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See table of contents

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The Arts at the Time of Simultaneity

By Andrée Paradis

We learned recently of the appointment of Canadian professor and writer Marshall McLuhan by Pope Paul VI as special advisor to the Vatican on communications. Once more, following great societies and governments, an appeal was made to the famous expert who, without hesitation, predicted the coming of an electric liturgy for electric man.

His short, striking formulas charm vast audiences and have been heard around the world for twenty years. A new sage of the present time who, from his headquarters, the Cultural and Technological Centre of the University of Toronto, fulfills the duties of an original thinker, very personal, McLuhan, enthusiastically followed by some, opposed by others, draws from the arts (poetry, visual arts) the greater part of his thoughts on the evolution of western awareness, and, on the other hand, exerts a predominant influence on many contemporary artists. In this respect, he particularly interests Vie des Arts. Since the authoritative interview he granted a few months ago to Jean Paré for the magazine Forces, as well as the one that appeared in L'Express last year, we have come to ask ourselves certain questions about the thought of McLuhan concerning art, nature and freedom, which our contributors have tried to answer.

McLuhan's most outstanding contribution to the examination of western thought has been to make him aware of the blind alley in which it is at present. The whole problem of formal logic is questioned in a world of sound.

Electrical time is no longer the hour of the analysis of elementary processes, of deductive reasoning. It is that of the simultaneous, therefore of reflection on the sequence and the ensemble of allied problems. The upheaval in the media throws into confusion the idea of environment, the sense of perception, the ability of assimilation and the conception of the arts in general, painting, sculpture, architecture, cinema, which are becoming old forms of art in relation to the new ones, radio, television, video. Are the old forms of art, which seem no longer productive of the avant-garde, sentenced to disappear? Or are they now undergoing still badly defined transformations? Doubtless it is necessary to know what passion will animate the dynamism of the successive changes that the artist foresees and which he tries to convey to us. The art of McLuhan examining Art: "A musical house for our clear harmony", a step toward a new awareness.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
Armoury Show of EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology) to those who encouraged artists to participate in experimental broadcasting at WGBH in Boston for the National Educational Television Network.

Though it might seem that McLuhan, by this means, creates a situation in which the media and the world of everyday objects subsume art, his actual intent is the opposite, for he sees art as providing the only way of controlling the process of change represented by the phenomena of everyday life. He sees the artist as providing precisely the same kind of critical perspective on the world that the launching of a satellite does, as McLuhan asserts, the turns the world into a Globe Theatre, a global art museum with its junk reconverted into new objects of perception. This is because, imaginatively, man can now think of viewing his environment from the outside and consequently the satellite is a revolution in consciousness. The artist, like the satellite, turns the environment into works of art which create a process that illuminates previously unnoticed aspects of the world. For his prime example of this process McLuhan selects a writer, though the writer, James Joyce, has a close visual and textual relationship to the Balinese artist, Klee, as McLuhan and Joyce refer. Klee's "thinking eye"; investigation of the way to encompass change, growth and movement in the world of forms, becomes one of the metaphors for McLuhan's ratio of the senses, for a thinking eye playing with form can realize the continuities or the discontinuities of the senses in a single medium, just as the language of James Joyce, Joyce and Klee, using puns, verbal or visual, discovers ways of breaking down the previously integrated visions of their society, forcing men to focus on the world with new eyes and creating a situation in which, as McLuhan insisted, the new world will do. The sản lime is a revolution in consciousness of the reader like an unexpected recollection. The image made of the inward horizon changes in quality. An original transparency reveals the whole text. The personal memory of the reader yields to a greater horizon of consciousness, which simultaneously refers numerous presences to a mind now concerned with not enforcing its prejudices. Perhaps it is quite simply a matter of going from fragmentation to concentration.

It is necessary to pass through this transition; from that time onward, intelligent moves without more effort than if it were enough to remember. Beginning with this state of intelligence, the most disturbing characteristics of this style which has annoyed so many persons are charged with an informing energy. This is a structure governed by a strict authenticity.

Among McLuhan's thoughts, we find these few sentences which can serve as clues as if with the demanding appeal which subordinates all his "fragments" to the real unity of McLuhan's thought: "...to understand the meaning of an author in his sense is to reconcile all contrary positions. (. . .) We must therefore look for one which reconciles all contradictions." (Fragment 257-684)

This relationship between Pascal's work and McLuhan's arises from the fact that both appeal to sensitivity to resonances rather than to rational deduction. These resonances are around the thin line of logical discourse, and McLuhan has established a space of multisensores phenomena which becomes the awareness of the reader. This interval is, paradoxically, the beginning and the end (in every sense of the term) of art and, perhaps, of communication, such as we understand it every day. However, more simply, it is perhaps only the moment of syntheses which suddenly occurs and all at once, at the end of every well-conducted analysis.

McLuhan's method of writing has this in particular and is very annoying to specialists and experts, that it dispenses with analysis. A follower of the Symbolists, McLuhan gives only conclusions of which he arranges in a strategic manner: like poets, he offers effects without giving causes. Writing from the completed synthesis, he does not concern himself with having the reader go along with him by following a road paved with patient deductions. He invites him to understand his words and his sentences in relationship to resonance. Let us recall a technique of the Surrealists which consisted of juxtaposing two ordinarily incompatible terms in order to cause a spark of understanding to arise between them. That is a mini-happening. One can get fire by rubbing together two incompatible objects of the world, an increase of information. There are many analyses which are nothing but the practice of an abolished ritual.

To write on McLuhan is to try, after having been expelled by synthesis, to put it at our disposal, but it is above all to describe, to explain the very aim of all the effort of the reading. It is among the same kind of ideas that Maurice Blanchot points out, by way of preface to L'Espace littéraire that: "A book, even fragmentary, has a centre that attracts it; a centre not fixed, but which moves through the pressure of the reader, and which is capable of absorbing all the positions. A fixed centre as well, which moves, if it is genuine, by remaining the same and by always becoming more central, more concealed, more uncertain, more imperitive." As it is not literary space but acoustical space that especially interests McLuhan, his intuition of the coexistence of the object of research to plunge more conveniently into analysis, we end up no longer expending our ideas on the object, but on an increase of information. There are many analyses which are nothing but the practice of an abolished ritual.

McLuhan and Art

By Derrick de Kerckhove Varent

To read the work of McLuhan is to seek the sentence or the word which, at some point in the text, can realign the reader. McLuhan and Joyce refer. Joyce and Klee, using puns, verbal or visual, discover ways of breaking down the previously integrated visions of their society, forcing men to focus on the world with new eyes and creating a situation in which, as McLuhan insisted, the new world will do. The sånd lime is a revolution in consciousness of the reader like an unexpected recollection. The image made of the inward horizon changes in quality. An original transparency reveals the whole text. The personal memory of the reader yields to a greater horizon of consciousness, which simultaneously refers numerous presences to a mind now concerned with not enforcing its prejudices. Perhaps it is quite simply a matter of going from fragmentation to concentration.

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KV. — What are the relationships between man and nature?

Mcl. — In Man’s Presumptuous Brain, Simeonis states that our biological heritage, which allows us to adapt ourselves to our environment, has ceased to evolve for more than half a million years and has reached a state resembling the least degree of technology. The brain of man has not changed since then. With the invasion of all the technologies, the only way of becoming acclimatized comes from art. Art takes up the task of evolution that nature has abandoned. Does it succeed?

KV. — No?

Mcl. — The artist reprograms the senses to render us able to survive in the technological environment. Naturally, to survive as human beings. Because man adapted to technologies is a robot-zombie who sleeps soundly.

KV. — And what about nature?

Mcl. — Nature is a robot-zombie any, any more. Since October 17, 1957.

KV. — Ah!

Mcl. — The launching of the first sputnik. The Russians have transformed the planet into a form of art. As a form of art, the planet puts us back into the situation of the most primitive man: that is, in prearcheological state. The role of art changes radically under these conditions. It becomes crucial. Now that we have passed from the world of the eye to that of the ear, because the environment of simultaneous information is structurally acoustical, history, which belongs to the world created by writing, and which is essentially visual, has dissolved wholly in the Now. The eternal present of Siegfried Giedion, the author of *Space, Time and Architecture*, Art will have to pull us out of there.

This is the end of the conversation on this subject. After that, we went on to that of abortion upon request, and we returned to those of discrimination in the press. By these few remarks, McLuhan invited me to draw some important conclusions from my own experience. Why is the rôle of art more crucial than ever? A useful answer to this question demands a rapid return into history such as visual linearity has given it to us. Figurative painting, at its height, endows the painter with a power of creation or destruction, that is, a power of definition. The novel, since its own rebirth (in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century) assured its own characters a still greater degree of autonomy and mobility. The theatre, struggling with this new man, fought at first to maintain feudal and collective traditions of the book of Commedia, and to give us a type of individual who consented, at the cost of a tremendous effort of renunciation, to sacrifice his private interests to those of the community, the family, the State and God.

By Racine, man was no longer in a position to resist his passions. From Saint François de Sales to Verne, from the mystics against the presumptuousness of a new man which plunged all consciousness into confusion. With Voltaire, the crisis passed: his tragedies, founded on chance, denied any form of fate and replaced it by a statement of mediocre misfortunes that are owing only to present circumstances and failings. From entreaty, thousands of middle-class persons individualized in their motivations and actions proceed to the exploration and the exploiting of a nature from which by scientific analysis and commerce they demand fragments always smaller, more personal, guaranteed by general, civic and cosmological laws.

As very well seen by Jean Starobinski in his wonderful book on the art of the eighteenth century, it was during this era that freedom was invented. Autonomy, of which we speak with respect to figurations of a linear kind, whether it be pictural (Corneille), linear (kind, whether it be figurative, or narrative (it is in the novel that this form blooms best), this mobility is applied to the contents of the work, but not to the work itself. That is, the human person is presented there as free and mobile within a fixed frame. Even in the pictures where perspective prevails, this general law is strictly observed: the person, on whatever plane he may be, stands out on the background. Set in a pose or a kinetic expression, he has also been fixed in motion, but once he is there he is there, the work in the awareness of the viewer. The whole definition he receives from the hand of the painter is precisely accentuated only to free it always more from the inertia of the context. This is true for sculpture as well: the famous blow of the hammer that they say Michaelangelo gave on the head of his just-finished *Moses* is explained exactly by this sudden autonomy acquired by human representation: "Well, there you are, you monster! However, the context or the environment, in the universe of sculpture, does not have this mobility: perspective fixes it in a set position — it would mean being able to move the picture or the cathedral, but that would change nothing in the tridimensional fixity of the cathedral or the painting. In the novel, the world is also fixed and the person mobile. In universe of indifferent forms, linked among themselves according to our choice and in accordance with the application of our individualized observation, we were as free as the characters of our past novels.

We no longer do this freedom only when the world, with the Romanticists and especially the Symbolists, became an ensemble of signs, a time when it was the turn of nature. "Nature is a temple where living pillars sometimes send out confused utterances; Man passes there through forests of symbols that observe him with intimate glances..."

As long as nature’s dialogue with us is confined to impressionist mumblings, as long as Chateaubriand’s *Rene* is pursued only by dead leaves, we are still free. That is, not to misuse an excessively ambiguous term, we are still free. The more we govern ourselves, the more we are separated from ourselves. Art becomes a form of behavior, by a power of personal decision which is the foundation of our private identity. However, when the whole environment changes into a network of information, it seizes us and, while showing us always more hateful roads which we must follow, it gives us always more marvelous ways of escape along there in spite of ourselves like the voices of Ulysses’ sirens. Because we are not tied to the mast of our spatial ship, we cannot resist: we must dive into the sea of ravenous signs; we must drown there.

On this point we do not agree with you in us. Or almost not: we can gain time by blocking our ears: we can stuff ourselves with tranquillizers to stop this opening of all our pores until they no longer work any more or until they kill us by their very excess, in order to arrest this terrible and inexplicable destruction of the species, of our stomach. Our real chance to resist is that the mass of information remains shapeless, that its very volume guarantees us against a single path; that it is incoherent — in which case, all the signs find the value of simple forms, supple, malleable, obedient to our fantasies of artists, philosophers, educators. If art intends to remain effective, alive, it must confuse the trails or discover wholly new ones. Because with a world of coherent signs, there is no more art, there are only prayers and magic.

Between the Renaissance and the present, the artist and the scholars have torn us from the power of the Magus only to put us back there. This is not necessarily worse; many young rebels, howling against pollution, bureaucracy and the education systems, will...
Mr. R. H. Hubbard, curator at the National Gallery of Canada, chose to present the painting of the nineteenth century, in preference to contemporary art. This choice, which was necessary, considering the size of the collection, promotes our understanding of old Quebec painting and offers an excellent history of the period in French Canada.

Maurice Corbeil tells, in an interview printed in the first part of the catalogue, how his collection was born. Two facts came out of his remarks: the spirit in which the collection was developed and the outside help necessary to it. Maurice Parizeau and André Corbeil met artists, such as Pellon (back from Europe in 1940) and Borduas (before the 1942 exhibition). Maurice and André Corbeil also made acquaintance of other collectors active at this time. One can believe that the Corbeils were pioneers in the collecting of traditional art. If they were among the first to buy works of the nineteenth century, their initiative was to be found in a century-old movement, at a time when art collectors and members of the clergy were encouraging Canadian artists with their orders. Historical societies and newspapers were publishing articles, often badly informed, but which societies and newspapers were publishing articles, often badly informed, but which

THE MAURICE AND ANDRÉE CORBEIL COLLECTION

By Laurier LACROIX

"...art, at whatever moment in history we observe it, does not express directly the total state of society. It is the prerogative of those who possess power and wealth. The latter order works, appreciate them according to the criteria of their taste and their culture. The life of forms is inseparable from the history of the intentions formulated by patrons: and these intentions, these tastes, in turn, are not separated from the social, political and psychic context of the period." (Jean Starobinski, "L'invention de la liberté, p.13.)

Maurice and Andrée Corbeil have made public a part of their immense collection of Quebec painting. It has been called the most "impressive" private collection in this field. The canvases were exhibited in Montreal and in Ottawa. As some works had been shown on different occasions, in books or in exhibitions devoted to a few of the artists represented in the collection, it became important that it should be presented, even in a selective way, because it allows us to become familiar with two centuries of painting in Quebec.

The exhibition devoted to Quebec art arises, I am afraid, from a nationalism ideologically calcified which leads to a valuation exclusive of our cultural patrimony. Maurice Corbeil will say: "Certainly, Plamondon is not insurmountable, but he is ours..." In the face of our excessive need to define ourselves, the criteria of personal taste no longer hold good. How to justify a preference for our own artists? One can believe that the Corbeils were pioneers in the collecting of traditional art. If they were among the first to buy works of the nineteenth century, their initiative was to be found in a century-old movement, at a time when art collectors and members of the clergy were encouraging Canadian artists with their orders. Historical societies and newspapers were publishing articles, often badly informed, but which Societies and newspapers were publishing articles, often badly informed, but which...
The romantic portrait of Toussaint Decarie (No. 14), if it was produced about 1795, shows a remarkable knowledge of the European style, revolutionary and romantic, and of the ideology that it conveyed. We had always believed that this ideology had shown itself much later here. The boy wears a very high detachable collar, which is probably the most practised form of art until 1940. This portrait is accompanied by a black stock. Drawn in an oval, the youth looks at the spectator. The softness of the green tones harmonizes with the mellowness of the touch.

The person of the energetic Mme Ruelian (No. 25) fascinates me. Plamondon, to whom she is attributed, has indeed added her long hands and elevated the subject in a pose which brings out her round and sensual face where all the members are exaggerated.

Leduc, in the portrait in profile of Guy Delahaye (No. 45) links symbolic elements to his divisionist manner. A man looks at his right and dominates the scene, his head is long association. Guillaume Lalaisse had published Les Phases in 1910, of which a part was dedicated to Leduc. In 1911, Leduc created twenty-six vignettes to illustrate the volume of poems Mignonnes, allons voir si la rocast...cest sans épines. We do not penetrate this work into a poem. Behind him stands a frieze showing Lalaisse's symbol and his wheel and the symbol of the crossroads where Guillaume Lalaisse finds himself. The latter is hastening at this time between a career in poetry and one in psychiatry.

The mention of the exhibition subject of the Femme à l'enfant (No. 81). This theme of mother and daughter has been familiar in Quebec since the Education of the Virgin. The mother holds a little girl standing on her lap. Clothing, hat, furniture: all is a pretext to Dallaire for a geometrization of faces and clothes.

Ozias Leduc's small sketch of religious decoration reveals the paucity of interest that private collectors have accorded this aspect of our painting, and which was one of the most practised forms of art until 1940. We no longer recognize ourselves in this painting, which has been so few years ago. Its place will reappear when we have recovered for ourselves that for our painters there was no dissociation between religious and secular painting, and that the former is just as much a revelation of our past as the latter.

The catalogue of the exhibition seems to have been made up in a hurry; one cannot hide too numerous errors under a quite original presentation. The reader who contents himself with a book of pictures will be satisfied: all the canvases are illustrated. For the person who is interested in Canadian art, the price of the catalogue is too high.

The presentation of these collections, it will be seen, proves to be a Duncanson. Why take an interest in Saxe and his latest exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art last April? Because it is always fascinating to see the development of an artist in order to try and understand how he achieved his most recent works. This survey contradicts the impression of the discontinuous, of leaps and sudden turns left by the memory of solo exhibitions which we have able to view in the space of ten years. A retrospective or a look at the entirety of the works that photographs revive for us smoothes the visible cracks, brings out the connecting thread that binds the works one to the other. (Unless the work reveals itself as being irremediably gratuitous.) It is this link to the interior of a development winding and chaotic that details but direct and logical in the whole that arouses a sustained and growing interest in the work of such an artist, in this case of Henry Saxe. Saxe began to exhibit in 1961 and already in 1963 he expressed himself a little in the style of Jacques Hurtubise, with whom he was connected through forms and colours: surfaces in diagonals scarcely broken, hard contrasts arising from abstract landscape art where coloured foregrounds are placed in a third perspective dimension.

From Canvas to Open Work

But it was from 1965 and at the time of his exhibition at the Galerie du Siècle in 1966 that Saxe aroused a very strong spontaneous interest, like a thunderbolt but resisting a view in depth.

A new language holds the attention by compositions in flat tints from which all textures and effects of depth have disappeared. Nothing exists any more but pure colour on the surface, which reflects back only on itself without possible lyrical interpretation, and asserts a great concern for formal clarity. At that moment the canvas hinders Saxe more and more by its rigid sides: his forms not being able to develop freely within the conventional limits of the picture. Whatever may be their soaring, the forms strike against the arbitrary, there exactly where... space begins.

Out of this frustration, it seems, were born the works painted on plywood whose irregular contours are dictated by the specific qualities of the form. A generous form, with sharp
Other works follow, composed of tridimensional modules (hexagons folded in a V) which revolve on one of their sides offering many possibilities of the occupation of space (fig. 6). Three factors consequently have an effect upon the final spatial disposition of the production: the position of one module in relation to another (identical or reversed), the position of the hinge between two modules (on the side or on the end) and, especially, the swirling of each of the modules. The first two factors arise from the decision of the artist, the third from the involvement of the spectator. These three factors cannot be entirely composed of simple modules. The multiform, almost inexhaustible, paradoxically presents no gratuitousness on account of the coherence of the basic structure. These open structures, placed on the ground, of a rather impressive size, capable of human proportions, are established in abstract terms like parallels with gestures or movements. The fact that they invite manipulation is in keeping with the way they are displayed in supleness and severity.

The path of Saxe went from simple to complex through the progressive evolution of the module at first as fixed surface (fig. 5), then surface bent to supply an open mobile volume (fig. 6). Then came closed modules, mobiles within mobiles and variable within themselves (fig. 7). Flexibility within flexibility.

In a contrary manner, from 1970 the module was simplified by the return to the line: a pole of bent metal whose ends turned back on themselves form loops which allow all the modules to be threaded one inside the other in the manner of a piece of knitting (fig. 8). The pliability then achieved by Saxe in his work and in his objects is an almost total freedom of movement in the model at the interior of the ensemble. Paradoxically, the creations formed of tridimensional modules have a variable linear character, at the same time as the works composed of linear modules becomes surfaces with contrasts between raw material, material treated in the rope knotted manner of a craftsman in the rope knotted by Saxe and material treated industrially.

The viewer recreates the continuous from the discontinuous set up by Saxe. He invents his own reading but crosses the usual process.
tangling of the rods of metal in an identical circumference, placed parallelly and supported at three points by triangles of metal (fig. 11).

Very spare in appearance, these groups by Saxe reveal themselves to the contrary to the keen eye, much richer and denser than appears at first.

The path into which Saxe has entered is narrow because it pushes back the barrier between what is art and what is not. Rejecting the conventions which permeate the idea of work of art, he lessens his public, risks reaching the point of no return beyond which there is no more art, where the race is finished. Saxe has also preserved the continuity of his plastic adventure and of the dispute which has been inscribed at the very heart of his work for several years. While seeking to forget art, while trying to begin almost from zero (but is this really possible?) the development of Saxe arouses esteem and admiration.


THE RICH ARCHITECTONICS OF BINNING

By Doreen E. WALKER

Even a casual glance at the 56 works on view at the recent B.C. Binning exhibition, held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, was sufficient to convince the viewer that there are strong references to the B.C. coastal environment in the majority of Binning's art. In the early drawings and paintings the west coast region provided the background from which he has derived the continuity of his plastic adventure and of the dispute which has been inscribed at the very heart of his work for several years. While seeking to forget art, while trying to begin almost from zero (but is this really possible?) the development of Saxe arouses esteem and admiration.

B.C. Binning has continually stressed his basic commitment as an artist to formalist principles: "I am more interested, really, in the idea of form than of content. Though they ultimately come together, my starting point has always been the form, the colour, the textures, the relationships, the idea of the flat canvas, the rectangle in which I work, and so on..."

And he has insisted, too, that for an artist with formalist leanings the subject is relatively unimportant: "I think it is just something to hang his hat on." However, the artist has acknowledged freely also, that the B.C. coastal world has provided him with a very strong peg. Since 1913, with the exception of limited periods of foreign study and travel, the artist's home has been in the vicinity of Vancouver, and throughout his lengthy career he has derived a rich vocabulary of forms from the coastal area which he loves so deeply.

B.C. Binning attended the Vancouver School of Art, and in 1934 - two years following graduation - was appointed Instructor of Drawing at the School, in 1938-39, seeking a broader experience and additional training, Binning went to England for further study. ("The first original modern paintings I saw were in London.") While abroad Binning worked under such eminent artists as Amédée Ozenfant and Henry Moore, and was also, he has told the American continent, where he remained in New York for a period, studying at the Art Students' League under Morris Kantor.

Binning's long and fruitful association with UBC commenced in the fall of 1949 when he became a member of the faculty of the School of Architecture. From that time on, his contribution to the cultural life on the UBC campus is inestimable. Several tangible accomplishments might be cited: founding of the Department of Fine Arts, 1955 (and Head from 1955-58); development of the Fine Arts Gallery; initiation of the Student Union collection of Canadian art [formerly known as the Brock Hall collection]; organization and direction of the Festival of Contemporary Arts; and planning [with the late Fred Lasserre] of the Norman MacKenzie Centre for the Arts at UBC. Binning has stated that his basic motivation in all his endeavours was always the desire to bring to the campus "a little richer texture than before".

Binning's rôle as teacher has been an exceedingly influential one. Ron Thom, FRCA, one of several Binning students who has achieved recognition on a national level, has written the following tribute: "He taught me to see. He taught me to think. He was an irreplaceable teacher whose lessons have lasted."

The Binning influence has, thus, over the years, spread well beyond the confines of UBC and Vancouver. His contribution as an artist and as an architect in Canada was recognized in 1962 when he became the recipient of the Allied Arts Award presented by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. In 1966 the artist was Canadian Representative of UNESCO Conference, Tokyo. Further significant honours included: Inclusion on the Advisory Panel for the Arts, Canada Council, 1956-67. In 1971 Binning's extensive contribution to the cultural life of Canada was acknowledged when he was designated Officer of the Order of Canada.

It was, however, in the rôle of painter-draughtsman that Binning first received national acclaim, and examples of this aspect of his career were handsomely displayed at the recent exhibition. Recent reflections of the artist are cited rather fully below, revealing an awareness and intentions concerning these works. His reactions (and reminiscences) with regard to the pen and ink drawings of the forties (which for many were the highlight of the show), are perhaps of particular interest. One reaction concerns a recent realization of a strong formal influence for his early style of drawing.

"At one time I was terrified in child art. (In 1941-42 I started those Saturday morning classes for children at the Vancouver Art Gallery.) I believe that the teaching of drawing to children provided me with a major source of influence for my drawings. I used to watch them intensely at the way they went about things: I admired the straightforward motivation that they had in doing any statement in visual terms. Their kind of directness was infectious..."

The artist was struck, too, on viewing his works, at the documentary value of the drawings. "It wasn't until this last retrospective exhibition of mine, when I looked at the early drawings and paintings like that, that I realized that I had made some kind of historical record. These places were reproduced with a fair amount of accuracy, and you simply could not find them if you went out to look for them now. The subjects of many of these drawings are non-existent.

"AFTERNOON BOAT, BOWEN ISLAND WHARF, 1945, as an event does not exist any longer. The old Union Steamships which used to ply our coastal waters visited so many of the little ports within about a hundred miles of Vancouver; Bowen Island was one of the nearer excursion centres, and certainly one of the most popular. It was a familiar sight to see the Bowen Island boat come in and the passengers (mainly summer dwellers and campers) disembark with their bits and pieces of provisions and freight. The happy time and informality of atmosphere which existed under such circumstances even today is just too far away..."

"VIEW OF FISHERMAN'S COVE, 1944, I think in some ways reflects more than any of this drawings the haphazard, rather jerry-built quality that existed all up and down the coast... the makeshift floats, the hodge podge of boats, the not always sandy beach, and the not too tidy foreshore. These things were all characteristic of the scene at that time; but the view no longer exists as such: it's tidied up! Great huge boats parks that they call marinas jam many of our coves."

"ME TOO 1, 1945, was the name of a shrimp boat that used to come into Fisherman's Cove periodically, with a hold filled with shrimp that had been scraped from the ocean floor. The boat fascinated me, and I drawn him right there while he was out fishing - and I drew it just as I saw it. I set out to make it as accurate as possible from the point of view of its gear and its detail (including the elaborate fishing net and the stove on deck for cooking the shrimp). I don't think you will find any of this drawings like this now - just maybe the odd one still left..."

"SELF PORTRAIT IN SHIP'S CABIN, 1945, is a very sentimental drawing for me. It shows the interior of Skookumchuck, the little 20 foot sailing sloop which I had in those days - and which I built partly by myself - was a kind of moveable studio. My wife and I would spend a good part of the summer pudding around the coves, bays and little snugs that you find around the coast. Frequently at meal time we would drop anchor and watch life in a little bay... there was always something happening: a small boy fishing; a man furling his sails: some- one rowing from one side of the bay to the other; and there were a lot of curious craft around, too... The occasion for this drawing was one of the many days (even in our summers) when it rained, and when there is certainly no much taking on a 20 foot boat. I decided to draw the interior of the cabin with its equipment and gear. As I began to draw, my reflection in my shaving mirror caught my attention, and I decided to include that. It thus became a self-portrait - perhaps..."
as much of my feet as my face! I have a very personal attachment to this drawing, because it recalls for me the boat on which I enjoyed myself so much... and loved so much.

Binning has made statements, too, on the works which followed the early drawings:

"In 1948 when I came to painting in oils, the influence of the sea and the ships that sail on it. I moved, however, from the particular to the general, and there was no longer any concern for any form of documentary accuracy. In the drawings I was always set off by some particular incident or thing, or collection of things. (In the drawings I might come, on occasion, from a particular experience, but the result was always a generalized statement.)"

"In painting I was aware that if a certain collection of forms were used together, one could get a certain reaction. I once said that the business of serious joy should be one of the main occupations of the artist. I do like joy... I do like order. I think my work plays between two sides of me: there is a certain joy and fun — perhaps even wit — but this seems to evaporate every now and then between another extreme of plain coolness and I strengthened tensions in the work: It was a matter of trying to get the balance between these two extremes..."

"FANCIFUL SEASCAPE, 1949, like many of the seascapes of the fifties, is in a lighter vein... from an expressive point of view the subject matter of these seascapes is perhaps more of a seascape of the feelings I experience during summer holidays along the B.C. coast than an actual interpretation of this coast... In the summer time, these little boats would look so joyful — certainly it wasn't a grim scene before me — it would seem to me that it had to be interpreted with some sort of 'joie de vivre'."

"The Seascapes of 1950 moved further in the direction from the particular to the general. I had got rather tired of all the detail of boats at this time — even in their more abstract and more general aspect. The sea itself became my main concern — its moods and expanse. In BLACK ISLAND, I have simply tried to synthesize the main essentials that make up this 'landscape-seascape'. It was a matter of trying to get the balance of forms right... in color I tried to do more of what the Fauvists were doing — of actually changing the colors to get in some total on the canvas a combination of colors that might bear little relationship to the blue sea and the green mountains, but would give the intensity... and I strengthened tensions in space in order to add breadth to the experience. I haven't really worked at this very much since that time, but for that two or three years I was working in this direction — and I might well come back to it again."

"In the mid-sixties I did a number of large emblematic works which I called Motifs. In retrospect I see that these works refer back, in some way, into the seascapes painting of 1950. I think there is a definite relationship in the form and in the use of fairly strong color. In addition to this there is a bigness of shape around B.C. that you can't get away from. I find it pretty overpowering at times. Whether you are looking at the mighty mountains of the coast, or at the expansive space of the sea there is this tremendous scale. I would imagine that this comes into these works."

"The Optional Modules were large works made up of modular units which could be assembled according to a variety of choices. I suppose they came about in several ways. One, certainly, was the architectural idea — the idea that one can work in a more fluid and three-dimensional ways than just with square or rectangle paintings. (I've always been very close to architecture — in my family and in my associations both friendly and professional. I think it's because of this, for instance, that I am so attracted by the built environment — with architects and by myself — in an almost avocational way at times, in executing murals and in the capacity as consultant in matters of color and design.)"

"Another thing that was involved with the modules was that I felt that the total impression of the way a picture worked was changing more and more. (The beholder wants to be part of art — and just as the artist he wants to have a creative hand in it.) I felt there should be a kind of inter-relationship: I'll give you the parts and, within certain restrictions, you can manipulate and change. These ideas started to fascinate me, and again, it was a matter of setting up a program for myself and going through it in a unrelenting way."

"These works were executed during a sabbatical year: I began working in the spring and continued through the summer — working gigantic modules in fairly bright colors. It was a strange thing that when it was coming to winter — the colourful days changed to grey — my paintings, too, changed to grey. (I was acutely aware of the seasons.) From then on the rest of the modules were all in greys. OPTIONAL MODULES (8 modules in greys), to me, frankly, is the best one I've done."

"These were the main steps, then: firstly the drawings, then the paintings of ships themselves, then the seascapes, followed by the emblematic Motifs, and from there into the Optional Modules..."

According to B. J. Shonky, Director of the Fine Arts Gallery at UBC, was organizer of the Binning retrospective. This was his last major show at UBC before accepting the position of Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In the Forward to the Binning catalogue, B. J. Shonky stated very perceptively: "In fairly bright colors, it was a strange thing that when it was coming to winter — the colourful days changed to grey — my paintings, too, changed to grey. (I was acutely aware of the seasons.) From then on the rest of the modules were all in greys. OPTIONAL MODULES (8 modules in greys), to me, frankly, is the best one I've done."
indicating that Shang power extended farther south than suspected. Gold and silver objects are extremely rare in China but not so during the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) and the pieces found in the tomb of Princess Yung T’ai (d. 701) and in the mansion of the prince of Pin (d. 741) — in Sian verified this. The latter site yielded two pottery jugs holding 1,000 items including 200 gold and silver vessels. Similar in shape and design to Sian, the Eastern Han finds at T’ai Ping, in Honan, are a strong clue to China’s relations with other countries during that period.

So too are superb textiles from Sinkiang, along Central Asia’s Silk Road, dating from the 5th and 6th centuries AD. The extraordinary weaving techniques incorporating 1027 BC to 547 BC with annotations by the famous Han dynasty scholar Cheng Hsuan (127-200 AD). Of the five chapters in this particular version only the first and part of the second are missing.

A special section of the exhibit is devoted to the Chinese technical finds. Coming are clay moulds for casting bronze, bronze moulds for casting iron both processes the reverse of normal procedures — and clay models for the positive moulds from which the negative mould for the final cast was made. But the most exciting is a simple yet powerful example of an Eastern Han kiln dating from 1400 BC. Chengchow in Honan yielded this, the earliest known example of porcelain. Feldspathic glaze, used in porcelain manufacture, is based on silica, the same chemical compound as clay. Hence the glaze cannot chip away. But it requires an elevated high firing temperature, 1100 centigrade, and even then the Chinese, at this very early date, possessed kilns capable of this. Neither feldspathic glaze nor the necessary kilns existed elsewhere and thus a softer glaze, lead based and most perishable, and utilizing a lower firing temperature, was used. Only in 1728 did the Germans realize porcelain.

There will be an exquisite bronze “Galloping Horse”, one hoof resting on a flying swallow, from the tomb of Wu Wei of the Eastern Han (25-220 AD) but there will be no painted silks or seated Buddhas. Chronology will follow the Chinese Marxist interpretation; the Neolithic Period to the beginning of time to the Shang; the Slave Owners Period — 1027 BC to 475 AD; the Feudal Society — 475 to 1912. The treasures will rest in Burlington House, the site of the first and last comprehensive exhibit of Chinese Art in 1935, the exhibit which opened the eyes of the world to an incredible heritage. This will be the first time so many painted silks or seated Buddhas. Chronology will follow the Chinese Marxist interpretation; the Neolithic Period to the beginning of time to the Shang; the Slave Owners Period — 1027 BC to 475 AD; the Feudal Society — 475 to 1912. The treasures will rest in Burlington House, the site of the first and last comprehensive exhibit of Chinese Art in 1935, the exhibit which opened the eyes of the world to an incredible heritage. This will be the first time so many painted silks or seated Buddhas. Chronology will follow the Chinese Marxist interpretation; the Neolithic Period to the beginning of time to the Shang; the Slave Owners Period — 1027 BC to 475 AD; the Feudal Society — 475 to 1912. The treasures will rest in Burlington House, the site of the first and last comprehensive exhibit of Chinese Art in 1935, the exhibit which opened the eyes of the world to an incredible heritage. This will be the first time so many painted silks or seated Buddhas. Chronology will follow the Chinese Marxist interpretation; the Neolithic Period to the beginning of time to the Shang; the Slave Owners Period — 1027 BC to 475 AD; the Feudal Society — 475 to 1912. The treasures will rest in Burlington House, the site of the first and last comprehensive exhibit of Chinese Art in 1935, the exhibit which opened the eyes of the world to an incredible heritage. This will be the first time so many
cubist pictures, McEwen strengthened the periphery by making it play the rôles of echo to the central axis. He tended also, in this way, to go beyond landscapes structure as it was still found in Monet's work.

The great vertical around which the balance of the picture plays will enlarge to form a plan, will unfold on the surface, will repeat itself on the border, will unite with orthogonal shapes, in order to assure all the expressive possibilities of the surface. By this dialectic between centrifugal and centripetal balances, McEwen at the same time was drawing near to the problems of Mondrian.

But these multiform perpendiculars keep blurred outlines a long time, offering themselves as a lyrical statement of fundamental underlying structures, firmly intuitive. Far from emerging from the meeting of coloured movements, these lines assert themselves in a contrasting linearity, taken up again in the two textured panels or framing them in a periphery, masking the mysterious forces which come out of the meeting of the pictorial elements. This oscillation continues between the open form and the closed form, becomes accentuated again with the appearance of planes in flat tints, inserted between two textured panels or framing them in a border, especially in the series of the Musée, McEwen describes the reasons for the introduction of these hard-edge elements and pure colour as the desire to find a more direct means of expression which the spot of colour or graphism could not be. "For me it is a matter only of joining interior resonances more adequately."

Through this fidelity to his deepest sensitive intuitions, McEwen has produced pregnant works whose repercussions are expanded indisputably by all the recent developments in American Abstract Impressionism.

1. Leo Steinberg, Other Criteria with Twentieth Century Art, Oxford University Press, 1972.

(Translated by Mildred Grand)

GO IN PEACE, FRANÇOIS DALLAIRE!

By André BASTIEN

Graphist, industrial designer and architectural draughtsman, François Dallaire is, in addition, a painter whose works have been exhibited recently in Montreal: at Casa Loma, with the Moins de 35, and at the gallery of the Society of Professional Artists of Quebec.

I found that what I had desired all my life was not to live — if what others are doing is living — but to express myself. I realized that I had never the least interest in living, but only in this which I am doing now, something which is parallel to life, of it at the same time, and beyond it (Henry Miller, Tropic of Capricorn).

There are worldly artists, princes of the ego-trip, masqueraded in propitious ideas which serve them as talismans against boredom. With many cries and oaths, they call themselves still capable of taking flight and bare their guts to have their exercises in style admired.

There are also the François Dalaires, solitary workers, concerned, whom the splendor of their craziest visions haunts. One sees them seldom in the milieu; they have a wife, perhaps children, sometimes a job... a life like everyone, after all!

Perched high on Villemain Street, François Dallaire lives in the Greek quarter of Montreal, for want of having found better elsewhere, but also through nostalgia for the Europe which he has just left. Did he really believe he could find again in these streets the delicious charm of the old labyrinthine cities, the languid charm of the idlers who pass along these corridors, the café terraces which flourish at each intersection? Cold, filth, the stench of the city besiege his world, an apartment of five rooms shut away from everything, closed against the noise of people and the rumbling of cars.

To go to his home, one must climb to the third floor of an old building. The entrance door opens on an aseptic hall. It leads to the living room furnished with taste: an old cabinet which hides the bar; two armchairs he designed; a rocking chair bought at Sainte-Théodosie; a stereo whispering the music of Charles Trenet dans l'Ouest; on the walls, pictures signed by Jean Dallaire: three or four canvases in the manner of the cubists and of this painter again, a few of his last works with the primitive charm of children's drawings.

His son François resembles him. He is a man in his twenties, with slow gestures and an absent look. He easily gives the impression of being absent-minded. Rarely does he take an active part in the conversation and he smiles awkwardly when his interlocutor bullies him for his evident lack of interest in it.

When the idea comes to us to ask for his opinion on an event, he answers that he never reads the newspapers, any more than he looks at the news on television.

— Life is already not so rosy, that on top of that I should poison my existence with the news.

Far from leaving him indifferent, human distress, daily field of the media of information, fills him with sorrow and disgust.

— One doesn't take a hundred steps outdoors without seeing some unpleasant thing. How do people manage to live?

Harmless questions have a corrosive effect on the shell of indifference which marks his personality. The best moment of his day: "Finding Paule, my wife, beside me, on waking up"; the most disagreeable moment: "Going down the stairs to go to work and discovering the ugliness of early morning"; the people he admires: "those possessed by a passion"; the man he thinks he resembles: "My father...", Jean Dallaire, who died alone in a little room in Montmartre in Paris, roared in his letters that Quebec was inhabited by barbarians.

Before he left again for Europe — I was very young at the time — my father often used to take me to his studio. There he let me play with his paint-brushes. When he left it, was as if he fell into a great void. I no longer knew what to do.

From these far-off years, François Dallaire retains of his father the image of a vulnerable man, tender, sensitive, a sort of sacred monster to whom everything was permitted, including dying of hunger in order to devote himself to his painting.

— With him gone, I followed my brother to the Applied Arts.

By instinct, François Dallaire would perhaps have opted for the Beaux-Arts, but everything in his life combined to make him reject this choice. For four years he devoted himself to industrial design — in which he excelled — before going to Europe to take up studies in graphism.

Whether he paints or produces a graphic work, he finds in his works the same purity of line, the same simplicity of execution. The few critics, come to view the works of this young beginner at the gallery of the Society of Professional Artists of Quebec last February, noted especially the influence of graphism in Dallaire's work. At the time when the pictures exhibited last winter were painted, François Dallaire was still completely unaware of graphism.

There emerges from his painting a desire to run counter to the Ontario Woman, Pepsi. Je me souviens. "Look," he tells us, "you are thus.

And yet where François Dallaire exposes a certain manner of living, the spectator discovers the tragedy of this way of being.

All the canvases shown at the time of this exhibition are dated from the end of the sixties. He excuses this long silence by asserting that his studies and, now, his work as a graphist, have taken all his time.

François Dallaire, do these reasons really explain your silence? And of what importance, besides, since you love Paule about everything: since in spite of your own doubts, your own agonies, you gather beauty in every place in order that our mornings may be less gray; since one day, if a few hours of real freedom remain to you, you will express in the solitude of your studio our most foolish dreams, our greatest hopes...

Go in peace, François Dallaire!

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

PIERRE GENDRON: DELIBERATE ACTION PAINTER

By Pierre DUPUIS

Born in Montreal, he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts. After working in graphism in an advertising art studio, Gendron pursued the pictorial research previously undertaken outside his academic concerns and then went to France (1961). He would later return there in order, this time, to go deeply into lithography. In the meantime, he participated twice in the international exhibitions of Lugano (Switzerland) and at the Paris Biennial, in 1961. He now teaches at the Cégep of Old Montreal.

On the occasion of the opening of a new gallery in Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts (Studie 23), last winter, Gendron presented his latest works, including those from 1970 to 1973, to the public of the Montreal area.

What do these creations reveal to us if not the desire to perpetuate pictorial tradition called Abstract Expressionism? However, sensitive to the ambiguities possibly raised
by all-inclusive terminology, let us try to characterize his work, which reviews fifteen years of painting.

Today he uses acrylic (gesso/masonite) and attempts through it to geometrize the forms in the pictorial space by always allowing, in other respects, the same forms to stand out from the background. This technique is in the nature of the spontaneous but free gesture, connecting it at the level of the finished product with the creations of Nicolas de Staël. In 1964, a comparison was being drawn between the works of these two painters. Beyond the fact that things have not changed so much in the matter of criticism (the best studies of scientifc character are always fed from the same sources, from the same purposes) it is nonetheless true that Gendron himself acknowledges having willingly returned to the style for which he had a fondness at that time.

The spots of colour are encircled and get tangled up more or less confusedly according to the way in which the painter places his colour in flat tints, uses the superimposition of colours (or glazing) or gives the clarity and transparency of water-colour to the canvas. As the forms are grouped in such a way, they are often arranged in relation to a cruciform diagram and/or the drawing is inscribed according to a system of parallels. The colours are repeated, are strengthened by contrast, are held together by the juxtaposition of the tones (dark-pale). We perceive the works as they are constructed; that is to say that the multiplication of vanishing points in staircase form promotes a free penetration of the view through the composition until the moment when there appears a remarkable canvas from which emerges a struggle (it is perhaps exaggerated to qualify it as symbolic) of the elements which compose it... Gendron willingly admits, as does Kandinsky, to the power of an interior necessity.

At the beginning, his academic education leaned toward illustration, and he expressed himself in this way. Then little by little he gave a personal touch to the forms that he developed while geometrizing them as far as the automatic movement. Finally he gradually rejected plastician and automatic influences. What was being said, at that time, to speak of his style was that he was a poet who seeks new paths, it seems to me with great nervous strokes, possessed by the desire of finding an outcome.

(Jean Sarrazin)

The temporary displacement has in no way changed his work in depth. On the contrary, the stylistic cross-checks of yesterday and to-day are answered in time and, in one case as in the other, Gendron continues to transform pictorial creation according to the same type of standard, in accordance with a language that nothing has been able to change. Although the motifs may newly have been geometrized, the idea predominating creation has kept the same tangent; the forms have settled down, but one feels through them a visual relationship which supports the colour.

A contemporary of Borduas, his work equally possesses identical concerns at the level of expression without, however, finding the same cry at the heart of his painting. The abstraction mastered by Gendron (halfway between lyricism and geometric exactness) can thus be considered as a look toward the past through a giant mirror formed from an Illusion just as immense. Why paint to-day?

   (Translation by Mildred Grand)

THE DRAWINGS OF SIMONE AUBERY-BEAULIEU

By Robert MARTEAU

After twenty years spent in very diverse countries, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu recently renewed her connection with Canada through an exhibition of drawings at the Galerie de Montréal. In spite of her long absence, interrupted by visits to Paris, Perce. Simone Aubery-Beaulieu is not unknown here in the field of plastic arts. Having studied for four years at the École des Beaux-Arts in Montreal, she received the Prize of the Province of Quebec in 1949, exhibiting at the same time at the Cercle Universitaire on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal. If her marriage with diplomat Paul Beaulieu was at the origin of her numerous trips, it was in no way opposed to her first vocation, and it was with a never-denied ardour that Simone Aubery-Beaulieu devoted herself to her craft.

She had met Fernand Léger in New York during the war. She met him again in Paris in 1946, where she attended his studio. In Paris again, she made the acquaintance of André Marchand, with whom she worked and to whom she is linked by a friendship of thirty years. After two years in New York, she went to Varengeville, where Braque received and advised her. After Paris came London; she became acquainted next with Boston, and Beirut, where she lived for six years, beginning there to tackle abstraction at a time when the desert and Arab characters were fascinating her. She left the Middle East for Brazil, where she felt the impact of the tropical forest, of its luxuriance, and of the effervescence of life, all things whose surging her drawings reflected. There was New York, then Paris again, Lisbon where she took up once more and developed themes initiated in Brazil. During a sojourn in Washington, she met Saint-John Perse, whose English poems Louise Varès translated while she herself illustrated Le Poème à l'étrangère and made several portraits of the poet, of which one was to appear in the Saint-John Perse in Poètes d'aujourd'hui. Furthermore, encouraged by Saint-John Perse, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu was going to devote herself assiduously to poetry.

As it is rather unusual to-day to see an exhibition of drawings, I asked Simone Aubery-Beaulieu if, with her graphic work really is more important than painting. Not in the least, it seems to her, and she thinks
CLAUDE MONGRAIN: WEIGHTS, TENSIONS, MEASURES

By Luc BENOIT

There are obvious facts in art as elsewhere. And the work of Claude Mongrain which, with that of J.-S. Champagne, is witness of a new approach in Quebec sculpture, calls rather situations lead to experimentation by the spectator. "All I wish is that the viewer be conscious of what is happening. To begin with, one perceives the fact, and it is only afterward that the phenomenon of understanding occurs."

I was almost going to forget to mention that he was born in Shawinigan but lives in Montreal. He studied there at the École des Beau-Arts from 1966 to 1969 with Jean-Pierre Boivin and Ulysse Comtois. The following year, he continued in sculpture, at the University of Quebec in Montreal, with Henry Saxe.

In 1968, he participated in the creation of a children's park at Orford, at the J.M.C. Centre.

In 1970, he exhibited with the graduates at the Pavillon des Arts of the University of Quebec in Montreal. One of his sculptures (in steel) won for him a bursary from E.T. Greenshield Memorial Foundation, which gave him a trip of investigation across Europe. He returned there the next year and visited a part of France and Italy by bicycle.

Among other exhibitions, let us mention the one at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jours d'artisies in 1970; another group showed itself at Galerie Joliart, in Quebec, in October 1972; the exhibition of Claude Mongrain de 35 Ans in Montreal in February 1973 and, recently, at the Galerie Média as well as at La Sauvagère, with a group of artists. (Translation by Mildred Grand)

JEAN-SERGE CHAMPAGNE: SCULPTURE IN TWO PERIODS

By Luc BENOIT

Jean-Serge Champagne had placed six planks six feet long side by side on two trestles. The farthest was horizontal; the next, a little hollowed at the centre as if under the weight of a load and the others, bent more and more, as if the invisible weight were heavier.

At first glance, one does not know much what is happening. To begin with, one perceives the fact, and it is only afterward that the phenomenon of understanding occurs.

The wood is raw and the notches are apparent. There are no deceptions, that is to say, no other matter has been used to make the nicks disappear by plugging them. Then to fill the joints and paint the plank to give it an appearance other than that which it really has. We are, 1) facing the material such as it is, 2) observing the manner of doing and 3) examining the result. The fact (absence of deception) is still obvious in these long pieces of wood, with the nicks (no-bys), which, in places seems crushed, slit by the rope which has been tightened around them. The pieces have simply undergone several cuts of a saw at their centre, which then allowed their being tightened and tied together, thus producing the desired effect.

The same thing is true for this long chest of twelve feet, made of one single piece of two-by-four, a handle and hinges as for a real chest. It was cut in two along its whole length to allow it to be opened. Once the chest is open, one realizes that the section of wood was completely hollowed out (and not cut and again put together) to contain a piece of wood as long, but of less thickness and width. There are no tricks, no mysteries in what I do.

"I could have chosen something else, plastic, for example. But then, it would have been like manufacturing things; while with wood the sculpture explains itself and the understanding of it becomes easy. By shellacking wood, one can give the impression that it is something else. Why make things as easy as possible?"

"The important matter is to do what one has to do. The finished product is of little consequence: it is only a point between what has been done and what remains to be done. But without having produced it, I would never have understood what is inherent in it. It is only after having done the thing is effective. From whence comes the importance of making gestures, because it is a step toward freedom. It is to eliminate restraints, to have access to joy."

"And one does not need to justify his gestures. It is enough to be available in the face of things."

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The same thing is true for this long chest of twelve feet, made of one single piece of two-by-four, a handle and hinges as for a real chest. It was cut in two along its whole length to allow it to be opened. Once the chest is open, one realizes that the section of wood was completely hollowed out (and not cut and again put together) to contain a piece of wood as long, but of less thickness and width. There are no tricks, no mysteries in what I do.

"The important matter is to do what one has to do. The finished product is of little consequence: it is only a point between what has been done and what remains to be done. But without having produced it, I would never have understood what is inherent in it. It is only after having done the thing is effective. From whence comes the importance of making gestures, because it is a step toward freedom. It is to eliminate restraints, to have access to joy."

"And one does not need to justify his gestures. It is enough to be available in the face of things."

Jean-Serge Champagne had placed six planks six feet long side by side on two trestles. The farthest was horizontal; the next, a little hollowed at the centre as if under the weight of a load and the others, bent more and more, as if the invisible weight were heavier.

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The sculpture of Jean-Serge Champagne proves that it is still possible to work in a material (which some would have believed old-fashioned, if not out of date) in a new and interesting way.

The result, as far as I am concerned, is a fortunate one. Much more, it witnesses a new sculpture in Quebec.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

VIDEOGRAPHY:
TOWARDS A NEW CULTURE

By Denise DIONNE

Vidéographe on Saint-Denis St. in Montreal is an organization which has as its aim the promoting of the use of the half-inch portable magnetoscopic system (closed-circuit television). Vidéographe lends the equipment and allocates the budgets necessary to the production of videograms.

Montage modules are available twenty-four hours a day. Vidéographe has its own sound studio, and an animation module has just been set up and produced by persons involved in the project of the Sainte-Scholastique airport. From that, one can no longer confuse the indiscreet eye, but rather a confidant and Libidante work with overprinting, with electronic effects in the medium.

Actual events, recorded directly, are used as basic material. Situations are set up where the camera becomes a sort of confident (according to Jean Rouch’s expression), and the videotape, by an instantaneous use of group viewing, becomes an illumination of the circumstances.

This quality of the videotape (instant recording), to which the lightness of the equipment is joined, was immediately exploited. About twenty productions centre around persons who explain their place in life in front of the camera (people twenty years of age, youths, separated women, old persons, etc.), their personal relationships (loneliness, homosexuality) or else their relation with the system.

The videotape also serves as a useful instrument of reflection on broad social occurrences. An analysis has been made of the significance of the October incidence and of the rôle of the mass media during that period. The controversies raised by the project of the Sainte-Scholastique airport, the conflict at La Presse, the battle of wood at Cabano, also aroused some interest. But the rare pearl of this type of production is certainly the video carried out by Émond and Lavigne on the Soma affair. S.O.S. Soma was set up and produced by persons involved in this struggle. From that, one can no longer define the camera as being a peeping and indirect eye, but rather a confidant and sharing ear.

The possibilities of new visual experiments have not been much used. They still make a little live film in 16mm. A few productions have played with the feasibilities of visual electronic effects in the medium. Réaction 26, Métamorphoses, Lumibres, formes et sons and Libidante work with overprinting, with doubling and with the shifting of the image. It is to be noted that a subject like eroticism is very well suited to this kind of formal treatment (for example, Libidante).

Ethnology and Quebec or Amerindian anthropology occupy a separate category. The traditions and the legends of the Quebec habitant or of the Amerindian are dealt with in it. Let us mention here the originality of the production Continuons le combat, where through the description of a modern rite, wrestling, Pierre Falodeau symbolically presents to us the forces present at the heart of our society and subtly incites us to pursue the fight.

Following the thought of McLuhan, who asserts that a new technique salvages the old ones, the videotape is also used as medium for other arts. Whether it be theatre, sculpture, marionettes, electronic graphism or music, we deal with this type of production.

The present concerns about general themes such as the system, the environment and society are approached in different manners in Système, m’aimas-tu, L’Accroc, L’Environnement, c’est toute. Zloczow and Objectal. One of the solutions generally offered to theills of our society, the experiment of commons is presented in six different forms: a commune of forty-two persons on a farm at Rawdon, the Krishna Group of Montreal, the Maison du possible, in Sherbrooke, where social medicine is practised, the musical Groupe Expédition, the couples’ commune at the Château, and, finally, the fifteen staff members of the P’tit Québec Libre, share their experience in turn.

Some other productions have as subject the Salon de l’Auto, the St. Lawrence Boulevard, the new Pierre Vallières, Edgar Morin, children and, even, the production of a videogram.

So videography is healthy in Montreal. The variety of the fields covered, as well as the pungency of the titles, gives the proof of its vitality.

Consequently, the technique of the videotape offers the possibility of new experiments in group communication. The light and relatively inexpensive material permits a greater accessibility. The chief problem remains, however, to differentiate it from ordinary television, which excels in broadcasting information directly at the moment it occurs, and the cinema of recent tradition which has involved itself in recording the present for posterity. What is left, perhaps, for video is to be the witness of what happens after the occurrence, to be the instrument of collective thought after the event. S.O.S. Soma is the best example of this.

For footnotes see French text.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)