Une topologie mentale de l'objet
A Mental Topology of the Subject

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Pierre Hamelin

L'été dernier, j'ai rencontré Jocelyne Alloucherie dans son atelier de l'avenue Charles, à Québec. Voici quel fut notre entretien.

Jocelyne Alloucherie - Ce n'est jamais vraiment du pur dessin... de la pure sculpture... Ce n'est jamais vraiment de la peinture... Un objet me suggère un dessin, une surface; on peut me ramener à l'objet encore. Je n'essaie pas de me situer dans les définitions traditionnelles de peinture, de sculpture, de dessin; c'est la notion de lieu qui m'intéresse, le plein espace, multidirectionnel et signifiant à des degrés divers; c'est pourquoi je veux rester ouverte et disponible à toutes ses conventions. Par l'esprit, du moins, mon activité rejoint l'architecture, une certaine définition de l'architecture.

Pierre Hamelin - Et l'art, en général, en tant qu'activité qu'en pensez-vous?

J.A. - Une manière d'appréhender la réalité, d'en retirer une connaissance et d'en témoigner. C'est le terme connaissance qui prend ici un sens beaucoup plus grand; il contient le désir de transgresser les schémas préexistants et l'aspiration au prodige. La réalité... Il s'agit d'une réalité qui a la qualité du rêve. Mieux vaudrait dire la surréalité.

P.H. - La surréalité, au sens d'André Breton?

J.A. - Non, à mon sens! Par l'immanence et au-delà. Peut-on vraiment savoir, maintenant, le sens où l'entendait Breton? Le drame, c'est qu'il y a l'histoire; la chance aussi, paradoxalement. Que serions-nous sans mémoire? Et que sommes-nous, vivant sur une mémoire collective faussée? Je me tais sur ces questions!

P.H. - Nous sommes loin de la stylisation. Est-ce que cela ne touche pas à la transformation esthétique de Théo van Doesburg ou des néo-plasticiens?


P.H. - Je constate dans vos travaux un aspect farouche, sauvage, comme si vous vouliez approviser le réel. Seriez-vous attirée par un certain primitivisme?

J.A. - plutôt une tentative pour une manière d'être plus fondamentale; une volonté de rompre la dissociation objet-sujet.

P.H. - Comme lorsque le primitif porte le masque de l'animal, il devient, il est l'animal.

J.A. - C'est en ce sens que je dis que l'artificiel rejoint le naturel. Dans le théâtre nô, c'est cette qualité globale qui est recherchée par le comédien.

P.H. - J'ai remarqué que vous démontez vos pièces et que vous les reconstituez en tenant compte du lieu, de l'espace. Vos objets ne sont pas fixés, leur arrangement peut varier.

J.A. - Si on veut. Mais elles ne sont ni d'ordre formel, ni de type conceptuel. Elles s'opèrent dans le temps et peuvent être comprises à partir d'une mémoire de l'objet. J'appelle cela une topologie mentale de l'objet.
1. Sans titre.
(Phot. Jean Payette)

2. Sans titre.
(Phot. Jean Payette)

3. Jocelyne ALLOUCHERIE
Environnement.
(Phot. Musée du Québec)

English Translation, p. 105
forms of activity are more centered on the collective good than on that of the individual.

From the point of view of urban form, each building should first serve the urban ensemble, just as from the point of view of social form each individual should first act for the good of the ensemble, thanks to a much stronger social conscience, in more appropriate political-economic structures.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

**THE REMAKING OF A WARD**

By Reynald and Reny GADOURY

Reynald and Reny Gadoury describe the development of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste ward and suggests means of giving this part of the city back to its inhabitants. It was in this ward that the communal engraving workshop, L'Atelier de Réalisations Graphiques, was established; it is here also that Comme Gallery has just moved; and a theatre has its creative studios in this ward.

The modern city, that of bungalows, shopping centers, industrial parks, highways and big complexes, leaves little room for the local life of the district. Time, which meadowed Old Quebec and the suburbs of Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Saint-Roch, and Saint-Sauveur, no longer has the same rhythm. The models that shaped Limoulo and Montcalm wards are no longer to be found in the Sainte-Foy or Charlesbourg suburbs. The new order has dictated the final solution to this old heart of Quebec: an enormous administrative block in Upper Town, a commercial zone in Lower Town, an historical sector for tourists, and highways to tie it all together. So Quebec's centre will now have to exist like modern cities. However, the diversity of milieu is an original characteristic of this city. Everything is to be found here, including the richness of architecture. We ought, therefore, to expect that this wealth should be preserved for the well-being of the citizens, and that the ward should be remade.

One ward of Quebec, the Saint-Jean-Baptiste, had 25,000 inhabitants a few years ago. At its centre, it contained a virus, indeed a cancerous-producing cell: the parliamentary city. This virus, fed by government budgets and capitalist investments, caused a serious illness. Charlatans andmandarins then did their work. Parliament Hill was attacked as gangrenous. Great destruction took place: 1200 dwellings destroyed, connecting roads, office buildings, hotels, luxury apartments, parking lots added.

Then, all around, there was to be seen decay, criminal arson and the insecurity of the workers. We must rede things come under one title: complexes H and G, the Hilton, the Concorde, Place Quebec, Convention Centre, the Laurentian, the Grand-Théâtre, the Dufferin-Montmorency autoroute, Place de la Capitale, Saint-Cyrille Boulevard...

We must remake this sector, so that it will not die. We must redo connections and links with the cut-off parts. We have to join the suburb to the town and allow the passageways for pedestrians to become continuous from one place to another. Let us return to St. John St, its status as The Street of Quebec, the street unique in this country, the street that restores Quebec's pleasures to us, that lets us discover the thousand and one colours of Quebec culture and life.

The suburb ought to be connected again and linked to its southern part, Parliament Hill and the Plains of Abraham. So little is needed, just to reform the links, to give the administration of funds for renovation which superimposes on the old web of the city a modern fabric of the fifties in which a downtown area, a central hub, absolutely must be established: and in this centre — this is the town-planner's rule — hotels, rooms one below the other, shops because the rooms exist and, in these boutiques, clients from the hotel who buy souvenirs and old things; restaurants, banquet and convention halls because there are rooms where the members of a convention can stay.

Why destroy a residential fabric made with man and family in mind; a texture that, daily renewed, would offer the life of the Quebecer to his people, with its children and its old folks, the Quebecer's rhythm, its commercial establishments, its boutiques, its commercial activities, the Quebecer's rhythm, with its moods, its streets for walking and its cautious cars? We know that capitalism always prevails over it, but the need to compete, to be bigger and stronger, can belong only to doers and not to generators of life, of the people.

The ward's fabric of life must be reinvigorated and services must be allowed to be set up in the residential area and bring to it an activity of work, of interest in work and daily life, a rhythm appropriate to people disturbed in their space, their mood, their season, their movement, in order that they stand fast and do what they must.

It is necessary to reinvent the suburb's range of activities by complementary equipment, rejuvenated equipment, to keep and increase the number of families in the ward, to allow senior citizens to live out their time in their milieu among the things they love. These means might be means so that the wards may renew and restore themselves continually. These means might be funds taken from taxes, which would be given in loans, at very reasonable rates of interest and repayment of capital, to whoever wishes to improve his home or to groups desiring to enhance their environment. Another method would be to relieve the person who wants to improve his home of a part of the taxes he regularly pays. Our rulers do not hesitate to spend large amounts to restore the government's home in the citadel, the residence of the governor, and they hesitate to permit a sector of fourteen thousand persons to live decently...

It is necessary to bring the residents, all the residents, to do their part of renovation, to suit their town to their needs. They must be given the desire to create a ward with day nurseries and art studios, a food store, a bookshop, a carpentry repair shop, a restaurant, a geriatrics service, a florist's shop, a crafts centre, a handy store, an architecture clinic, a furniture workshop, a grocery, and a photography shop.

The city administration ought also to institute renovation that would go on slowly in the wards. This should allow the residents to repair, improve, recondition their homes and their environment through aid and encouragement programmes continued with the same acracy as this administration shows each year in collecting the taxes of these rate-payers. They should avoid acting mechanically. In separate cases, and spending considerable sums distributed indiscriminately on buildings. They should make interventions on the scale of the ward and gradually solve the serious problems of deterioration of the environment by planning a programme of renovation of electrical systems, a programme of renovation of heating systems, a programme of renewal of commercial and exterior walls, a programme of renovation and improvement of back yards, emergency staircases and doors, a programme that would solve the problem of electric power and telephone lines.

Renovation ought also to be carried on in experiments where the ends of streets would be closed off to return to the pedestrians and to nature, where unessential traffic would be slowed, turned away and discouraged, where spaces would be animated by sand or greenery, where walls and back yards would be revitalized by colour, where bicycle trails and pedestrian paths would be created.

It is necessary to invent new experiments in which renovation would become creation and the administrator, an inventor.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

**A MENTAL TOPOLOGY OF THE OBJECT**

By Pierre HAMELIN

Last year I visited Jocelyne Alloucherie in her studio on Charles Ave. in Quebec. Our interview follows:

Jocelyne Alloucherie — It is never really pure drawing, ... pure sculpture, ... It is never really painting, ... An object suggests a drawing to me, a surface; I can be brought back to the object again. I don't try to locate myself in traditional definitions of painting, sculpture, drawing, and my current work is the idea of place that interests me, a pure sculpture, a surface that can be brought back to a pure drawing, a surface that can be brought back to the idea of place that interests me.

J.A. — A way of seizing reality, of drawing knowledge from it and of expressing it. It is the term "knowledge" that takes on a much greater meaning here; it contains the desire to contraven pre-existing ideas and the aspiration to the extraordinary. Reality... It is a matter of a reality that has the quality of a dream. One might better say surrealism.

P.H. — Surrealism, according to André Breton?

J.A. — No, according to me! Through subjectivity and beyond. Can we really know now the sense in which Breton understood it? The dramatic part of this is that there is history, chance too, paradoxically. What would we be without
The real in relation to subjectivity. Is this a question of personal expression?

J.A. — Art is obviously not only a matter of personal expression. It is an adventure of a sensitive kind at the same time as intellectual, an inclusive step. If it were only a question of expressing oneself, there are more effective methods. It is true that it is recognized as more proper for each to go with his small spurt of pretty little colours and settle everything in the finest hour of the automatists! Each one expresses himself, that's reassuring, and let the middle class bless you!

P.H. — Aren't we then, coming close to the idea of science?

J.A. — Knowledge, science, learning... Originally, ars meant knowledge.

P.H. — Let us come back to your works. How are they developed?

J.A. — I become astonished in the face of the structure of certain natural elements; notice that I am not the first. These are usually stones, of forms of solidity that I integrate into a system of artificial organization. This first transitional system is never really abstract; its structure remains very dependent on the properties inherent in the object. On this second quality, varied readaptations build up; a model from a model... P.H. — Would these be variations of the same object?

J.A. — If desired. But they are neither of formal nor of conceptual type. They come about with time and can be understood from a memory of the object. I call this a mental topology of the object.

P.H. — Are we far from stylization. Is this not related to the aesthetic transformation of Théo van Doesburg or the neoplasticists?

J.A. — Van Doesburg? Mechanical and linear. I work in mosaic, with collages.

P.H. — I see in your works a fierce, savage aspect, as if you wished to tame reality. Are you attracted by a certain primitivism?

J.A. — Rather an attempt toward a way of being subject dissociation.

P.H. — As when the primitive wears the mask of the animal, it becomes, it is the animal.

J.A. — It is in this sense that I say the artificial catches up with the natural. In the N5 theatre, it is this inclusive quality that is sought by the comedian.

P.H. — I have noticed that you dismantled your works and set them up again with attention to place and space. Your objects are not fixed: their arrangement can vary.

J.A. — I think first of art in terms of place rather than in terms of object. A physical and mental set up, I think first of art in terms of place rather than in terms of object. The explosion of this writing would lead the reader to a certain linear elaboration, the bringing together of aims of the engraver and the painter, the brush stroke, not on the canvas, but a piece of masonite almost completely white.

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