given rise to definitions as
numerous as there are people to make those
definitions. To try to apply this term to the
eyearly sculpture of Quebec is not an easy
job. The personal approach made here is in
no way definitive, far from it. If it can
contribute to advancing, however little, the
state of knowledge on the early arts of
Quebec, we shall have attained our goal.

In order to simplify this approach, we are
going to deal only with religious figurative
sculpture. In a colony, which, since its begin­nings,
has been very strongly structured by
the Catholic religion, it is not surprising to
see sculpture on wood become one of the
principal exterior manifestations of this
religion. In the interior of the churches, the clergy
and the faithful create a religious environment
of prime importance in the life of all and in
eyeryday life. This religious environment is
at the basis of a décor sculptured in the
chancel of the church which includes, in an
architectural frame, ornamental sculpture and
figurative sculpture. Without this need of
religion to create a physical setting which is
the most beautiful on earth, there never
would have been attempts, from the 17th
century, to establish viable artistic traditions
in New France.

Sculture of a figurative character is only one aspect of the craft of the sculptor who
works in the decoration of churches, but it is
doubtless the one which is the most character­istic of the sculptor. It allows him to present persons
or scenes about which worshippers so often
hear in the interior of churches and which
resound outside the churches. We know, for
example, that there were in Quebec at the
corner of certain streets niches in the walls
of the houses, niches which held statues
having, it seems, a connection with the names of
the streets. The best known is the one
which, before containing a statue of Wolfe,
had in it a statue of St. John the Baptist and
formed the corner of St. John St. and the
Street of the Poor (Palace Hill) in
Quebec. Figurative religious sculpture was
not limited to the interior of churches; it
also occupied the façades of the churches, the
intersections of roads, the cemeteries. In this
sense, it was a sculpture of the people, a
sculpture with which the people lived every
day as they lived with the religion whose
symbols and devotion it represented. The
user, if one might say it, of the sculpture at the
same time as its sponsor (directly or
through the clergy) was the Quebec people
for whom the Catholic religion formed a
uniqueness, a particularism of their own
life. If one went no further, there would
truly be no very complex questions concerning
Quebec sculpture as popular art, but we
would have put aside the sculptures and the
works in order to consider only the environ­ment
which gave rise to them and conditioned them.

Let us examine a few works, which, by their
stylistic characteristics, come nearer to a
generalized conception of popular art. The
first of these works is a Saint Joseph
d'Enfant Jésus preserved in the Museum of
the General Hospital of Quebec. Tradition has
it that this sculpture was placed on the first
of this institution by its founders, the Hospita­liaires de Saint-Augustin, in 1693. Since
1624, Saint Joseph had been the patron of
New France; he was also its protector as he
had been that of the infant Jesus. An inscrip­tion
on a manuscript paper glued behind the
sculpture could perhaps give us other informa­tion if it were deciphered. We do not know
who could have done this work, but it must
have involved, in spite of its awkwardness,
a professional sculptor. The too large hands,
the too long feet, the stiffness of the infant
Jesus must not make us forget the admirable
treatment of the folds of the cloak and the
hair of Saint Joseph. In spite of its tendency
towards excessive stylisation, this sculpture seems
to us, through its plastic expression, nearer
to an art called scholarly than to an art called
popular. The technique demanded to create it
implies on the part of the one who made it
an education more extensive than that of a
simple man gifted in tinkering.

A polychrome relief picture preserved in the
Convent of the Ursulines of Quebec
would also be near to a general conception of
popular art. We know that at the time of Saint
Angèle de Mériel, the founder of the Ursula­ines
and, formerly as today, it would have been
placed in the part of the convent reserved
for the novices, to be offered to their
meditation. According to tradition, it might have
been sculpted by a nun; it is not possible for
us to accept this tradition, perhaps founded
on the clumsiness of the work. At the bottom,
at the right, we can read "Th.Ch.F.(?)
Scul/1808". An Ursuline, through humility,
would not have signed this work while there are
already very few signed works in the early
sculpture of Quebec. We have not yet been
able to trace the name of the sculptor through
these initials.

The use of painting and the techniques of
drawing made the use of sculpture less
refer to her temporary blindness. The
iconography is unique. Saint Angèle
d'Enfant Jésus is shown as a Virgin of the Annuncia­tion
– prie-Dieu. However, the iconography is unique. Saint
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society. One must not believe that the sculptors were free to do what they wished; they too were part of this society which supported them, and, still more, their means of individual expression were strongly conditioned by their education. Perhaps there were marginal sculptors who did not make a living by their art, but if we consider what remains of the early sculpture, how can we distinguish their works from those of the professionals, whether we name them artists or craftsmen? It would perhaps be necessary to conclude that the early sculpture of Quebec is very simply a provincial art having its own characteristics, conditioned by its forms, the very diversified aspects of this environment and its evolution. It is in this sense that one could consider it as a manifestation of art of the people.

(For foot-notes, see French text.)

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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MARCEL JEAN — AT THE GRAND THEATRE OF QUEBEC, COLUMNS FOR THE OCCUPATION OF SPACE

By Michel PARENT

The building technique of this big montage, which designs and occupies space, is simple but especially ingenious and adequate. To metallic wires stretched vertically on the whole height (nearly 70 feet), component units of styrofoam of different dimensions are attached, wedged by small incisions. The lightness of this material allows the superposition of several components on a single wire, which further emphasizes the airy appearance of the montage. In the evening, projectors with concentric rays, placed at the base, dramatize the appearance of this structure, giving value to the contrasts of bright colours and bringing out the basic character of the whole.

Seen from certain angles, from below for example, what the work loses in structural clearness it gains in theatricality. Momentarily, on account of its colour and its extent, it takes on a startling effect of size. A sort of architectural construction, whose norm and scale one loses and which becomes almost dizzying, splashed with colour and which completely takes refuge in its appearance.

The object, at first realized in this way, gives an indication at the end of a moment of the structure of its planning. Slowly, a reading of it becomes possible. It is necessary for us to isolate a shape according to the angle of view, to prefer one volume rather than another, to confer importance on certain space relationships, etc. A reading changing according to the movements of the spectator, but always conceptually clear since related to a simple plan: that of two columns of different perimeters placed one within the other and both made up of superimposed cubes and prisms. The volumes, outlined by yellows and blues, compel our attention and contain secondary variable reds and greens whose chromatic divergence is less marked. According to the same conditions, blacks and whites can be discerned as having a static value, supported by the less relative character of their shades. All that is of a clearness of intention without fault.

It is fortunate that the architecture of the Grand Theatre of Quebec allows very different views of the montage. Thus, according to the ability of each, he will be able to set up for himself a more measured, more analytical reading of it. Proceeds from a very abstract system of reference, in truth conceptual.

This structure of space, one sees, is not delivered to us complete. It is for the spectator to restore its harmony of organization. We are given only its visual elements. Space is the real object of this structure and this space is found between the components or, better, beyond them. According to his visual habits, he will find in this work a different degree of complexity and a different pleasure. This participation, whose thoughtful character is not lacking, could seem barren to a few persons and rebuff them, but it is never passive or linear and, in any case, not demagogic. That changes us!

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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FUSELI IN VANCOUVER

By Harold KALMAN

Visitors to the Vancouver Art Gallery are treated from time to time to a painting that may be one of the most alluring — and important — old master canvases in Canada: The Dream of Belinda (fig. 3) by Henry Fuseli (1741-1825). Four principal figures emerge from the mysterious chiaroscuro to produce a hauntingly beautiful composition, one which effectively contrasts repose with action, beauty with ugliness, and mortal beings with the world of fairies.

Henry Fuseli — known in his native Switzerland as Johann Heinrich Füssli — was an excitable intellectual with early experiences as a minister, literary historian, and political activist. He arrived in London in 1763 and took up painting after Sir Joshua Reynolds encouraged him to visit Italy. Fuseli's career in art was climaxxed by his appointment as Professor of Painting at the Royal Academy of Arts. His sublime style, with its physical strength and powerful emotions, inspired a number of younger artists, among them William Blake.

Fuseli's scholarly training led him to subject major gleaned from a vast range of literature. His favourite authors included Homer, Dante, Milton, and especially Shakespeare; less frequently did he illustrate the writings of his own century. The Dream of Belinda represents one of these rarer ventures, depicting an episode from Alexander Pope's The Rape of the Lock (1712). The Dream of Belinda is described in Canto I of the poem. Belinda reclines upon her bed, robed in white and identified by the crucifix around her neck and her flowing locks of hair. Above her flutters the guardian sylph Ariel, clad in the thin, airy garments described by Pope. Ariel presents Belinda with a dressing table upon which lies the billet-doux that will lure her to Hampton Court and her undoing.

The other two characters foreshadow the evil that will happen to Belinda. Crouching beneath a sheet is the Baron, ready to spring and seize her precious lock. Through the scene races the gnome Umbriel, the malicious agent of grief who will usurp the protective...
On closer examination it appears that the connection between The Nightmare and The Dream of Belinda is no coincidence. The two paintings share much in content and style. Both depict the dream world of women influenced by the evil Mab and the poem and tales of Mab as the ‘hateful gnome’ in a kind of rape. The ape-like influence who is Mab's agent of evil mounts the sleeping woman in The Nightmare and sits more passively to the left of the malevolent Mab in the Vancouver canvas (hardly visible in our illustration). Both subjects are preoccupied with hair. Belinda's famous lock is a pendant to the long tresses of the other woman, which are tangled into "elflocks" by Mab. The paintings share such physical properties as the dressing table — whose jar and crystal base refer to the fragility of women's chastity — and the curtains. The execution of both is linear and precise, the draperies of the women are remarkably similar, and the light and chiaroscuro are essentially identical.

Even the dimensions of the two paintings match. The (original) Detroit version of The Nightmare measures 40" x 50", whereas The Dream of Belinda, which was trimmed in an early restoration, is one-half inch shorter in each dimension. The only significant physical disparity is found in the dark triangular corners of the original painting which may originally have been covered by spandrels in the frame.

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All evidence suggests a date for The Dream of Belinda around 1782, the year in which The Nightmare was exhibited at the Royal Academy. It is not unlikely that the two paintings may have been conceived as a pair. This connection makes the Vancouver canvas all the more important as an example of Fuseli's work.

Nothing is known about the provenance of The Dream of Belinda other than an unconfirmed report that it came from the collection of the Marchioness of Cholmondely. A close friend and ardent admirer of Fuseli during the 1780's was William Lock; it is tempting to suggest that it may have been he who commissioned the artist to illustrate The Rape of the Lock.

The Vancouver Art Gallery is not alone among Canadian museums in possessing an important work by Fuseli. The Art Gallery of Ontario recently purchased Fuseli’s King Lear, Banishing Cordelia (fig. 1). Lear angrily dismisses his daughter while Goneril and Regan look on and the Earl of Kent vainly attempts to intervene. This enormous painting — some twelve feet wide — was commissioned by John and Josiah Boydell in the late 1780’s for their Shakespeare Gallery in London. The Boydells solicited Shakespearean subjects from all of the leading English painters of the day, exhibited them in their gallery, and profitably sold engravings after the works. The Lear subject was engraved in 1792 by R. Earlom. This is a very fine piece of work, the treatment of the portrait, and the realistic rendering of Lear and his court, is a strong expression of the European aesthetic of the late 18th century. It represents the leading English painter's of the day. A number of important recent exhibitions and publications have shed new light on this period, and Fuseli himself has been the subject of several new books — clearly emerges as one of the great and exciting artists of his time.

Contemporary American painting is noticeably absent from the exhibition lists of our museums and galleries. Or rather, it makes only scattered appearances, discontinuous, always abortive, never followed up. For a Soulsages retrospective (July 23 to September 1, 1968), Feito (December 19, 1968 to February 16, 1969) and Vasarely (December 1967, 1969 to January 3, 1970) at the Museum of Fine Arts of Montreal... we have had an exhibition organized by the Museum of Modern Art of New York, Jackson Pollock's Works on Paper, at the Museum of Fine Arts of Montreal, a showing of recent works of Hans Hofmann at Myra Godard’s last year, very recently a Wall Drawing of Sol Lewitt at the new gallery, Vehicule Art Inc., and a few graphic works of Rauschenberg, Oldenburg, Stella, Kelly and Francis, at the Galerie B, to mention only a few examples.

It is necessary to set aside the effort of the National Gallery, which besides having made important acquisitions in this particular field, organized from the thirteenth of September to the nineteenth of October 1969, a very important Don Flavin retrospective. The fifth floor of the gallery is presently showing American works. Thus, parallel to the Fontainebleau exhibition, one could see a large picture by Olitski, a Carl André and the Keith by

The painting arrived in Vancouver with the title Queen Mab. It was erroneously identified — probably by Holmes — as the painting of that name exhibited by Fuseli in 1814 and now in Zurich.

The principal subject of the Vancouver painting is not related to the legends of Queen Mab. Investigation into that name exhibited by Fuseli in 1814 and now in Zurich.

The painting arrived in Vancouver with the title Queen Mab. It was erroneously identified — probably by Holmes — as the painting of that name exhibited by Fuseli in 1814 and now in Zurich. Queen Mab does indeed appear — in fact twice — among the phantoms behind Umbriel, as both the good and the bad dream fairy. Her more kindly self may be found in the seated figure between Umbriel's legs with the crescent moon in her hair, while the more malevolent aspect of Mab is seen in the sinister squatting spirit just left of Umbriel's leg.

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But on the whole, this remark remains true: neither De Kooning, Rothko, Reinhardt, Newmarch, Slayden, Schlichting, nor the third hand of Pop Art, but the motifs borrowed from the art of the Woolworths are here swept along in a very personal synthesis, not to say psychoanalytical, which has nothing to do with Pop Art. The laces resemble those clamps which surgeons use to hold wounds open. The ice cream cone, held by flames revealed by this opening, edible and burning at the same time, giving the impression of volume and flat image, since it is pierced by holes through which the laces pass, confirms the erotic imagery that we perceive in this falsely innocent, curious atmosphere.

Very different in appearance from the production of Art Green, that of Edward Paschke, represented here by *Nueva York* (1971) is not without connection with it. Ed Paschke shows us a tattooed wrestler, with long wavy hair, open mouth, tongue hanging out, wearing a clinging bathing suit of purple velvet with a fluorescent pattern. Paschke's interest in the techniques of Funk Art is evident; but the sexual reversal of the model makes itself felt with such force that it is clear that by itself alone it does not exhaust the motivation of the work.

The pictures of Paul Lemantia which involve the most grotesque triviality (the head of the nude in *Benefactor*, 1970, is a toilet seat), the fetishism of garters and brassières, and of the diagram of the arterial system taken right embody explicit sadistic and erotic obsessions. More subtly, in overloaded plasticians, in the manner of the *Hourloupe* of Dubuffet(1), Gladys Nilsson reveals a world teeming with sows, rats, small persons sticking out their tongues or waving soft sticks, kangarooos, bears with phallic heads treated in discreet shades of gray, beige, dark green, white and black. *Barouqen Oats* (1971) well illustrates her style. *Big Bluegill Pynup* (1970) was previously reproduced in *Art Forum* (art. quoted p. 54).

Finally, James Nutt, to end here an enumeration of the most representative painters of the trend, draws inspiration from the comic strip or, rather, from what seems to be an adolescent adaptation of the comic strip, by removing from it its too linear anecdotal side, as in *Y Did He Du It* (1966-1967), *Miss T. Garmit* (*Pants a Lot*) (1967) shows a smiling but strangled head, surrounded by drops of sweat, in the purest Dick Tracy style of Chester Gould.

If it were necessary to characterize as a whole this very diversified showing, one could say that thanks to the mediation of Funk Art, the Chicago painters have succeeded in being regional without being provincial, a fact to which Kozloff has noted in his article in *Art Forum*, already quoted. It is in that that they seem to me to be typical and can be of some use to us in Quebec. We have not always resisted the temptation of provincialism, that is to say of becoming the imitators of large centers, but let us insist that we have no other choice than to be regional. It remains for us to be so in a sufficiently universal way in order not to imprison ourselves in a ghetto, but in a manner individualized enough to bring an original contribution to international art. It goes without saying that it is not a matter of redoing here the same as what has been done in Chicago.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
THE STEDELIJK MUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM

Luc D’IBERVILLE-MOREAU

The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam is considered by many to be the most alive and dynamic museum of contemporary art in the world. It annually welcomes close to 450,000 visitors in a city whose population is less than that of Montreal or Toronto and which has besides another museum, the Rijksmuseum, known for its famous collection of Rembrandts. These two museums are subsidized by the city of Amsterdam. The Stedelijk receives about $1,850,000 a year. Two-thirds of this budget goes to administration and to the salaries of one hundred eighty employees who are superintended by director Edward de Wilde. The museum is open every day. Sixty-three percent of the visitors to the Stedelijk are between twenty and thirty years of age, fifteen percent between fifteen and twenty. On the average thirty-five major exhibitions a year are organised there and one vernissage a week.

For many people the Stedelijk was the museum where one could admire the famous Van Gogh collections bequeathed by the nephew of the painter, engineer V. W. van Gogh. These are to be found lately in the new Van Gogh Museum, situated right beside in a recently opened museum. The superb collections of Mondrians, of Maleviches, of Stijl, etc., are taken down, changed from one week to another. "We are against permanent exhibitions, that is good for historians of art", Edward de Wilde tells us. "The public must constantly be surprised, thrilled, excited. The aim to be sought is to render art accessible to the public by means which are neither intellectual nor chronological. It is a matter neither of education nor of learning, but of individual awareness." But for others, and it is the majority which counts, the Stedelijk is a museum of contemporary art where, for the last ten years, we have been able to admire contemporary exhibitions.

The list is dazzling: Gabo, Klein, Rayyre, Glacocetti, Lam, Kline, Fontana, Lichstein, Rauschenberg, Bell, Rayma, Sam Francis, Warhol, De Kooning, Soto, Arman, Chillida, Ernst, Oldenburg, Stella, Kienholz, Négre, Spoerri, Newman, Agam, Kelly, Monory, Dibbets, etc. If we compare this list of exhibitions with that of prestigious American museums, it shows a much greater internationalism, while paying homage to the best in American creation.

Furthermore, the director defines the art of this century as possessing an international character. "National art is a concept as absurd as national science. The character of a museum of modern art is therefore, by definition, international, since the function of the museum is to adhere closely to art. The museum plays an active rôle when it marks current trends, or when it acts at the same time as organiser, realizer and producer of projects, which, without it, could not be achieved. The artistic situation has presented, since 1960, an image of such plasticity and its evolution is so swift that the administration of the museum can no longer be founded on the preferential choice of one single person. It must constantly be surprised, thrilled, excited. It must be the outcome of the work of a team, each curator bringing his contribution, which will be determined by the many personal contacts which he maintains with artists."

The director defines the political situation of the museum in this way: "The museum, under the circumstances the ensemble of its officials, finds itself in an ambiguous position in political matters. Either it is a government institution, or it is, as in the United States, managed as a private institution by a certain number of influential people. It is therefore a part of the existing social structure. But it also serves as a platform for contemporary art which very often, consciously or not, has a challenging character. I believe that the museum should have no other criterion than the artistic level, whatever it may be. The challenging work is also a work of art. Art is the expression of all the human experiences of reality. Giving a political aspect to a museum would lead to the abandoning of vast fields of endeavour. A political decision can be demanded of a museum, but giving a political aspect to its activities is quite another thing. The artist makes social demands as numerous as they are justified. By the fact that he is the closest associate of the museum, it therefore behoves the latter to uphold them."

The director of the Stedelijk is responsible to the alderman in charge of the arts of the city of Amsterdam, but the latter takes care only of the financial matters relating to the budget granted by the city. The choice of acquisitions and exhibitions comes entirely from the director and the curators of the museum. "It is essential to have a competent scientific staff and that in many areas. The head of the section of the arts is an architect. The curator of the collection of prints once had a commercial gallery. Their experience is valuable to us." Director de Wilde would not endure, he says, the state of dependence in which the directors and the curators of American (and Canadian) museums are confined. "The trustees are, in general, collectors who have too much money and want to meddle in everything. Often, they know nothing of art and still less of the problems of museums. The director or the curator is their employee; in case of disagreement, he is dismissed."

Mr. de Wilde attributes the great success of the Stedelijk Museum to the continuity of its policy. "Solo exhibitions, however good they may be, are often too ephemeral. The public is slow to learn; especially at the beginning. It is necessary to have a sustained policy, the results will make themselves felt after a few years. We use all the publicity possible, with poor results. One percent of our public comes thanks to advertising on the radio, three percent thanks to that on television. For important exhibitions, we advertise in the cinema."

"Much too many people, even artists, are still obsessed by the idea of a centre. The rôle of New York is more or less ended. Today, artists travel. The great stars like Oldenburg or Dine move about at their own expense, the others thanks to grants. It is for the museum to go and get them before they become untouchables."

The purchasing policy is centred in a concrete way on art subsequent to 1960. "We have gaps, but it can't be helped, because it is too late. It would take my whole budget and, at the end of ten years, it would be necessary to pay too dear for what we had neglected. There is no good collection chosen by a committee. A collection is not a bringing together of good things. It needs a soul."

The result is all contemporary art, European and American, bought during the good time — in 1971 — Mertz, Neuman, Négre, Monzoni, Miodrag Dedo, Newman, Spoerri, Dubufet. Morris Louis, Kienholz, Tinguely; in 1967-68, for example — Arman, Kelly, Newman, Stella, Oldenburg, Noland, Dorazio, Raynaud, De Kooning, etc. "Without the acceptance of the artist, without his moral support, nothing can be done. There is no other solution but to be on the side of the creator against all the authorities of the world, against the public, if it is necessary: It is for the latter to adapt itself", E. de Wilde tells us in ending(1). (Translation by Mildred Grand)

(1) This article follows an interview with the director of the Stedelijk Museum, E. de Wilde and the author in 1971 and also recent information sent by the same museum.

THE KROLLER-MULLER MUSEUM AT OTTERLO

By Françoise LeGRIS

The history of the formation of certain collections of works of art and of the founding of some museums is thrilling provided that one is willing to spend a little time on it. A good example of this is offered to us by the Kröller-Müller Museum at Otterlo, in Holland, known especially for its famous collection of Van Goghs (272 works).
Founded by Mrs. Hélène Kröller-Müller, this museum, located in the Hooge Veluwe National Park, is one of the most attractive in the country, by reason of its completely modern design, its geographical situation and its collections. And it truly vindicates the excellence and the very high reputation of Dutch museums. Closed for a year to allow the installation of air-conditioning and the addition of a new section, the museum reopened its doors in February 1971. Let us briefly review the history of the collection.

In May 1888, Hélène Mùller married Anthony G. Kröller, an eminent Dutch businessman who was to exert a great influence on the affairs of his country. In 1900, the Kröller-Müller family established itself in the forest of Scheveningen where Mrs. Kröller began her collection, composed at that time exclusively of Delft blues.


From this moment, preference was given to works of painting, but sculptures, drawings and engravings were also chosen by Mrs. Kröller. The period from 1909 to 1921 was the one of the most important acquisitions. For example, in 1912, during a stay in Paris, Mrs. Kröller bought seven pictures and two drawings by Van Gogh in the same day, at the same time as a Seurat and a Signac.

The collection of pictures, formed chiefly until 1921, comprised a variety of works of the nineteenth century representing French Realism from Courbet to the Barbizon School. Impressionism and Vincent Van Gogh, whose works occupy the centre of the collection. Neo-Impressionism illustrated especially by Seurat, Symbolism and New Art, by Redon, Toorop, Thorn Prikker and others, and finally, Cubism, by Picasso, Braque, Léger and Gris. Next Mrs. Kröller discovered abstract art and acquired pictures by Mondrian and Van der Leck. In this way was set up an exceptional collection of modern and contemporary works of art, which has continued to increase since that time.

Since 1907, Mrs. Kröller had been thinking of bequeathing her collection to her country. To do this, it was necessary to ensure the preservation and the conservation of the works by the construction of a museum which would be a certain attraction for the public. For this purpose, Mrs. Kröller bought the land which, in 1936, was going to form the Hooge Veluwe National Park, in the centre of which the museum was erected.

Mrs. Kröller refused the plans of architects Mies van der Rohe and Berlage. After many attempts, she entrusted the building of her museum to the Belgian architect, Henri van de Velde. Mrs. Kröller donated her collection to the state, on condition that it assume the erection of the museum. The doors were opened on the thirteenth of July, 1938. Mrs. Kröller was the first curator, until her death, which occurred in 1939. Mr. Hammacher, who followed her, enlarged the plans of a garden of sculptures with Van de Velde. In 1953, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Van Gogh, architect Van de Velde built a new wing. In 1963, Mr. Oxenaar succeeded Mr. Hammacher as director of the museum. Since that time, the area of the museum has continued to develop, with the acquisition of works which were to form the sculpture park.

The museum itself, of limited dimensions, is especially well adapted to the presentation of modern works. Very bright halls opening one upon the other, overhead lighting, very mobile arrangement and hanging, make it one of the most interesting and the most attractive examples of the modern conception of museums. Furthermore, it was intended to create a continuity between the works of art and surrounding nature, each adding value to the other. From next May 23 to Aug. 26, the Museum of Modern Art in New York will present an exhibition of drawings from the Kröller-Müller Museum. It will comprise more than a hundred works, from Van Gogh to Mondrian, and for the first time America will have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the wealth and the variety of this collection of the Kröller-Müller Museum.

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The collections of modern art, of great richness, teem with information on the Dutch and world artistic movement from the end of the nineteenth century to our time. A dynamic policy concerning exhibitions is in force. During the course of the last years, a few to remember: the great retrospectives of Dali, Man Ray, Delvaux.

As for the amateurs of ancient art, there are many who come to consult the documents concerning, for example, Jérôme Bosch, which of the highest order. Others prefer the works of the Siècle d'or or the most important collection of Rubens' sketches in Holland. Without ignoring the remarkable collection of prints and drawings, which are to be found in the former Koenigs collection by D. G. van Beuningen, patron of the arts. We must also mention the collections of ancient and modern sculptures, as well as those of ceramics, glasses, silver, pewter, lace and furniture. In brief, the Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum: a museum which preserves, admirably, at the same time an open museum, on the look-out for all new expressions of significance, as alive as Renilde Hammacher, a chief curator who knows how to polarize so many abilities and so much enthusiasm around the art of today.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)