Summaries of the Articles

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marguerite bourgeoys

As an authentic portrait of Mather Marguerite Bourgeoys, foundress of the Order of the Congregation of Notre Dame who died on January 12, 1700, in her 80th year, has come to light as the result of a restoration project on a work by artist Pierre Le Ber.

Le Ber was commissioned to do the painting at Mother Bourgeoys death. During the last century, however, the portrait was repainted, with no respect whatever for the original work, as evidenced by photographs 4 and 10. The original was not simply re-touched but an entirely new portrait was painted over it.

An expert New York artist-restorer named Edward O. Korany examined the work and by means of X-rays established that there was another portrait under the surface picture (Photo 5). In fact, the X-rays showed another shoulder line, other hands and part of another face. A coat of white lead, however, could not be penetrated sufficiently by the rays to enable the restorer to be certain the face could be uncovered. Fairly certain of the situation, he asked and was granted permission by the sisters of the order to proceed with the work.

The work of restoration is shown in Photos 6 and 7. The original painting comes to light in Photo 8. An enlargement of the head appears in Photo 9. Photo 10 shows the full true portrait.

Pierre Le Ber, son of Jacques Le Ber, the wealthiest merchant of the time in New France, was born in Montreal on August 11, 1669. Very pious and extremely generous, he gave much to the religious institutions of Ville Marie. He contributed greatly to the founding of the General Hospital of the Charron Brothers and, while he did not take vows, he was part of this community from the start. He died in one of the houses of the Brothers at Point St. Charles on October 1, 1707.

Nothing is known of his artistic background but it is certain that there was a feeling for beautiful things in the family. His sister, Jeanne, for example, did some magnificent pieces of embroidery. There is no doubt that he devoted a good part of his time to art, particularly painting, judging by the artist’s supplies itemized in his will.

Should we attribute the painting of the Infant Jesus at the Congregation of Notre Dame to this artist? I do not think so but it would be necessary to restore this work to its original state to be sure because it, too, has been retouched. But of one thing I am certain and that is that on January 12, 1700, Pierre Le Ber painted a masterwork of Canadian portraiture. It is a magnificent work which does justice to the many human qualities attributed to Mother Bourgeoys. Looking at this painting, it is not difficult to understand the love the people of Ville Marie had for the woman who contributed so much to the founding of the community.

marielette vermette

For Mariette Rousseau-Vermette, the art of tapestry-making is a grand and beautiful adventure. There is a profoundness to her work which reminds us of the Zen philosophy, a meditative, contemplative quality that produces a kind of poetic liturgy. She works serenely and generously to produce works which are moving without being upsetting and monumental without being solemn.

Mariette Rousseau-Vermette, who was born at Trois Pistoles in 1926, is the wife of ceramist Claude Vermette, of Ste. Adele. She studied in Canada, the United States, France, Italy, Spain and in the Scandinavian countries. She has had a number of exhibitions, including that of the Arts Council of Canada in 1967, and an international showing of modern tapestries. Her works are included in both Canadian and foreign collections.
The artist admits that her tapestries could be described as reflections. Her reflection in the lake, and on the snow at nightfall show a great affinity to nature. She has been influenced recently by the American artist Rothko, whose works frequently show a marked meditative quality. Her current work has a play of geometric forms with a lyrical quality and a pellucid form of Maricette Verset. She needs to explore new areas and her Spring show at the Camille Hebert Gallery showed that she may yet be reaching out for still new horizons despite the dynamic variety of her present efforts.

**gaetaudaudin—japan**

Some 600 pieces of pottery, brought back to Canada by Gaetaud Baudin, one of our most remarkable potters, after a study trip to Japan, were exhibited at the Pointe Claire Art Centre in June. The exhibition, which went by almost unnoticed, included examples of work from the regions of Honami, Bizen and Mashiko.

Baudin stayed in Honami, about 30 miles from Okayama and not far from Bizen. The young Yu Fujiwara worked with him at Kei Fujiwara's. Ken, the nephew of Kei, was a neighbor. Kanashige, Yamamoto and the three Fujiwaras are the most original and most celebrated potters of the region.

There are 100 potters in the one village of Bizen, Baudin says. The Bizen potteries are divided into three groups: the Yohin, Goma and Hidasuki. Baudin studied for two months with Seihei Tsuji, who lives in the Sakuragaoka area near Tokyo, and who, at 36 years of age, is considered one of the most interesting of the young potters. The only two professional female potters in Japan work with him.

Baudin reports that Soji Hamada is the big potter of the village of Mashiko. This potter and his group produce a functional type of work. Shimaoka's work, for example, has been at the request of a Japanese sculptor. The Shimaoka pottery produces a Functional ware and presents us with a visual sludge of manipulative images that are devised to be read with the least effort by the largest number of people.

It is this mass-produced contemporary world that Pop Art confronts. It uses popular images, and is involved with the means of communication that made these images popular.

There is no fixed and single aesthetic that dominates Pop Art, but, rather, a growing idea and a common attitude. The Pop attitude can be seen to emphasize the detachment of the artist; feedback, perhaps, from the American era of Zen and hipsterism. There is a strenuous allegiance to plain descriptive and dead-pan realism, and to the choice of random but archetypal events and objects.

The images used by the Pop artists are the most common and massively projected images of our time. Images so looked at that they have become unseen.

Roy Lichtenstein, for instance, starting from the comic-strip, the advertising poster and popular reproductions, fragments these images and presents them in an impersonal and direct manner, without sentiment or emotion. The effect of this presentation is that of a shock treatment: they are real and intense, as if for the first time.

With James Rosenquist, we find a montage of images taken from the grand themes of advertising. His colours are the jarring colours of billboard ads. The mechanical process of billboards is emphasized in the presentation. The Pop artist affirms man's contemporary world. He has no illusions that he can create, nor the ambition to imitate what he sees.
sacred art

An exhibition of sacred art was held during the summer at the Kelley Library of St. Dunstan’s University in Charlottetown as part of Prince Edward Island’s centennial program. The show was organized by Abbé Adrien Arseneault, an artist, folklorist, art critic and member of the Canada Council. There were 165 items in the exhibition, among them paintings, sculptures on wood, metal and stone, religious ornaments and even an altar. Some 50 Canadian artists from all the provinces were represented.

Québec season in Paris

Two interesting exhibitions were held in May and June in Paris. Jean McEwen’s show at the Galerie Anderson-Mayer in May was considered a great success by the French press. The journals, Art and Combat, were particularly impressed. In June, a show entitled Québec Painters in Paris, organized by artist James Pichette and our contributor, Jean Cathelin, was held at the Maison de la Culture Paris-Mercoeur. There were works by Riopelle, Germaine Perton, Marcelle Malraux, Edmond Alleyn, Paul V. Beaulieu, Suzanne Bergeron and Real Arseneault.

Modern painting in French Canada

La Peinture Moderne au Canada Français (Modern Painting in French Canada) is the third in a series of pamphlets dedicated to art, life and science in French Canada, published by the Department of Cultural Affairs in Quebec under the direction of Mrs. Genevieve de la Tour Fondue-Smith. This work by Guy Viau, consisting of 96 pages, considers the revival of the pictural arts in French Canada. The volume has been presented with good taste and is enhanced by a number of photographs and reproductions in black and white.

Salon du livre

An exhibition of Quebec books will be held in the Cité Universitaire Laval from October 22 to 27. The chairman of the exhibition this year will be André Vachon, of Laval University. More than 6,000 volumes will be on display. The various committees responsible for the salon have met several times recently and plans are well under way.

Montreal festivals

Le Chat Dans le Sac (The Cat in the Bag), which describes the unbelievable uncertainty that exists among certain French-Canadians, is the third full-length film produced by French Canada in one year and dedicated to different aspects of youth. Trouble-Fête was based on religious concern and A Tout Prendre drew its story from a sexual restlessness. Le Chat Dans le sac is inspired by political and metaphysical uncertainty. Gilles Groulx’s Le Chat features Barbara Hulich and Claude Godbout.

daniel cordier

It was not so much to get away from the trials and tribulations of an art merchant that Daniel Cordier decided recently to close down his gallery on the Rue de Miromesnil in Paris but rather to free himself for his one passion — painting. "To preserve this passion," he wrote recently to his friends, "I wish to get away from a form of activity that threatens to extinguish it." The letter drew barely a comment in Paris where it was received, read and promptly forgotten.

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