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the domain of communication. Art, particularly, fusing aesthetic values? In other terms, is tech­
is affected by its relationships with all new forms cultural section in the establishment of new other conquests? The debate is an open one; it aided by additional supports, is rushing toward change of direction in art since the appearance technolo­gies. This is also the most important economic, financial and political part dominated the is the fight for content which, until now, has re­
sition that has been going on for some years be­

tail a period of settlements of account but will claring it dead, but dominant. This will surely en­

optimistic when he speaks of the rapture of com­

changes in a sequence of moments”. He states that all functions have been abolished in one single dimension, that of communication; all se­crets, spaces, fields of action destroyed to the benefic­
tion, and he emphasizes that promiscuity, saturation, extremist creat­

keen to make us put technology in its place and technolog­ism. This is by means of this information that drawings of very complex architecture strip away the ele­ments of evil. These places harbour futurist, frantic, robotized persons who are sometimes even exposed to radiation; alone or in reciprocal action, they are decided, abandoned to them­selves, bound hand and foot in the face of death. The imprisoned, paralyzed being splits, is re­
fected, is extended and takes more room under a stylized and geometrized light. A flashing, progres­
sive breach materializes under our eyes: an appear­ance of transformation watches the viewer.

Whether it be in an engraving, a painting or a drawing, this message is conveyed in an im­pressive production. If one lines up the four hundred paintings and drawings of large size (55,6 cm by 75,2 cm) in the Kaddish series, the world of the concentration camp is revealed to our eyes. Each of these works is complete in itself. They record half-breaths, sighs of suffocation and posthumous cries: “I have represented only one of the facets of evil,” says Jan Menses. These works disclose to us a long interior progres­sect; this is a denunciation, a commentary and a social criticism, a fragment of an atomic fu­
Kaddish means a sanctification of the inno­cent, victims of Nazi barbarism! It is also a prayer for the dead, “a cry of hope, of unim­paired faith in present and future life, hurled toward heaven by us mortals”! Kaddish is a series of extraordinary drawings and pictures.

Under the pressure of a diabolical obsession, sustained by an impeccable technique, in a puri­fied interior world, Jan Menses painted, drew and outlined the paper of the Klippoth series comprising five hundred new works! These are a continuation of the death theme and are caught in the abyss of agony, a strange atmos­phere. This research into the transformation of matter extracts white from blackened leaves and frees the Executioner and the Victim. This moral conflict is without outcome; the elements of evil are the rulers. Klippoth also signifies envelopes, peel, bark or refuse, debris. The spiritual prac­tice consists of working on the destruction of its wrappings. In order to allow the flashing forth of the Divine Light impressed within each human being. This is the work done by the Tsaddik. It is by means of this information that drawings of very complex architecture strip away the ele­ments of evil. These places harbour futurist, frantic, robotized persons who are sometimes even exposed to radiation; alone or in reciprocal action, they are decided, abandoned to them­selves, bound hand and foot in the face of death. The imprisoned, paralyzed being splits, is re­
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During this exhibition the heedful visitor could thrill to this light of repentance. The continuity and flow of each theme blend; it is at the sight of this ensemble and through Menses that the shadow of this ensemble will be with us. ‘Each time that man purifies himself, he brings back to its true place an atom of uncreated light and advances the messianic time when the divine person will be fully revealed.’

Tikkoune is the explosion of life of the black, a spark of transformation of metaphysical matter. This creation in the form of galactic skeletons, will make a rebirth possible for the human face; it is a glorious message, half warlike, half redeeming. These blacks of atonement give life. The explosion of the second reading, this time on observing the whites, is a luminous cluster. Its dazzling concentration is used in drips, measured in its wavelength, in the manner of an unearthly mystical scientist. In Menses' drawing the clear distinction between good and evil is the demarcation between white and black. The gestures of the painter, the brush strokes and the lines of the ruler have completely disappeared. It is as though the artist twists up each hair in the grain of the paper and penetrates it. The surface of the mat black offers the moment of repose for the eye. "All these reflections of silhouettes draw human prototypes in the image of God", says Jan Menses.

The expression of his work is a delight for the eye, a light of concentration nurtured in the ethereal fire of poetry, the quivering reality of a cellular memory, traced in the meaning of black. This significance is indefinable without the presence of this light, whether it be corrosive or beneficential.

1. Presented at the Michel Têroux gallery, Montreal, October 1983

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

ROBERT MOTHERWELL:
ART CHARGED WITH FEELING
By Helen DUFFY

A major Robert Motherwell retrospective exhibition, arranged by the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, opened in Buffalo, N.Y. on October 1, 1983. It will travel to four American museums before ending its tour at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, from December 7, 1984 to February 3, 1985. It is the artist's tenth retrospective in twenty-four years, and it brings together ninety-two oil and acrylic paintings and collages on canvas, board and paper, created between 1941 and 1982. The conventional scaffolding of such presentations has become perhaps the most suitable framework for assessing the broad repertory of his oeuvre, which calls for periodical summing up on a grand scale.

Once the youngest member of the group whose name he coined, The New York School, Motherwell is - with Lee Krasner and Willem de Kooning - one of the few still active key figures of the Abstract Expressionist movement that included fellow artists such as (in alphabetical or­der) William Baziotes, Arshile Gorky, Franz Kline, Barnett Newman, Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, David Smith and Clifford Still, all no longer living. He stands at the center of a circle that has not closed and his art today springs from the same inexhaustible resources of feeling and sensitivity, kept alive by his ideology and attitude.

Motherwell (born 1915 in Aberdeen, Wash­ington), painter, collage, printmaker, art historian and editor, is well known in Canada where his influence on younger artists has been particularly strong during the 1950's. With its unique fusion of refined lyricism, acute form-sense and calligraphic ease of line, Motherwell's abstract imagery lent itself to imitation more readily than is commonly supposed. It is our loss that this exceptional show will not cross the border to provide the kind of perspective that is difficult to gain from textbooks.

The artist's vocation as a writer and critic, his faculty in communicating the central concerns of modernism with clarity and conviction, was part of his early success. An outspoken internationalist with a thorough knowledge of Western history and culture, he formed the vital link between European expatriate painters in New York and a small circle of American sympathizers during the war years, when such a rapprochement was of crucial importance. In his words: "When I started out, all but a few were against abstract painting. The art world, as it was then, hated it. But the university world was very interested in what we were doing. Since I knew how to talk about it (I had originally trained in philosophy) I was given, by default, the office of spokesman for the Abstract Expressionists, especially in the university world."

Motherwell was twenty-seven when he abandoned university studies (and his doctoral thesis on Delacroix's journals) in favour of painting. Two years later, in 1944, he had his first mature solo exhibition at Peggy Guggenheim's Art of This Century Gallery in New York, and was appointed first director, then general editor of "The Documents of 20th Century Art" series. In this capacity, he introduced writings by outstanding figures in art and literature (Apollinaire, Mon­drian, Hans Arp, Max Ernst and others) often translated into English from European texts. The slim, sparsely illustrated paperbacks reached a wide public long before New Paint­ing and the New York style par excellence began to attract world attention.

This retrospective exhibition concentrates on major works selected to "reveal the origins, nuances and stylistic changes with which the artist has dealt in his substantial and long career". Included are paintings from principal series such as Spanish Elegies; Open; In Plato's Cave; The Blue Painting Lesson; Je t'aime, and A la Pintura.

To Motherwell, subject matter has always been crucial, and creating in open-ended series is a ritualized experience that cannot be confused with so-called "serial painting". A particu­larly successful series of such an inspiration is a recapitulation of key motifs over an indeterminate period, imitating a lifetime. Rather like a literary work that builds a network of incidental tales around a central plot, Motherwell's series appear to be cyclic, while moving through endless levels of meaning and inter-connection. The artist offers clues in the titles he chooses, trusting the viewer to see the point.

For example, Riverrun, 1972, connects like River Liffey, 1975, with the Irish world of James Joyce: the Liffey runs through his native Dublin, and "riverrun" happens to be the first word in the first sentence of "Finnegan's Wake", the never-ending story whose conclusion - the last para­graph - is its beginning, closing the cycle.

The monumental Elegies to the Spanish Re­public are free from the painful nostalgia of an exile remembering the vanished past. According to Motherwell they are, unlike the rest of his work, "public". The Elegies reflect the internationalist in me, interested in the historical forces of the 20th century, with strong feelings about the conflicting forces in it. They originated in a small illustration the artist did for a poem by Harold Rosenberg in 1948, not antici­pating that it would become a leitmotiv for some thirty years and result in over 140 paintings. The basic shapes that dominate the Elegies - brooding arrays of black, rough-edged oval forms en­cased by ragged vertical beams - attracted more attention than most of his other seminal images. Motherwell was twenty-one in 1936, when the Spanish Civil War began and the tragedy of this conflict and its aftermath affected him deeply. In the Elegies we recognize the essence of Feder­ico Garcia Lorca's "Lament", death At Five in the Afternoon (title of a 1949 painting): an embracing metaphor for human affliction and suffering whatever its source and form, beyond the con­trast between life and death, and their inter-re­lation. The last of the Elegies, begun in 1975 (the year Generalissimo Franco died and parliamen­tary democracy was restored in Spain) was finished, almost simultaneously with a free-floating, shattered shadow figure entitled Spanish King, in 1979.

Motherwell travelled and studied extensively throughout his life. In his oeuvre we discover the aesthetic consistency of his emotional and intellectual links with the Hispanic, Latin and Celtic cultures that are the wellsprings of his art. His so-called Francophilia or Mediterreanphilia has never been an acquired taste; "My father had a vineyard in the Napa Valley (California). I grew up in a landscape not at all dissimilar to Provence, or to the central plateau of Spain, or to parts of Italy and the Mediterranean basin. In such landscapes, the colours are local, intense, and deep shades are black. The hills of California are ochre half the year".

His largeness of vision, his preoccupation with polarities - being and void; black and white; nightmare and daydream, Jour la maison, nuit la rue (title of a 1957 canvas) strives passionately to connect the present with a past and a future "to it, not to the place, with figure it produces" (peindre non la chose, mais l'effet qu'elle produit) in the spirit of Mallarmé. The distinctive rhetoric and the counteridiyllic concepts of 19th century modernism as expressed by Mallarmé, Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Delacroix continue to resonate in Motherwell's art and thought.

Matisse chose Mallarmé as his first subject when he began to illustrate poetry in the early 1930's. One of Motherwell's first superb collages

1. Robert MOTHERWELL
Mexican Night, 1979
Acrylic on canvas; 121 cm x 121.9.
Coll. Douglas S. Cramer, Los Angeles, California.
(Phot. Albright-Knox Art Gallery)
Bateau lve" suggests the artist's own spiritual voyage through troubled seas of emotion ("... J'ai vu quelquefois ce que l'homme a cru voir"). The luminosity of the canvases in the Blue Painting Lesson seems to capture the perfect moment when "l'azur et l'onde communient", or, more poetically, as Motherwell has it, "...what is behind it says without actually saying it: what is behind is never abstract, always used symbolically and associatively, ranging from the mysteries of black to the rich ochres, gritty yellows, vermillion, scarlet, and, less frequently, a cool ultramarine blue.

In this exhibition, the intimate and often autobiographical aspect of his collages plays an important part. Built up in flat planes with torn, rather than scissors-cut paper, they suggest drawing by tearing'. He first began to experiment – with Jackson Pollock – in 1942, and soon "collage somehow became a joy, and has been ever since. Also, it has another function: sometimes I get stuck in painting, as everybody does, and often, after shifting to collage for a time, I may resolve the painting problem when I return to it".

The collages counter-balance the epic scale of his recent works, such as the magical Face of the Night (for Octavio Paz) 1981, and The Hollow Men 1983 (title of a poem by T.S. Eliot). Both paintings evoke Octavio Paz's words, restating in a different medium what the work of art says is not to be found in its manifest content, but rather in what it says without actually saying it: what is behind the forms, the colours, the words... ?". Motherwell's oeuvre is as masterly a demonstration of this concept as any living painter could set forth.

4. and 5. Robert Motherwell, In His Own Words, Brochure publ. on the occasion of the exhibition by the Albright Knox Art Gallery, 1983.

6. The Voyage, 1949, inspired by Rimbaud's "l'azur et l'onde communient", and often, after shifting to collage for a time, I may resolve the painting problem when I return to it".

GALERIE DES BEUX-ARTS DE MONTREAL, 3400, avenue du Mont-Royal
Jusqu'au 1er avril: Alex Coville; Jusqu'au 22 avril: Eddoie Erdsos Erdsos; Du 13 au 31 mars: Temps présent; Du 3 au 10 mai: L'art contemporain de dessinateurs de sculptrurs contemporains.
Du 22 juin au 23 septembre: Bougonneau.

MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, 1500, avenue Mont-Royal Ouest

GALERIE D'ART CONCORDIA, Université Concordia, 4555, boulevard de Maisonneuve Ouest
Du 4 avril au 21 mai: Goodridge Roberts et ses personnages; de 1933 à 1955. Du 8 au 17 mai: Stéphane Poissette; Du 1er au 29 mai: Benoît Bouchard; Du 29 mai au 1er juin: Gérard Leduc; Mai et Juin: Lithographies et peintures; Du 1er au 29 mai: Roger Victor (maître).