Summaries of the Articles

Numéro 51, été 1968

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58245ac

Citer ce document
summaries of the articles

Translation by bill trent

editorial

by andrée paradis

works of art generally live on because they have specific identities. Isolated from their creators, they are autonomous. They may proclaim a basic meaning or truth — but whose? That of the artist, that of the spectator? Or is the meaning the result of a combination of the artist's intent and the viewer's reaction? Then, too, it must be realized that there is the element of time and that this may introduce a third dimension.

it is becoming increasingly difficult to establish the meaning of the contemporary work. Modern art rarely defines decoding without access to all possible sources of information. Michel Seuphor maintains that the people who are best equipped to popularize modern day art are not the critics but the artists themselves. And in this connection, he cites the dialogues of Mondrian, the works of Kandinsky and Braque, the notebooks of Delaunay and Arp and the writings of Klee and Léger, but this is the easy solution.

this thinking is reflected in great britain with the publication of "le art du réel, états-unis 1948-1968." this is the real start of the pop era in the arts. The fourrh will serve as a library and projection room. From a technical point of view, the installations are the best in Canada and a special electrical system makes it possible to subtly vary the lighting for different kinds of works. The facilities are such that big-scale works can be exhibited easily but small, intimate areas have also been provided for so that smaller canvases can be seen to advantage. The space available is large enough to accommodate big international exhibitions and the museum hopes to be able to bring some of the more important ones here.

precortesian art

by guy joussemet

With sufficient money, it is still possible to acquire a really good collection of Mexican pre-cortesian art — but this is the easy solution. My method is more sympathetic and more human. In the first place, it is necessary to have a love for Mexico before delving into the cultures that existed prior to the time of Cortez. The Mexico I speak of is not that of Acapulco and san miguel allende but rather that part of the country that lies beyond the highways. There, with luck, you might get original pieces as gifts.

I acquired my first piece in 1958 at the lagunilla, Mexico's flea market. At the time, it was possible to pick up some beautiful items there. Now, 10 years later, I must confess that I still have much to learn about ancient Mexican art, a fact that does not surprise me since so little is known about this period. In some cases, the history books ignore entire cultures in effect. And even when the thousand-year histories, are dismissed in one or two short paragraphs. Setting down historical fact, of course, is often difficult because new excavations keep altering established theories.

The big fear confronting the new collector is that of acquiring a fake. But the fear is usually short-lived because the collector who is really in love with his work goes from museum to museum to examine important collections and eventually he develops a sixth sense that helps him separate the good from the bad. Of course, it is much more difficult to establish the precise origin of a piece than its authenticity. The reason for this is that this whole vast land was always populated by nomads.

museum of contemporary art

by gilles henault

millions of people visited the international gallery of art at Expo 67 last year. The permanent pavilion in which the gallery was set up is now the property of the Quebec Government and since last February it has housed the museum of contemporary art, an institution which owes its existence to the department of cultural affairs.
mexican painting

BY CARLA STELLWEG

Mexican art today is the continuation rather than the result of the characteristics which fashioned the sensibility, language and mode of expression over the centuries. The contemporary Mexican artist is influenced by existing means of communication and by new trends in thinking and creativity. The group of Mexican artists considered the most important today includes such people as Vlady, Manuel Felgueres, Arnold Belkin and Vincente Rojo, all of whom are intensively engaged in a search for new dimensions. The most recent generation of painters includes people like Pedro Coronel, G. Acevas Navarro, Arnoldo Coen, Robert Donis, Lopez Loza and Icaza.

yves trudeau

BY TONY P. SPITERIS

At the beginning of his period of transformation, Yves Trudeau made good use of current technology by employing metal to express his feelings of free form. He retained figurative while simplifying and even eliminating the philosophical qualities of the past. Rather, unsatisfied and restless, he moved into a new stage in which the wood was framed and squeezed by the metal and in which the emptiness was filled, or at least defined, by a trellis of long nails. It was a technique already employed by the Yugoslav Djamonia and permitted Trudeau to work out ambivalent plans. It made it possible also for him to suggest a certain sense of color while giving the adventure-some spectator a new scope for his imagination.

The demands of void and volume, a reminder of Henry Moore, and a strong love of the material involved have given an unexpected vitality to the work of Trudeau. It is not difficult to discern in his work an old empirical tradition dear to the English, a tradition which exploits the highest organic vitality of matter. His subjects became more restrained, more static as he gave himself to the sober discipline of the bas-relief. There was a pause and the empty spaces gave way to occupied surfaces. During this period, in 1966 and 1967, he did his Barque des Dieux and his Phare du Cosmos. Before this, he had created a whole collection of characters, some of them dramatic, others right out of science fiction. In this collection were such works as Oedipus, Cosmonautae, L’Homme Cosmique and L’Homme Sphinx. The conflict here exists in the story, the agitation and the tragic in the structures. The sculptor achieved a kind of relief in doing the Phare, a work shown at Expo 67.

The question of achieving a plastic expression of time and space has always been the basis of the artistic dream. Brancusi, Pevsner and Gabo suggest a fourth dimension by stopping time in its flight at a given moment. Ernemann’s new realism, movement has become a tangible reality. Trudeau has introduced the new notion into his sculpture by mechanical means.

Conscious of his own participation in the field of art, Trudeau says, "For me the artist is a witness and a critic of his times. He should be the reflection of his century."

picasso in rome

BY JACQUES LEPAGE

Fate and coincidence have played strange roles in the lives of great men. Picasso, for example, could never have guessed in 1916 that in the following years of the twenties he would leave Paris for Rome and that at the Hotel Minerva, he would meet a dancer who would become his wife. Nor could he have guessed how great an influence his stay in Italy would have on his work — or that for eight years he would devote much of his time to the theatre.

Picasso’s association with the theatre began when he did set designs for a ballet conceived by Jean Cocteau, set to music by Satie and mounted by Sergei Diaghilev for the Ballets Russes. This was the austere period of cubism and painting for the theatre, especially for the Ballets Russes, was tantamount to committing a crime. No one believed that Picasso would go through with it but he did.

Ernest Ansermet, conductor of the Ballets Russes orchestra, recalls those bygone days this way: "Picasso was with us in Rome in the spring of 1917. He was working on Parade (the ballet) with Cocteau, Satie and Diaghilev. I lived at the Minerva Hotel along with other members of the company, including Olga Koklova whom he loved."

When he was 37, he married Olga.

Ansermet recalls that Picasso travelled with the company to various cities of Europe and for some years was considered a man of the world. In Madrid, on one occasion, he even gave up his old Montmartre clothing for the smarter fashions of the continentals. Picasso, however, did not change as an artist. He remained independent, fiercely protecting his freedom. It was in Rome that the artist did some of his most beautiful drawings. One of his drawings was of Cocteau and he did a number of caricatures of such people as Diaghilev, Darius Milhaud and Massine.

Living with the cast of the Ballets Russes was exciting but Italy was having a far deeper effect on the artist. There among the antiquities of Rome, Picasso’s work underwent a great transformation, the effects of which would be seen for years to come.

jean antoine demers

BY JACQUES DE ROUSSAN

It is a fact that Jean Antoine Derners’ search for rhythm in art led him into abstraction and that some 15 years ago, he was influenced by De Kooning. But he was soon to find himself in conflict because of his flamboyant forms and the assurances they gave of the predominant beauty of the modem. It seemed his work was tantamount to committing a crime. No one believed that Picasso would go through with it but he did.

Ansermet recalls that Picasso travelled with the company to various cities of Europe and for some years was considered a man of the world. In Madrid, on one occasion, he even gave up his old Montmartre clothing for the smarter fashions of the continentals. Picasso, however, did not change as an artist. He remained independent, fiercely protecting his freedom. It was in Rome that the artist did some of his most beautiful drawings. One of his drawings was of Cocteau and he did a number of caricatures of such people as Diaghilev, Milhaud and Massine.

Living with the cast of the Ballets Russes was exciting but Italy was having a far deeper effect on the artist. There among the antiquities of Rome, Picasso’s work underwent a great transformation, the effects of which would be seen for years to come.

For anyone interested in pre-Columbian art in Mexico, I would recommend an indispensable book by Octavio Paz called Le Labynth de la Solitude.

The commercial sign, often criticized for being unattractive and in poor taste, is undergoing some changes in the old streets of Quebec. The first stage of this evolution was marked by an elimination of abstraction. They advertise there were no signs. On the contrary, it is logical to suppose that production has been preserved of that era. This does not suggest that advertisement can be pleasant to look at and still perform its basic function. It is a fact that Jean Antoine Derners’ search for rhythm in art led him into abstraction and that some 15 years ago, he was influenced by De Kooning. But he was soon to find himself in conflict because of his flamboyant forms and the assurances they gave of the predominant beauty of the modern. It seemed his work was tantamount to committing a crime. No one believed that Picasso would go through with it but he did.

Ansermet recalls that Picasso travelled with the company to various cities of Europe and for some years was considered a man of the world. In Madrid, on one occasion, he even gave up his old Montmartre clothing for the smarter fashions of the continentals. Picasso, however, did not change as an artist. He remained independent, fiercely protecting his freedom. It was in Rome that the artist did some of his most beautiful drawings. One of his drawings was of Cocteau and he did a number of caricatures of such people as Diaghilev, Milhaud and Massine.

Living with the cast of the Ballets Russes was exciting but Italy was having a far deeper effect on the artist. There among the antiquities of Rome, Picasso’s work underwent a great transformation, the effects of which would be seen for years to come.
James Rosenquist

James Rosenquist's work is a part of man's vital preoccupation with the virtuality of the invisible world that surrounds us. The romantics have reflected on it intellectually and the academicians have examined it scientifically but since the dawn of time, it has really been an intuitive matter. And the personal search for it is often a long and delicate one. More problems are presented than are resolved. Rosenquist has not been afraid to venture forth in this world. In a way, his work has been a challenge to modern-day civilization which he maintains is unhealthy for man.

From his research in space and perspective has emerged the reflection of his own intimate world and there is more implied than actually set down on canvas. The spectator who allows himself to become involved in the canvas will find himself immediately swallowed up in a highly vibrant world. The hopes of the painter, however, are perhaps best expressed in his portraits because here he searches out the interior being, the soul of his subjects.

Los Angeles Six

Los Angeles has become an important centre of art, capable of rivalling the great international centres, and an exhibition of the works of the Los Angeles Six at the Art Gallery of Vancouver this spring provided ample proof of the fact. The show, the first of its kind, was organized jointly by Anthony Emery, director of the Vancouver gallery, and John Coplans, curator of the Museum of Art of Pennsylvania. It is a affinity among those new romanticists, the west coast artists, whether they work in Vancouver, Los Angeles or San Francisco, and it is hoped that other artistic exchanges will be organized.

The Los Angeles Six are difficult to classify being neither entirely painters nor sculptors. At first, some of them were abstract impressionists. Their work shows a strong individuality and a high degree of perception. As a group, they are intensively involved in color and light and are influenced by a kind of hedonism from which all sensuality is excluded.

The six are Larry Bell, who lives in Venice, Calif.; Ron Davis, whose home is in Los Angeles; Robert Irwin, Los Angeles; Craig Kauffman, Los Angeles; Edward Kienholz, Los Angeles; and John McCracken, Venice. Bell is a neo-constructionist. Davis is experimenting with the "shaped canvas". Irwin sees a completely new world in the open form. Kauffman is working on a new simplification of form. Kienholz, with his assemblages, is the lucid critic of society's cultural habits. McCracken is a sculptor whose work has a definite presence and relates to the things that surround it.

Pop art, and the work of James Rosenquist in particular, may only be appreciated by the observer who has come to understand the duality of thought of the artist and the way in which the works are presented. The images may well evoke a number of reactions. The viewer may find them intimate or disquieting, even profound.

There is much said, perhaps too much, of the influences of poster art but where technique is concerned, there is an almost academic perfection to it. And it was in poster painting that Rosenquist learned his pictorial language. He is entirely preoccupied with the question of space and pursues all of the techniques to work. He links the idea of the open form. Kauffman is working on a new simplification of form. Kienholz, with his assemblages, is the lucid critic of society's cultural habits. McCracken is a sculptor whose work has a definite presence and relates to the things that surround it.

Visitors to the United States Pavilion at Expo 67 had the opportunity of viewing one of his large-scale works, a giant canvas 33 feet high called Fire Pole (Vie des Arts, No. 48) which the artist claimed had a certain rapport with events in Vietnam. It would be a mistake, however, to see his work in terms of social comment alone. In the first place he attacks the established canons and in so doing he rolls back the frontiers of art. His work is the result of constant research and experience. Most important perhaps, he detests a lack of natural quality and honesty and rebels against sham in any of its forms.

François Ranvoyze

By Jean Trudel

Despite the research and writings of Barbeau, Morisset, Traquair and Langton, comparatively little is known about the old gold and silver work of 19th and 18th century Quebec. The big problem facing the researcher, of course, is the fact that the works are so widely scattered. There are hundreds of pieces in the collections of the Quebec Museum and of Henry Birks but there are thousands more spread around among churches, religious houses, private collectors and Canadian museums.

The history of Quebec's beautiful gold and silver works contains all sorts of artistic, economic and sociological implications which are not excluded. The growth of Quebec's merchant community provided ample proof of the fact: it is a difficult matter, however, when one considers how widely-dispersed the works are.

The most widely known and most prolific of our artists in this field is François Ranvoyze who was born in 1739 and lived in Quebec until his death in 1819. Historical records indicate that he had a shop on St. John street and, beginning in 1774, his name appears in the account books of various Quebec parishes. It was the golden age of the art in Quebec and men like Laurent Amiot, François Baillarge, Louis Quevillon, Louis Dubongpré and others were at their peak of creativity. Because of the heavy demand for gold and silver objects, the factories were giving important orders to the gold and silversmiths and Ranvoyze emerged as one of the highly-respected member of the merchant community.

A number of interesting pieces had been brought to Quebec from Paris during the French regime and they were invariably the pride of their owners. But with the increase in population, more were needed. Craftsmen were then given many of the old pieces to repair and copy. Ranvoyze is little-known for commercial efforts. His main work was with religious centres and he used the French imports owned by them as his models. He is best known for his chalices and two of them are in the Ursuline Convent. One of his chalices, that of TIslet, is truly exquisite. There is no doub that Ranvoyze's work is among the most important in the history of Quebec art.
BY GUY ROBERT

A brilliant retrospective of the work of Jean Dallaire was arranged by André Marchand, curator of the Quebec Museum. The exhibition held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal included some 100 works done between 1930 and 1965. The collection featured gouaches, charcoal, oils and some tapestries. There were many lovely items although some even more beautiful ones were omitted. Dallaire was born in Hull and studied there and in Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and Boston before going to Paris on a grant.

BY JACQUES DE ROUSSAN

The age of space and electronic revolution has left our environment in a state of constant change. Maurice Demers, of Montreal, is conscious of the rapid developments taking place and in his St. Andre street workshop he is producing work that reflects the fluctuating currents of our time. Demers is playing the prophet. He employs the materials and ideas of his day and hopes they will help us become aware of our environment — but at the same time he is projecting into the future, prophecying the reality of the next century.

BY CLAUDE-LYSE GAGNON

Le Patriote, the east-end Montreal boîte à chansons, has added a new dimension. It will continue to feature singers but in addition space has been made available for exhibitions of painting, sculpture, photographs and for poetry readings and meetings. The exhibition hall is situated above the club. In effect Le Patriote has become a popular cultural centre to which the public is invited free of charge.

BY M.-MADELEINE AZARD-MALAUERIE

A collection of works from the oldest civilization in America will be shown for four months beginning June 1 at the Grand Palais in Paris. They belong to the Mayan civilization of Guatemala and are part of the findings in recent excavations. Archaeologists discovered the traces of ancient cities which, for nearly 15 centuries, occupied the high surfaces of Central America.

BY M.-MADELEINE AZARD-MALAUERIE

The centenary of the death of Vuillard is being marked at l’Orangerie des Tuileries this summer with a joint exhibition of his works and those of his close friend, Roussel. It is in remembrance of the long friendship of the two artists that the joint show is being presented. Vuillard and Roussel were inspired in different ways and their works show a great diversion of subject matter. Vuillard painted interiors and portraits while Roussel did landscapes.

BY MARIE RAYMOND

A magnificent exhibition of 18th century French works of art was held by the Royal Academy of Arts in London. No effort was spared by the organizers to produce a collection that was completely representative of the period. It was an extraordinary presentation of more than 1,000 works. Fifteen countries, as well as many individuals, sent their best works. If there is one regret, it is that only the people of Britain could see it. The exhibition should really go on tour.

BY J. M. VAN AVERMAET

It was something of a surrealistic season for art lovers of Brussels. First there was the retrospective of Paul Delvaux at the Musée d’Ixelles and then there was the Magritte retrospective at the Galerie Brachot. The first was an extraordinary show. The fact that an official museum would undertake to organize a retrospective of this importance is proof of the esteem in which Delvaux, this authentic master of Belgian art, is held.