

Les surfaces sculptées de Gerhardt Knodel The Sculptured Planes of Gerhardt Knodel

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LES SURFACES SCULPTÉES DE GERHARDT KNODEL

Virginia M. West

Historiquement, l'emploi de pans d'étoffe à l'intérieur de l'espace architectural ne constitue pas une nouveauté. Il remonte, en effet, à l'époque médiévale alors que l'on tendait bannières et tapisseries sous les hautes voûtes des églises et des châteaux. Ces matières textiles attiraient l'attention sur les dimensions spatiales devenues possibles quand l'ogive permit aux voûtes d'atteindre des hauteurs de plus en plus grandes et à la lumière de pénétrer dans tout l'intérieur.

Grâce à sa sculpture tissée à la main, œuvres monumentales utilisant la surface textile comme dynamisme tridimensionnel à l'intérieur de vastes intérieurs architecturaux, Gerhardt Knodel a renoué avec la tradition de la tapisserie de la Renaissance. Dernièrement, John Portman, architecte du Renaissance Center de Détroit, construction évaluée à \$337 millions, lui a commandé une œuvre et l'Université de Houston, une composition pour sa nouvelle bibliothèque; plus récemment encore, l'Administration des Services Généraux de l'Oklahoma lui accordait une subvention pour lui permettre de décorer le hall d'entrée de l'édifice fédéral. Toutes ces œuvres sont frappantes et étonnent par l'alliance réalisée entre le tissage, l'art le plus ancien pratiqué par l'homme, et les exploits de la technogénie les plus audacieux. Il y a sans doute lieu de s'attendre à ce que les architectes des édifices du 20^e siècle recourent à la chaleur de la fibre pour humaniser les surfaces antiseptiques faites d'acier, de verre et de tuiles. Depuis le 14^e siècle, les tapisseries ont effacé de notre mémoire l'humidité des murs des châteaux. Cependant, l'œuvre de Knodel étend la relation spatiale entre l'architecture et la sculpture et communique une expérience émotive qui situe toute la masse de l'édifice dans une perspective identifiable.

À l'Hôtel Plaza, centre d'attraction du Renaissance Center, *Free Fall*, qui atteint 70 pieds de hauteur, s'élève verticalement dans la cour intérieure, haute de huit étages et directement éclairée. Quarante panneaux d'argent et de mylar tissés à la main montent et descendent simultanément, modulent l'espace intérieur par le motif serein de surfaces textiles continues, tombent doucement en cascade jusqu'au rez-de-chaussée où ils se reflètent dans un lac intérieur qui s'étend sur un demi-acre. Malgré la présence de balcons en encorbellement, d'escaliers mobiles en saillie, d'arbres, de verdure et de divers éléments susceptibles d'éclipser une œuvre d'art, la scintillante sculpture tissée n'en demeure pas moins présente, agit en interaction avec la cour gorgée de lumière et d'eau et apporte une touche humaine dans un cadre où domine l'architecture.

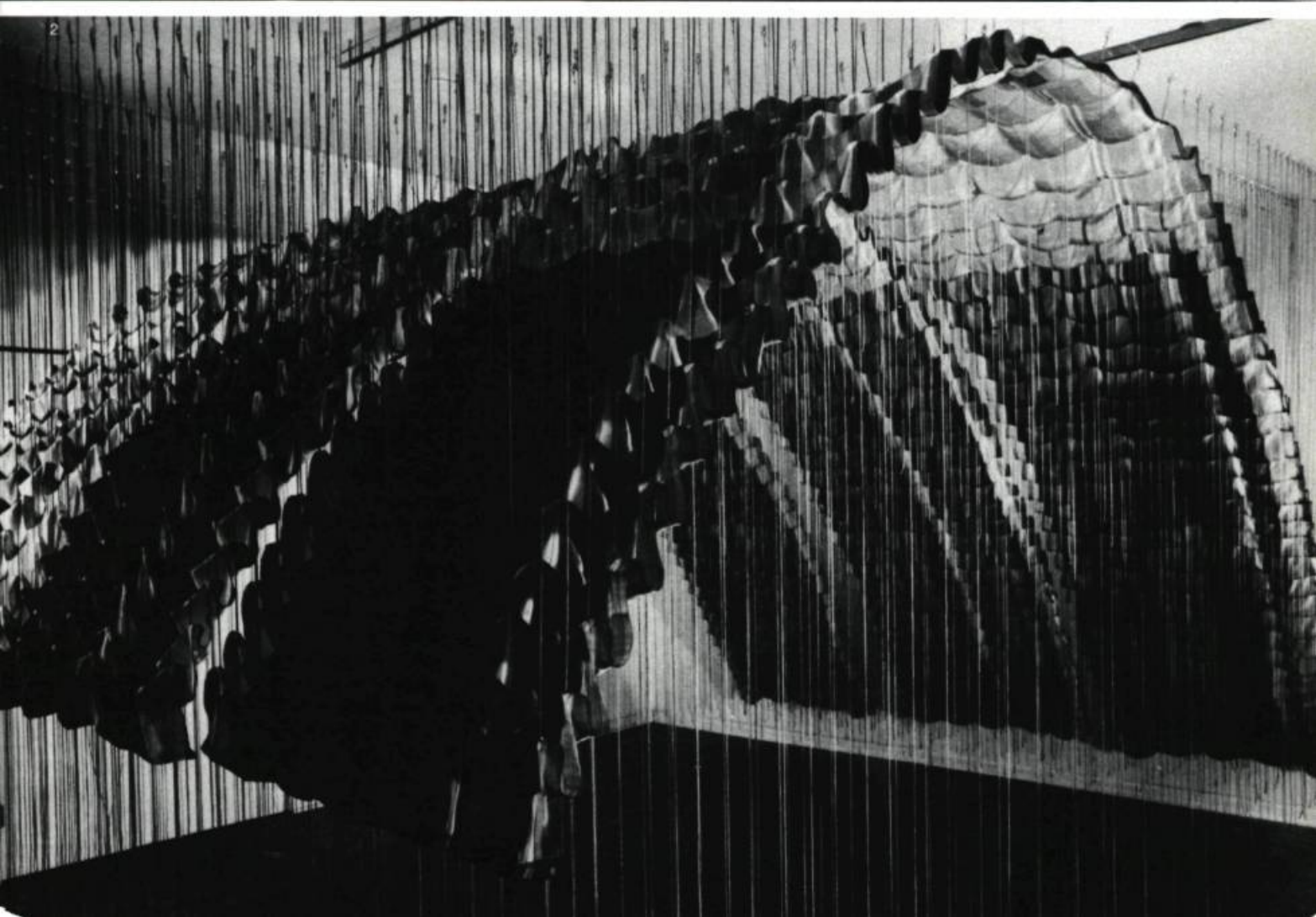
Les balcons, points d'observation avantageux, permettent d'apprécier les variations subtiles de tons allant du bleu gris au jaune, au violet et au pourpre.

De la même façon, l'œuvre de Knodel intitulée *Gulf Stream*, s'étale sur une longueur de 110 pieds dans la galerie en forme de boîte de verre horizontale qui mène à la bibliothèque de l'Université de Houston, un espace qui, visuellement, forme le pivot d'un campus admirablement paysagé. Le soir, 120 verges de rubans, assemblés deux à deux et fortement éclairés, se reflètent dans le verre qui les enveloppe, se tordent et se déplacent selon un rythme symétrique, tout en produisant un sentiment d'intériorité et de confort. L'énergie dégagée par les bandes tordues symbolise les forces à l'œuvre au sein du ferment intellectuel de ce centre du savoir.

La prédilection de Knodel pour le textile utilisé pour fins de sculpture, a commencé à germer dans son esprit alors qu'il étudiait à l'Université de Californie, à Los Angeles, et qu'en 1961, déjà, il entreprit de manipuler des laizes de textiles. Il étudiait à l'époque le dessin de la texture des tissus au moyen de l'écran de soie, du batik, de la toile ton-tisse, etc., et, plus tard, le tissage lui-même en combinant sur le métier à tisser deux sortes de matières. Il présenta ses tissus délicats, souvent transparents, comme des auvents portés par des tiges d'aluminium ou comme des formes tournantes sur un cadre métallique tendu sur des montants à ressorts. Sa construction en textile *Something To Do With Trees*, constituée de quatre figures plates en forme d'arbres, mesurant chacune 6 pieds sur 17, et faites de laine, de soie, de nylon et de polyester, faisaient présager les œuvres à venir. Dès 1971, son intérêt pour les espaces clos parut dans la salle à manger tissée qu'il a exposée au Musée de Pasadena. Il a littéralement tissé une pièce de 8 pieds sur 12 sur 8 avec de minces bandes de toile, en y incorporant des miroirs à l'intérieur de cylindres noués. Loin de se fermer au monde extérieur, cet espace donnait une impression d'ouverture, en produisant, avec le milieu environnant, un espace *spécial*, isolant et invitant à la fois. Plus tard, en 1974, Knodel tissa un autre espace fermé, *Act VIII*, utilisant cette fois une gaze très légère. La surface était un délice chromatique. Réalisés au moyen de la minutieuse méthode des nœuds teints (*tie-dye*), trois panneaux de rubans bonbon sont suspendus côte à côte au moyen de centaines de cordes verticales d'un rose lumineux en une courbe parabolique offrant une intimité délicate et sensuelle. Lors d'une visite à l'exposition *Fiber Works* au Musée de Cleveland, l'année dernière, je rencontrais un groupe d'élèves en visite

1. Gerhardt G. KNODEL.
Arroyo Seco (maquette), 1977.
1 m x 4,2 x 4,2.

2. *Act VIII*, 1974.
Soie et cordes en nylon;
238 cm 7 x 297,7 x 427,2.
Coll. de l'artiste.



guidée, arrêtés devant *Act VIII*. Ingénieuse, celle qui les guidait avait recommandé à son auditoire de ne pas toucher à l'ouvrage mais plutôt de souffler dessus, ce qui eut pour effet de changer la surface diaphane en un chatoyant torrent d'ondulations. Elle leur montra, en outre, que l'on pouvait déplacer toute la pièce sur le côté et le ranger le long d'un mur. Une sculpture cinétique vraiment pratique!

Cette facilité de déplacement provient du système de cordes auquel les panneaux sont suspendus. Chaque corde part d'un rail horizontal parallèle au plafond, voyage verticalement au tissu qu'il perce à intervalles réguliers et est arrêté par un simple nœud sur la face intérieure. La longueur des cordes est établie de façon à donner à la surface tissée la courbe voulue; l'épaisseur du tissu détermine la quantité d'ondulations ou de plissés. Enfin, les cordons eux-mêmes fournissent une nouvelle dimension. D'une épaisseur variant entre $\frac{1}{8}$ et $\frac{3}{4}$ de pouce, en nylon tressé de couleurs très vives, ils tendent à capter la lumière réfléctée par les surfaces tissées et, par leur réunion, font l'effet de colonnes. Le spectateur doit les traverser pour atteindre le calme espace intérieur du refuge parabolique.

L'exploration des possibilités de la flexibilité de la surface textile a conduit Knodel à des formes diverses. Une exposition à la Galerie James Yaw, à Birmingham, au Michigan, était à juste titre intitulée *Eleven Aerials Acts*. Plus tard, il eut la velléité de faire quelques expériences avec des murs de tissu commandés électriquement, les faisant traverser une pièce puis arrêtant leur mouvement afin d'obtenir un changement de densité ou de forme. Il rêva d'une cathédrale gothique où loger l'une de ses créations. «Imaginez l'effet dramatique que produirait un changement de forme qui suivrait la fête religieuse».

En 1975, *Parhelic Path*, qui mesurait 18 pieds sur 40 sur 8, ouvrit à Knodel les portes de la prestigieuse Biennale Internationale de la Tapisserie de Lausanne, en Suisse, où ses panneaux plissés se projetaient d'un mur à un autre dans la vaste galerie du palais de Rumine. Il était évident que son œuvre suivait une conception qui lui était intimement propre, tellement elle était distincte de celles des autres qui offraient de nouveaux concepts d'utilisation de la fibre textile. La plupart abandonnaient celle-ci et ses bordures parallèles comme si l'usage du métier à tisser était dépassé. Les possibilités de texture avaient séduit presque tous les tisserands, les poussant à l'utilisation du fil, des plastiques, de la corde épaisse d'un pouce et du jute. Knodel, pour sa part, a fait fi de tous ces matériaux et a plutôt choisi une surface tissée lisse, délicatement dessinée, qu'il pouvait manipuler à volonté. De nouveau invité en 1977, il présenta *Arroyo Seco*, une composition comprenant six longueurs d'un tissu transparent attachées en alternance à deux tubes d'aluminium parallèles et disposés à hauteur de la taille, inclinée vers le sol au centre où le lit d'une rivière interrompait la surface, le tout dissimulé par l'image du ravin érodé.

Directeur du Département des Fibres Textiles à la Cranbrook Academy of Art, à Bloomfield Hills, au Michigan, depuis 1970, Gery Knodel personifie le jeune et bel artiste qui travaille avec la fibre et le métier à tisser plutôt qu'avec la peinture et la palette. Cranbrook est une institution exigeante qui

attire la crème des diplômés d'art des collègues du monde entier. Le programme de maîtrise a formé des meneurs qui ont su atteindre des postes enviés dans le milieu académique et dans l'industrie. Ses standards concernant les prototypes ont stimulé la recherche dans un domaine foisonnant déjà de changements marqués où le tissage et l'art du textile rejoignent le grand courant du monde artistique.

Dès que Knodel reçut la commande de John Portman, il se rendit compte que les dimensions des panneaux flottants dépassaient la largeur de ses métiers. De plus, il n'était pas possible pour un homme travaillant seul de tisser les centaines de verges de tissu nécessaires à la réalisation du projet. Il demanda donc l'aide des Churchill Weavers de Berea, au Kentucky, groupe de tisserands fondé en 1922 par le Dr Churchill, ancien professeur de sciences physiques au Collège de Berea. Churchill avait créé de l'emploi pour les tisserands locaux dans une région où l'économie était en baisse en leur faisant produire des articles pratiques: cravates, écharpes, couvertures. Aujourd'hui, propriété de Richard et Lily Bellando, les Churchill Weavers comptent 45 employés qui fournissent des magasins spécialisés comme Saks, I. Magnin, Lord & Taylor et d'autres. Au début, il y eut un peu d'hésitation de part et d'autre, mais, par la suite, leur relation fut si cordiale pendant la production de *Free Fall* que Gery redemanda à nouveau l'aide du groupe pour l'exécution de *Gulf Stream*. Il monta lui-même les métiers à tisser, utilisa plus de 120 verges de mylar rouge de 72 fils au pouce, régla soigneusement les problèmes de mesure qu'ils se présentaient puis laissa aux artistes de Churchill l'initiative de la production du tissu. Knodel dit à ce sujet: «L'étape du tissage a consisté à lancer la navette et effectuer quelques changements simples de couleur. Ce sont de véritables artisans en ce sens qu'ils utilisent leurs mains et ils m'ont soulagé de ce très long travail. Un alliage heureux de ressources et d'énergie.» Pour réaliser la composition destinée à la ville d'Oklahoma, il a fallu 500 verges de tissu de 10 pouces de largeur que les artisans de Churchill ont également tissés.

Et voilà, le cercle se referme, et l'histoire se répète. Dans une petite ville du Kentucky, en un établissement qui rappelle un atelier médiéval, on tisse des tapisseries contemporaines avec, cette fois, la perception spatiale articulée et consciente de Gerhardt Knodel.

(Traduction Marie-Sylvie Fortier-Rolland)



3. *Free Fall*, 1977. Quarante panneaux; H. totale: 21 m. 17; Prof.: 4 m. 55; Larg.: 2 m. 72. Detroit, Renaissance Center, Vestibule de l'Hôtel Plaza.

Virginia M. West, qui est directrice du Département des Arts du Textile au College of Art du Maryland Institute, a publié plusieurs ouvrages et de nombreux articles sur la tapisserie, le tissage, la sculpture tissée. D'une grande activité professionnelle, elle a organisé des expositions, donné des conférences et fait partie de nombreux jury. Son action s'est portée tant sur le plan régional et national qu'international. Elle habite Baltimore.

It is neither criticized or praised, its existence is only recorded as part of our urban habitation upon this planet. What is revealed is this, it is not the painter who is anti-human, it is not his creation nor that of any individual. The world of man's created environment conforms to the elements of nature's teaching. Go Shigi's painting *Housing-D, 74-2*, for example, shows the cells within a complex interdependent human habitation as modular, if not as architecturally perfect, as the honeycombs of a thousand worker bees. The artists see no need of colour in most of these works, they are generally colourless to our eyes. We see our cities as grey and colourless. I remember stepping from a New York subway coming up out of the earth and seeing the grey stone of Wall Street for the first time. Tokyo is not only a larger city than any in North America or Europe, but it is also far more condensed in its living space. The artist is an urban person and records what is there and yet remains unseen and grey in our minds. People in cities seek beauty and meaning in the arts. They seek it in glass cases in a museum or at the theatre. In a crowd of millions moving like ants for the Tokyo underground at rush hour, each wrapped in his or her own individuality, one person stops to look up and is knocked over. In New York, London, Montreal or Tokyo only the tourist looks up. Only the stranger looks up and sees the surroundings. The artist in the same way provides this function. A small and compact kitchen is the subject of Go Shigi's painting *A Kitchen* painted in 1975. It represents a centre of human activity within the apartment multiplied a hundred times, perhaps more, within a single exterior structure. Yet everyone knows his own door.

The artist is part of this world while standing apart from it. He paints images that resemble in some ways photographs and then these paintings are enlarged as large as the painted canvas. Side by side both can be compared with the original. The copy, its surface and colour perhaps somewhat different from the painting on canvas, exists as a kind of paradox. The photo is derived from the painting and not from the actual subject.

NOSTALGIA FOR ROMANTICISM

by Eric CAMERON

Virgil Hammock's exhibition of sixteen drawings at Dalhousie Art Gallery includes seven based on photographs of the composer Mahler. Most of the rest are self-portraits or portraits of his family. It is the relationship between these two groups of works that sets the theme of it all and finally gives the key to the meaning of the drawing process for him.

Several of the Mahler drawings are quite straightforward portraits, a seated half-length or just a simple profile of a head, that are prosaically rendered from plates in books. In one Mahler is on a boat going to New York; in that case alone there is a scanty indication of setting. Another, *Mahler at Toblach 1907*, shows the composer and his daughter together with a rather shadowy figure of a woman in the background. At that point we might notice the parallel with the subject of Hammock, his daughter and former wife together in Edmonton, but generally the connection is not forced. We are left to form our own conclusions as to the nature of the juxtaposition, to play with the composer's name and its suggestion of a visual artist, and to wonder if there really are similarities between the cast of Mahler's features and those of Hammock himself.

In the brief catalogue notes he does tell us his drawing is a private activity, but one has to look between the lines for its personal significance. As drawings they are very reticent. There is no great passionate outpouring of emotion of the kind we find, for instance, in Mahler's symphonies. Perhaps that in itself is their main point. What Hammock shows us is the actual Mahler, who was in fact a rather small man. If Mahler had his share of misfortunes (the loss of a daughter), that in itself is no more than many people endure without attracting the attention of history. What was different with Mahler was that the music of late romanticism allowed him to externalise his personal feelings on a heroic scale, to sublimate his grief in expanding it to the dimensions of a great tragedy.

Since Mahler, that sort of sublimation has become more difficult. The twentieth century and its art have become disillusioned with heroic stances. Looking back over his own active art life since the fifties it may seem to Hammock now that he has "watched the form of the visual arts disintegrate to the point where writing on art is more interesting than art itself," but the process he describes is partly an

internal one, his own shift of emphasis from art making to art writing, and as he looks back to the generation of Mahler he still remembers that disenchantment with the hero image was his own starting point in art.

That was in 1960 when he went to art school at the age of twenty-two. For three years before that he had been a photographer with the U.S. army in Korea. The war was over, but people continued to get killed — in automobile accidents, plane crashes and suicides. It was his job to take the photographs. Between times he recorded the parades and medal presentations. It left an abiding sense of futility and absurdity.

At the San Francisco Art Institute he first studied photography, but soon turned to painting. His subjects were cowboys, airline pilots, politicians, and writers like Scott Fitzgerald and Herman Hesse. They were the heroes of society, but in the photographs from where he worked they were only paper heroes. Sometimes the subjects were very pointed, the boy presented with a blue rosette for some juvenile achievement, the maimed war veteran receiving his medal in the hospital. In the context of California figurative painters like Richard Diebenkorn his flattened images fitted well enough, but there was something negative, a denial of humanity in his own move towards abstraction.

When his painting becomes completely abstract around 1966 there is something very harsh about the colours. I have to admit to finding them very difficult to deal with. However, before the end of the decade the formal patterns began to resolve themselves as landscapes — impenetrable mountain ranges beyond great expanses of water that provide no place to stand. As time goes on the mountains break, a path winds its way into the distance, the sun appears above the horizon, but it is all still very flat. From '72 come the first of the drawings, generally from photographs. He copies an old photograph of himself in army uniform. It seems important to know he is working from the flat surface. When he turns away from his photographs he finds in his studio window a subject that is just as flat; the wall, the double layers of glass and the fence beyond that. When he draws his own image in the mirror, it comes out just as flat again, squashed between the drawing board and some unidentifiable form in the background. The lines are varied, a lot of different grades of pencil and different modes of shading, but almost always a rather hard indecisive line somewhere seems to dominate as if he were trying to penetrate the barrier of the paper itself.

Occasionally as in the drawing of his daughter *Paive on the P.E.I. Ferry* there may be a hint of the "magic" realism of Maritime artists like Alex Colville, a reminder that the years since San Francisco have brought him via Indiana, Alberta, and Manitoba to New Brunswick. Such occasional overtones are never more than slight. In the end they only point up that his is a world deprived of illusion.

THE SCULPTURED PLANES OF GERHARDT KNODEL

By Virginia WEST

Historically, the use of the fabric plane within interior architectural space is not new, dating back to medieval times when banners and tapestries were hung in high vaulted areas of churches and castles. Such textiles called attention to the new dimensions of space that were made possible after the pointed arch raised ceilings to new heights and allowed light to penetrate interior recesses.

Gerhardt Knodel has bridged the tradition of Renaissance tapestry with his handwoven sculpture, super-scale works using the fabric plane as three-dimensional dynamism within vast architectural interiors. One recent commission came from John Portman, architect for Detroit's \$337 million Renaissance Center; a second from the University of Houston for their new library; and the most recent a grant from the General Services Administration for the entrance to the Federal building in Oklahoma City. All are stunning, — astonishing in their ability to blend the most radical engineering feats with weaving, the oldest of man's arts. It is perhaps to be expected that the architects of our twentieth century buildings would resort to the warmth of fiber to humanize their antiseptic steel, glass, and terrazzo surfaces; since the fourteenth century tapestries have visually blotted dank castle walls from memory. However, Knodel's work extends the spatial relationship of architecture and sculpture, communicating an emotional experience that places the whole mass of the building into an identifiable perspective.

Free Fall soars 70' vertically in the eight-story sky-lighted atrium of the Plaza Hotel, hub of the Renaissance Center complex. Forty handwoven panels of silver and mylar ascend and descend simultaneously, modulate the interior space with the serene pattern of sequential textile planes, gently cascade to the first floor level, where they are reflected in a half-acre indoor lake. Although surrounded by cantilevered balconies, jutting escalators, trees, greenery, and various elements guaranteed to distract attention from a work of art, the coruscant fabric sculpture holds its own, interacting with the light-filled courtyard and the water, lending the human touch to an over-architecturized setting. The balconies afford vantage points from which to perceive subtle tonal variations from bluish gray to yellow to violet and magenta.

Similarly, Knodel's *Gulf Stream*, 110' long, fills the horizontal glass box passageway to the library at the University of Houston, a visually pivotal area at the heart of the beautifully landscaped campus. Illuminated at night and reflected in the enclosing glass, 120 yards of paired linear ribbons twist and move in symmetric rhythm, at the same time affording a sense of enclosure and comfort. Energy diffused from the torquing strips symbolizes the forces at work amid the intellectual ferment of this center of learning.

Knodel's predilection with fabric as sculpture has been germinating since his student days at the University of California at Los Angeles, where, as early as 1961, he began to manipulate textile lengths. At that time he was studying the design of the fabric surface by means of silk screening, batik, flocking, etc., and later the actual weaving of fabric by the interlacing of two sets of elements on the loom. He displayed his delicate, often transparent, fabrics as canopies, supported by aluminum rods, or as revolving forms over metal framework on spring tension poles. His fabric construction, *Something To Do With Trees*, four flat tree-like shapes, each 6 x 17 feet, of wool, silk, nylon and polyester, portends what was to come. By 1971 his concern for the environmental enclosure was manifested in his woven dining habitat, shown at the Pasadena Art Museum. He literally wove a room, 8 x 12 x 8 feet, of narrow linen strips, incorporating mirrors within knotted cylinders. Rather than blocking the outside world, the space had a sense of openness, articulating with its surrounding ambience, a "special" area, separating yet inviting. Later, in 1974, Knodel wove another enclosure, *Act VIII*, this time of gossamer sheer threads. The surface was a chromatic treat, accomplished by the painstaking tie-dye resist method, three ribbon candy panels suspended side by side by means of hundreds of vertical neon pink cords in a parabolic curve of delicious, sensuous intimacy. This writer, while viewing the exhibit *Fiberworks* at the Cleveland Museum of Art last year, happened on a conducted tour where a group of schoolchildren had paused by *Act VIII*. The ingenious guide, having instructed her entourage not to touch the work, told them to blow on it instead, which sent the diaphanous surface into a shimmering torrent of ripples. Further, she demonstrated that the entire enclosure could be pushed to the side out of the way and housed along a wall. A practical, kinetic sculpture!

The clue to this flexible traversal is the cord system by means of which panels are suspended. Each cord originates from a horizontal track parallel to the ceiling, travels vertically to the fabric where each perforates the surface at periodic intervals and is stopped on the inner surface by a simple, terminal knot. The length of the cords is calculated to control the amount of curve to the fabric plane; the thickness of the fabric determines the amount of rippling or pleating. Another dimension is added by the cords themselves, varying from 1/8" to 3/4" braided nylon in high intensity colors, which tend to capture the light reflected off the fabric planes, and by the columnar effect of the massed cords, through which the viewer must walk in order to reach the quiet interior space of the parabolic hut.

Exploring the possibilities of the flexible fabric plane led Knodel to a variety of configurations. An exhibit at the James Yaw Gallery in Birmingham, Michigan, was appropriately titled *Eleven Aerial Acts*. Later he played with the idea of electrically controlled walls of fabric, moving them across a room, stopping movement to produce a change of density or shape. He dreamed of a Gothic cathedral as home for one of his creations. "Think of the drama involved in changing the shape according to the religious season."

In 1975 *Parhellic Path*, 18' x 40' x 8', gained entry for Knodel to the prestigious International Tapestry Biennial in Lausanne, Switzerland, where his pleated panels projected from opposite walls of the spacious Rumine Palace Gallery. It was clear that his work followed his own inner conviction, so distinctive was it in comparison to other innovative fiber concepts, most of which had abandoned the fabric sheet with parallel edges as though the loom product was passé. Almost every weaver had been seduced by the textural possibilities, pushing the use of wire, plastics, inch-thick rope and jute, but

Knodel rejected all this, opting instead for the smooth woven surface, delicately delineated, which he could manipulate at will. Invited again in 1977, he displayed *Arroyo Seco*, six lengths of filmy fabric staggered between two parallel sets of aluminum tubes at waist level. Dipping to the floor at the center where the "river bed" interrupted the surface plane, the whole was screened with the image of the eroded gully.

Head of the Fiber Department at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, since 1970, Gery Knodel personifies the young, handsome artist who works with fiber instead of paint and the loom instead of the palette. Cranbrook is selective, attracting the cream of the crop of college art graduates internationally. The Master of Fine Arts program has turned out pacesetters who have earned coveted positions in academe and industry. Its prototypal standards have instigated investigation in a field already burgeoning with vigorous change, where weaving and fiber art have come into the mainstream of the world of art.

When Knodel first received his commission, he realized that the dimensions for the floating panels exceeded the width of his looms. It was also impossible for one man working alone to weave the hundreds of yards required for the project. He turned for aid to Churchill Weavers in Berea, Kentucky, which had been founded in 1922 by Dr. Churchill, formerly a physics professor at Berea College. Churchill had created employment for local handweavers in an area of downward economic conditions, producing functional items such as ties, scarves, and blankets. To-day owned by Richard and Lily Bellando, Churchill Weavers has a staff of 45 who furnish specialty shops — Saks, I. Magnin, Lord & Taylor and others. Both parties were hesitant at first, but their relationship worked so well during the production of *Free Fall* that Gery went to them again with *Gulf Stream*. He set up the looms himself, over 120 yards of red mylar at 72 threads per inch, carefully dealing with problems as they arose, then turning over the production of the cloth to Churchill Weavers. "The actual time spent weaving," Knodel stated, "was straight throwing of the shuttle with simple color changes. These were true craftsmen in the sense of using their hands and they relieved me of the time-consuming burden. It was a happy linking of resources and energies." The project for Oklahoma City has required 500 yards of 10" wide fabric which Churchill also wove.

With this the narrative comes full circle, and history has repeated itself. In a small Kentucky town, at an establishment reminiscent of a medieval weaving atelier contemporary "tapestries" are being woven, this time with the conscious, articulate spatial perception of Gerhardt Knodel.

DOROTHY MACPHERSON OR THE DEMOCRATIZATION OF ART THROUGH THE FILM

By René ROZON

We ought to drink to it — the Canadian Centre of the Film on Art celebrates its fifteenth anniversary this year — but our heart isn't in it. The reason? The very existence of the Centre is in danger. And yet the director, Dorothy Macpherson, has been working for more than twenty-five years to promote the film on art. To clarify the matter, let us ask her to reveal her thoughts to us.

René Rozon — What paths led you to the film on art?

Dorothy Macpherson — My earlier work had prepared me for it and chance did the rest. In England, at the end of the thirties and at the beginning of the forties, I was the secretary of the London Group, an association of painters and sculptors, and my chief responsibility consisted of making them known to the public. At the start, I was therefore tied to the artistic milieu and education. Thanks to this experience, on my arrival in Canada in 1944, I was appointed co-secretary, with Jules Bazin, of the Quebec section — I had settled in Montreal — of the Federation of Canadian Artists. Incidentally, in London I had previously met John Grierson, who had meanwhile become first commissioner of the National Film Board. He learned that I was in Canada, summoned me, and brought me into the NFB. After that, two combined factors plotted my future. On the one hand, my first screening of the film on art, which was a revelation for me. This was *Il Dramma di Christo* (1941) by Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras, based on Giotto's frescoes in the Padua Arena, a wonderful film because it recreates the climate of the work with great economy of means. To this day, this document has profoundly marked me.