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The increase in curiosity about the work of art, and the necessity of having the work confront the viewer, are the prime concerns of the organizers of major exhibitions. The exhaustive efforts undertaken for art education must be supported by a policy of bringing the public into contact with works that are worthwhile.

By Yvonne Kirbyson
left a deep mark on Canadian artists who have studied with him; it would be very difficult to tell that Borduas and automatism have had any influence whatever on Canadian painting. The legacy of the automatistic painters is still less venerable than that of the Group of Seven, and one might desire to see throughout the Council's collection a more exact image of the role that these painters have played in jarring conformity in their environment. It is not from automatism that Riopelle arose, the only Canadian painter with an international reputation, and the only one of that group present in the collection? Even if "there is no accounting for tastes", this absence can appear regrettable.

Especially since the fact that the Council's becoming a collector is exciting an interest in the country. "If what we are told is true, public museums are becoming more aggressive since we have begun to act. What is important is that we have had confidence in Canadian artists and the private collectors have followed suit. In a few cases, we have bought a work just before an exhibition. Then we saw: "Painting purchased by the Canada Council"; that was like a label of quality."

"There is really an abundance of works of art. We know fully well that in ten years perhaps 20-30% of the works we have bought will be good. We cannot predict the future and we make mistakes. But, as Alfred Barr has said: If after ten years you are still left with 30%, that is very good."

In the catalogue of the "Canada 101" exhibition, Mr. Silcox enlightens us about his tastes and his way of seeing things. "Montreal painting—that of Hurtubise, Molinari, and Tousignant is a reaction to the gestural spontaneity of automatism and a step towards conscious structure through colour and composition. It is distinguished by the quality of the surface and the optic effects. It is an art of illusion, strictly controlled by a knowledge of colour theory and its visual effects. It is a decorative art."

At 32, Mr. Silcox is playing a role that is all the more important as he has a dual responsibility. First he administers the budget of the collection. This budget which changes greatly from year to year, is detailed in the catalogue of the "Canada 101" exhibition. In 1963, 100,000 dollars; in 1964, 25,000 dollars; in 1968, 40,000 dollars; and in 1969, only ten thousand, to which was added the cost of publication of the 5,000 copies of the catalogue of the collection. Moreover, Mr. Silcox is in charge of the section of the Plastic Arts of the Council, which this year has given 390 bursaries to painters. That is three times more than writers receive.

Mr. Silcox received his training in England at the Courtauld Institute in London. Thanks to a Council bursary, he studied history of art there, and he even worked on a dictionary of art. With his almost innocent appearance, and a lock of hair that suddenly falls back on his forehead Mr. Silcox is a charming man. Moreover, he knows where he is going. "Wisdom is not the monopoly of older people", he says, and there is no reason to doubt it. That is all started for him in Toronto. When he was a student at the University of Toronto, he worked for three years at Hart House, a house for students. At that time there was a programme of cultural animation: concerts, exhibitions, and debates. But Mr. Silcox, who was very arduous, spent all his time in the exhibitions. That is where he gained his experience in administration.

The goal of the collection that he is directing today is to help artists by purchases. "It isn't really a form of assistance, for if a poor artist has urgent needs, we would rather give him a bursary. What we want is to buy the most beautiful works and set an example for other organizations by showing them that there is joy and satisfaction in owning works of art. We do not buy with the idea of making a profit, but in spite of ourselves, the value of our collection has almost doubled."

"When you buy a work, are you looking for innovation at all cost? Mr. Silcox denies this: "Innovation is always interesting especially for the present exhibition. Mr. Silcox enlightens us about his tastes and his way of seeing things. "Montreal painting—that of Hurtubise, Molinari, and Tousignant is a reaction to the gestural spontaneity of automatism and a step towards conscious structure through colour and composition. It is distinguished by the quality of the surface and the optic effects. It is an art of illusion, strictly controlled by a knowledge of colour theory and its visual effects. It is a decorative art."

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"When you buy a work, are you looking for innovation at all cost? Mr. Silcox denies this: "Innovation is always interesting especially among young people who are experimenting. But the most interesting works have come from the studios of Town, Snow, Molinari, Lockhead. They all date back a few years."

"Have you had problems?"
"We were the subject of sharp questions in the House of Commons when we purchased the work by Claude Breeze: "Sunday afternoon, taken from an old American photograph 1965", but that did not have any consequences. We have always taken care to consult professionals who guide us in our choice. Thus, the artistic value of the canvases that we buy cannot be contested."

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson
The Drawings of the Ottawa National Gallery in Paris

BY JEAN-DOMINIQUE REY

In a similar vein to the "imaginary museum" that not long ago André Malraux dreamed of with a lot of more or less faithful reproductions, our time has become that of the museable museum. Today works of art are travelling. Sometimes the respect that they are shown is the same as if they were heads of state; a few years ago the Mona Lisa left the Louvre with a motor escort before going to cross the Atlantic. More often the works take long and complicated journeys like prominent tourists... which people would go to see. It is the frequency of a stroke that we can justly consider as classic. Picasso's woman reunites tradition and newness in a single image, and the past and present at the same time, as always happens when art is true.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

An erotic tinge in the art of Jean Dubuffet (1943 - 1952)

BY FRANÇOIS GAGNON

Between 1943 and 1952, Jean Dubuffet executed one thousand four hundred and five works (properly called paintings, gouaches, drawings...), that represented one, two, or several human figures (once again, Dubuffet did not draw) with his Fox, Paul Klee counts at once on the resources of his Fox, Paul Klee counts at once on the resources of Italy. By the force and clarity of a stroke that we can justly consider as classic, Picasso's woman reunites tradition and newness in a single image, and the past and present at the same time, as always happens when art is true.

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attention to, and give a reproduction of a marvellous pencil drawing representing a Yang girl seated on the ground by Suzanne Valadon, which is rigorous and extremely valuable in the incredible exactness of the stroke, for the best Picasso's work is certain more vigorous than a drawing by her son, Utrillo, who is however, held in greater esteem by the critics and the public.

Among the numerous sketches of almost contemporary artists, we may mention those of Marie Nolde, Rouault, or even of Nevelson, Kirchner, Klee, or Moore, which were particularly impressed by a masterful drawing by the wizard of modern graphism, which Picasso still is, a Woman standing, seen from profile, dated 1906, which as the catalogue states, "marks, as it were, the cardinal appearance of a figure in the Panatheneans of the Panathenaeon". That is why we can consider perfect the choice of this drawing, for the cover of the catalogue, as well as the notice spread all over Florence, and even almost all of Italy. By the force and clarity of a stroke that we can justly consider as classic, Picasso's woman reunites tradition and newness in a single image, and the past and present at the same time, as always happens when art is true.

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Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson
In Toronto: Fifty years of the Bauhaus

The exhibition Fifty years of the Bauhaus which was held in Toronto, paid homage to the forerunners of what we are now used to calling modern art. This exhibition which corresponded, moreover, with the death of two of the former leaders of the Bauhaus, Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mes Van De Rohe, underlined the importance of the architectural discipline of which these two men were among the most representative adherents in our century.

In the excitement of the new Weimar Republic, amidst the chaos of the German defeat, the Bauhaus are going to attempt to rethink and adapt the industrial civilization to human needs.

Fifty years have passed, and the works of the Bauhaus have been held on, and influenced our way of life and our environment to such an extent that it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish the creative power and originality of the Bauhaus, as the solutions tested in disciplines as diverse as architecture, painting, sculpture, theatre, industrial design, typography, photography, ceramics and weaving, the most part, found a use in our daily life.

The basis of the Bauhaus teaching is GIVEN BY ateliers, indeed, the school does not claim to form artists, but rather craftmen of the new industrial armament. Breaking with academic tradition, the Bauhaus will try to invoke, in a direct manner, the student with the problems of the material; and Gropius will declare: "Together, let us conceive and create the works of the twentieth century which will cast away the old building and painting into a single mass, and which, from the hands of a million workers one day will reach to the heavens like to crystallized symbol of a new faith".

In substance, Jean Dubuffet says that art is a character desiring anonymity: as soon as we define it, as we discuss it too moment, it disappears. Would the same not be true for sexuality? For the latter also, would it not be better that it occupy a MORE MODEST place?

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

NOTES
(1) "Dubuffet: the terrible" I and II, in News Post (Paris) Nov., Dec., 1950

(2) It is not always easy (for sometimes the representations of figures are tiny or lost in a tangle of lines), to decide whether the figure is male or female, clothed or nude. This is no longer true of 72.1% female in male or female clothed, nude or clothed. The other 27.9% were not counted. The current proportions are the opposite of those of Dubuffet, and we have not attempted to gather current declarations on the same subject. Does Dubuffet wish to propose a new way (new, different) in which to consider sexual matters? Dubuffet does not seek to propose anything new at all, especially not a new way... There is nothing he likes less than a manner and mannerism.

(3) The psychological approach of the beginning do not correspond to the usual way of considering things because they correspond to no way at all. They reflect only a view, with no particular circumstances, of sexual matters. In the same way that culture kills art, so an obsession with sex kills sexuality. In the same way that colleges of academicians, rings of buyers and sellers, the journalistic body, the innumerable art teachers, the numerous-as-grains-of-sand art writers and critics, flattering, criticizing, distributing rewards are, in the process of killing art which they surround with such untimely cares, we might wonder, in the same way if sexuality is not threatened with the same fate, seeing the large stock made of it by flatterers, prophets, therapists, exorcists, writers, pictorial newspaper salesmen, filmwriters, psychologists, professors, criminologists, sexologists, psycho-analysts, psychiatrists, and psychologists...

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Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson
The Stained Glass Window in our Time

BY JOSEPH PICHARD

The seventy-five stained glass windows exhibited this summer in Montreal, in the French pavilion at the World's Fair, were almost all works of well-known artists, and which were presented in October at the Museum of Quebec, give us an excellent opportunity to take up the current problems raised by the art of the stained glass window.

Does this vivid light cast upon an art that since its origins has successively known periods of glory and disregard signify that this art is again approaching a glorious period or is this manifestation gratuitous and admitting no real future?

Certainly, as closely the stained glass window has been associated with religious art. It originated in a time when the construction of churches was at its peak. How was it associated to this movement? I believe that like architecture itself, it was governed by man's desire to create, to build, a spiritual place as a meeting place of all the elements of the church. More than the fresco, more than the mosaic, it became almost indispensable in all of Western Europe. It is Father Couturier, an artist in stained glass himself, who recalled that in the 13th century, it was sufficient for a church to have the stained glass window to appear to us. And we are less sensitive to the actual biblical depiction than we are to a certain plastic and coloured construction that reflects our inner rhythm.

Do you think that the more rationalistic tendencies that followed the Renaissance, its human ecology, were established only to restore ancient repose, to be an end in itself, when it is our duty to bow to the pioneers of what is becoming a veritable science of human ecology.

The Nazi regime by causing the Bauhaus to go into exile, contributed to the propagation of their ideas: Van der Rohe and Albers went to the United States and were joined by Gropius after a stay in England; Kandinsky settled in Paris...

The Bauhaus had set themselves the goal of assuring a rationalization of the entire usual environment within the framework of architecture, and of assuring planning and cooperation between the artist and industry. After fifty years numerous projects conceived between 1920 and 1930 have been executed. One must henceforth form the volume of human space. The Bauhaus is not an adequate space, a constant collaboration between painting and sunlight has been necessarily required to show this. This stirring harmony agrees with our feeling for life.

For many centuries the stained glass window was one of the essential elements of the church. More than the fresco, more than the mosaic, it became almost indispensable in all of Western Europe. It is Father Couturier, an artist in stained glass himself, who recalled that in the 13th century, it was sufficient for a church to have the stained glass window to appear to us. And we are less sensitive to the actual biblical depiction than we are to a certain plastic and coloured construction that reflects our inner rhythm.

The stained glass window reappeared in the 19th century as a privileged canvas—thus did the factory at Étretes understand it—or as a reconstruction of, or a return to, gothic times—thus it was understood by the architects of the historical monuments who worked on the restoration of churches. It was in answer to the requests of the latter that everywhere window-studios, that for a time had disappeared, reopened. However, these studios had been established only to restore ancient repose, to be an end in itself, when it is our duty to bow to the pioneers of what is becoming a veritable science of human ecology.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

André Kertész

PAR GEOFFREY JAMES

The Yves Gaucher Exhibit in London

BY MARIE RAYMOND

The very fact of being invited by the Whitechapel Art Gallery to hold a solo exhibition is in itself significant. The reputation of this gallery, which was intentionally set up in the East End, is in fact, already established, and its role in a strictly working-class environment constitutes an experience well known even beyond Europe.

Even if he objects to a personal criticism of this exhibition—because it was his idea—the former director, Brian Robertson, not only brings it to the attention of the readers of SPECTATOR but he exhorts all those who are seriously interested in an intellectual and aesthetic synthesis of high quality not to miss it and he even suggests that true art lovers see it without any artificial lighting, in order to better perceive the demands it makes on the viewer and its unexpected dimensions.

Christopher Salveson, in the LISTENER of Oct. 16th, defines Gaucher’s grays as musical grays, free of melancholy or gloominess, not Nordic grays with qualities of light, but rather, their effects are tonal. There is no doubt, he adds, that his work indicates an aesthetic purity which is related more to music than to a work marred by imagery, emotion, or literary reminiscences. The lines, for example, which begin inside the picture, invite one to measure their length, and the lines of the different regions that are like big mushrooms, that they are shaped and cut out. And then I began to enlarge on them. Now I am trying to purify them, to simplify them. To summarize the dynamism of life, a flash of a moment in infinite space, in eternal time. As if I were stopping, for a time such and such a moving ray of lights.

An early riser, Rita Letendre takes up her brushes and painting knives at an hour when most people are getting out of bed; she pauses for a rest at noon. At twilight she is often still in her studio. And if, since 1935, she has had many exhibitions, and if most of her canvases have been hung in Montreal, Toronto, Los Angeles, and Tel-Aviv (last winter), it is not surprising for her abundant life is woven into metallic shades. Like an obsession, which, moreover, she explains.

"When I began to paint, my work was like lyric graphics, masses of contrasting colours; then I arrived at forms that were more precise, indeed geometric, and then I began to enlarge on them. Now I am trying to purify them, to simplify them. To summarize the dynamism of life, a flash of a moment in infinite space, in eternal time. As if I were stopping, for a time such and such a moving ray of lights."

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Dürrenmatt at the Théâtre du Capricorne

BY BERNARD LANTRAIN

Le Théâtre du Capricorne, the French-language resident company of the National Arts Centre, opened its first season with La Visite de la vieille dame by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, in a production by Jean-Guy Sabourin, the company’s director.

Jean-Guy Sabourin has very little of a “monsieur le directeur”. He accepted this post because of the challenge it presents; he has the impression that a new and important cultural dimension is now developing in Ottawa. For him theatre, without being an instrument of revolution, must forge its austere facade and try to develop in its audiences a taste for life and happiness. Thus he intends to mold the Capricorne company into a local and national centre of cultural animation that will expand its audiences and integrate theatre into daily life.

The first play of the season had to meet several requirements: on the one hand it had to please the different social groups of the Ottawa region and adapt itself to the prevailing linguistic conditions; on the other it had to rival in importance and caliber those other important productions of the company’s production of Hamlet. The artistic director chose La Visite de la vieille dame. With its linear style, this play could be staged as an important production, full of action and ideas, while lending itself to cultural animation by its theme and structure.
Dürrenmatt is surely one of the most important playwrights of our time. A minister's son, he studied theology and philosophy, has written a dozen plays and a few novels and is now a member of the board of artistic direction of the Bâle Theatre as well as an active producer. His plays have been compared to those of Brecht, a pessimistic Brecht. From L'Angele of 1948 to Play Strangor recently presented in Bâle, Dürrenmatt's plays present a combat where the winner is the one who has best adapted himself to the materialistic morality of a rotten and disorganized world. For him, mankind is not divided between good and evil but between tormentor and tormented; it is not justice that rules, but force, violence, wealth, and vice.

In spite of this, Dürrenmatt is sometimes described as a happy pessimist. "My theatre is a theatre of absurd hope, of unjustifiable, invincible hope," said Dürrenmatt in an interview in 1960. Even if the world cannot be changed, man must bravely try to subsist. In his solitude he will make his life successful in so far as he is aware of his human condition and accepts the corrupt universe in which he lives. Refusing to despair, Dürrenmatt opens the way to a new life of sadness and cheerfulness, to a new game tinged with both irony and suffering.

La Visite de la vieille dame is typical of Dürrenmatt's dramatic universe. Claire Zahananass, now a millionaire, returns to her birthplace. She offers her wealth to her countrymen, providing that they do her justice by killing Alfred III, a former lover who had allowed her to be expelled from the town, pregnant and disgraced. In this country where money is omnipotent and poverty too bitter, the people will gradually justify and accept the murder of Alfred.

Faithful to Dürrenmatt's principle that theatre must not only say but show, Jean-Guy Sabourin's production is primarily visual. The sets by Mousseau and the costumes by Solange Legendre express the playwright's mockery and contempt. Beginning with these elements, the director emphasized the rhythm of the acting and the contrasts of the play. However he could have made better use of the large stage. By reducing the space, he could have made certain scenes more intimate and have given the production a rhythm more suitable to the aggressive character of the play. While keeping the visual aspect predominant, he could have given the text and the acting more importance, in order to involve the spectator's sensibility.

In spite of these reservations, this newly formed company, performing in a new environment, managed to come through honourably. They deserve encouragement for their future productions.

Translation by Pierre W. Desjardins

Orphée

BY PIERRE W. DESJARDINS

Gabriel Charpentier's Orphée was perhaps the most original of all the works created for the inauguration of the National Arts Centre in October. It was publicized as a chamber opera, but the technical achievements of the audiences that it deserved, perhaps because of the reminiscences of powdered wigs conjured up by the term chamber opera. The author now prefers Orphée to be described as a 'liturgy', an expression more in keeping with the spirit of his work which, though thoroughly modern, nevertheless recalls Noh theatre and Benedictine paraliturgies of the Middle Ages. The work suffered initially from a lack of sufficient rehearsals and was somewhat mistracted by the critics, except those of New York who perceived its quality and originality.

Commissioned in September 1967, Orphée was worked out during a trip to Paris, London and Brussels in December of the same year. The work was conceived with the experimental studio of the National Arts Centre in mind and exploits the hexagonal shape and technical resources of this small theatre.

Charpentier had long been fascinated by the myth of Orpheus and had already written a series of poems on this theme. These served as a basis for the text of the liturgy. Charpentier's hero is a triple mate and has given the production a rhythm more suitable to the voices of this small theatre.

Orphee's score is written for soloists, chorus, mass chorus and an instrumental ensemble of two pianos, ondes Martenot, celesta, harp, percussion and recorded voices. There are no sets; the stage is made up of ondes and harp, colour and music. The lighting, designed by Robert Reinhold, defines the theatrical space, creates the mood and adds a symbolic dimension. The beautifully simple and effective costumes were designed by Claudette Picard.

Orphée was directed collectively by the actors and technicians of the production (many of these actors are former pupils of Charpentier from the National Theatre School). From the piano Serge Garant directed the musicians; the actors Claude Flagel, Francine Dionne and Claude Grisé respectively supervised the folkloric elements, the choreography and the movement, while Jean Perrault and Jacques Breton were responsible for the spoken text. The result was a lively and fresh production where a few minor weaknesses were largely compensated by the close interaction of the actors among themselves and with the audience. There was in Orphée a successful fusion between the theatre poet, music and dance to which the spectators were invited actively.

Orphée has continued to evolve since its premiere: the instrumentation has been changed and the few elements of folklore eliminated (which emphasize the poetic mood). The text has been modified also and now has the three Orpheus successively discovering light, colour, words, and language. Future audiences will be involved even more actively in the action and the singing.

Although Orphée is closely linked to the theatre for which it was written, hopefully other productions will soon prolong its career on stage and on records for the benefit of a wider public. In the meantime, Gabriel Charpentier is already at work on another 'liturgy', on the theme of Prometheus.

The Sixth Paris Biennale: the keynote was participation

BY LAURENT LAMY

About ten years ago the Paris Biennale exhibition was established to present artists under the age of thirty-five. The Sixth Paris Biennale had two points at issue: the intervention of technology into art, and the viewer's contribution to the work of art.

I am willingly unmindful of the by-products of lyric abstraction, pop art, optic art, new realism, and minimal art. What is the good, for example, of showing pale imitators of Le Parc or of Soto?

The increasingly numerous group works almost make the work of the solitary artist anachronistic. No doubt this is not true, but such is the impression felt at the Biennale.

Coming after Fuller's constructions, spatial architecture, done mainly as group work, is presented in a manner renewed by the use of the vertical or most often the slant, after the fashion of the polyhedral and multiplied cell of the honeycomb. Consequently, this is an architecture which seeks to resolve the problems of an intense concentration of population and a massive urbanization. Versatile, prolificus, still semi-utopian, this research really shows the new face of a futurist architecture.

The artist holds out his hand to the public, forces it to take an initiative, and no longer limits its role to that of onlooker. At the Musée Galliera, an empty studio has even been provided so that the passer-by can write on a wall, put on colour, drive in nails... It is pleasant and, at the same time, a bit derivative.

From the entrance to the Musée d'art moderne, the visitor is greeted by L'Envol (Lumenaphome) which transforms and translates the presence and the movements of the visitor into a variety of sounds, triggered by photo-electric cells. The Groupe from Montecovido incorporates in a scaffolding, dancers in white tights, who by their slow shifting of frames and white poles, create a moving sculpture that is constantly changing.

The numerous environments are presented under the form of happenings or "parcours". Here, there is a games room, there a small room for relaxing. A living-room that promises euphoria! Further on, a Czechoslovakian entry, a tremendous air jet, blows up all the skirts. The siren by Sergio Lombardo of Italy grates on the ears. The Biennale is often more sonorous than visual!

The most interesting thing in this Biennale, I thought, was the "poor art", the "earth art" and the question-works. Never has the work been so free, so provocative, so dependent on the attitude of the viewer. Rather, it is poverty and humiliation, the antithesis of all that modern civilization can produce, that are given us by the first element, the earth. In La Concession à perpétuité (France), for example, poles of earth surrounded by a few steel beams, in their distressing truth, are as fearsome as a grave. From Japan, Les Quatre Bosses: a canvas is spread out on the ground; on one side is a stain, a pile of red earth, on the other, a pile of blood. These rough materials, in the colours of blood and death are a stripping-away. How can one turn away from this?

Trente-deux noms des Argentins morts anonymes is the title of a
Jazz Band of London, occupied a place of honour. Why does Canada
Harold Town
static (the square is static compared to the triangle in Stretch No.
create in their concerto,
was totally different from that of Soto or Takis.
balance of the forces and movements that are engendered, the problem
which the painter has attained in his new STRETCH series. The
acquisitions.
which the finished work gives us, that to see an object melt as a song
visions to which he gives resonances and a group density
to different orchestral densities. Similarly, Town presents us with these
mum suggest a slowness in gestation, a painstaking and prolonged
intention by the viewer almost exactly follows the tempo of the destruction
a theme which touches us closely, and his effort seems valuable to
us in the personal qualities he brings to it.

Miller Britain—Un souvenir
PAR LUKE ROMBOUT
Lorsque je rencontrai Miller Britain pour la première fois, au cours
de l’été 1954, il était à l’apogée de sa carrière. Ses toiles se vendaient
to New-York; sa réputation grandissait au Canada; bref, il était en
plaine possession de son talent.

Connie, sa femme, vivait encore. Jamais je n’ai rencontré deux
personnes mieux faites l’une pour l’autre. Aucun d’eux n’avait le sens
de l’ordre. Ils habitaient un appartement plutôt petit dans le quartier
Soto ou Takis. Sometimes they depict vagueness, disorder, and great
release, Silent Light No. 3; sometimes a meaning gives them direction,
Silent Light No. 4.

The work of Town is rich. The painter invites one not only to
participate, but, much more, to pursue his effort, to fulfill it. Like
the kinetic painters he goes deeper into the condition of instability,

Harold Town

The Waddington Gallery has just given us a geometrical perception
of art. In the next few weeks it is offering a series of canvases that,
it would seem, in a formal way, bear more supple characters; although
they are more rigorously constructed.

Miller Town was an authoritative force for a long time.

Toronto is now showing a retrospective of his work, Robert Fulford
is publishing a fascinating book by Jack McClelland on his drawings,
Montreal is concentrating on his new canvases. The Fine Arts Museum
is granting him a place of honour in the exhibition of its recent
acquisitions.

These facts will enable us to understand more clearly the purification
which the painter has attained in his new STRETCH series. The
balance of the forces and movements that are engendered, the problem
of space relative to these movements, are treated in a manner that
is totally different from that of Soto or Takis.

The long threads that reunite the elements stretched to the maxi-
mum suggest a slowness in gestation, a painstaking and prolonged
effort. An interminable difficulty, which for some people, is the very
component of life, of nature. Very close to this nature, Harold Town
uses elements with biological forms that are sinuous and unctuous,
but which at the same time are dynamic (the dynamism is due perhaps
to the triangle, which is nothing else than the extreme purification
of these swellings).

The living composition, the elegance and suavity of the stroke, the
restraints exercised by the vibrations and contrasts of the tones, and
the general tension arouse in the viewer an explosive feeling. An
explosion of the same nature as that evoked by the abstract-concrete
music of Ivo Malec, for example, who borrows this same explosive
character from a cell by Luc Ferrari, who is working with him to
create in their concerto, Tuft, a single sonorous formula applicable
to different orchestral densities. Similarly, Town presents us with these
visual formulas to which he gives resonances and a group density
according to their arrangement, dynamism and the abstract triangle of
No. 9; or even abstract, because of the elements which are grouped around
an invisible, but present axis. Using methods such as collages, and
hard-edge technique, painting in oil with luminosities quite his own,
he attains by painting what others have succeeded in by spacing.

Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson

Mr. Laurent Lamy, President of the Canadian section of the Interna-
tional Association of Art Critics, was a member of the jury of the
Sixth Paris Biennale.
maison. Pendant presque deux ans Miller lui avait servi de garde-ma-
lade. Une dépression nerveuse le guettait. Il avait cessé presque tout
travail et il faisait face à la tâche d'élever sa fille et de tenir maison;
deux tâches qu'il ne pouvait assumer. Plus tard, Jennifer fut placée
dans une école pour jeunes filles et Miller resta seul dans son énorme
villa avec son chien comme seul compagnon.

Un an et demi plus tard j'allai rester avec lui. J'occupais, près de
la villa, un bâtiment qui avait servi aux domestiques et j'y vécus
pendant un an. Ce ne fut pas toujours facile. Miller avait toujours
bu régulièrement mais avec modération. Désormais il buvait trop. La
mort de sa femme l'avait cruellement frappé. Cette perte irremparâ-
lant avait rendu solitaire à l'excès et il ne pensait qu'à l'agonie de Lanne.
De plus, je crois qu'il se sentait écrasé par le style autant que par les
dimensions de la villa qu'il habitait. Il est vrai qu'il buvait trop
mais jamais il ne perdit conscience de ce qu'il faisait ou de ce qu'il
disait. Même dans cette condition il travaillait constamment à des
dessins et quelquefois à ses toiles. Il remplissait plusieurs albums de dessins
et de croquis de genre que l'on peut voir au cours de cette exposition.

Durant ses meilleurs moments, et il y en eut plusieurs, sa présence
était charmante, pleine d'esprit teinté d'humour fin. Parce qu'il vivait
en solitaire il téléphonait constamment à ses voisins, à des connaissance-
ces et parce qu'il n'avait aucune notion du temps il téléphonait souvent
au milieu de la nuit. Les appels interurbains l'enchantaient particuliè-
rement. "Chacun a son péché mignon", disait-il, "c'est le mien." Je
me souviens d'un jour où il avait téléphoné à un ami qui se trouvait
dans un village perdu de l'Irlande du Nord. Il n'y avait qu'un télépho-
ne au village et pendant que quelqu'un en allait chercher l'ami, à
bicyclette, Miller engagea une conversation époustouflante de vingt
minutes avec la téléphoniste irlandaise. Il lui récita la généalogie
irlandaise de certains membres de sa famille, s'enquit de sa généalogie,
parla du temps, etc. . . . etc. . . .

Malgré ses revenus restreints, il savait être d'une extravagance su-
perbe lorsqu'il arrivait d'avoir des espèces sonnantes. Lors de ses
visites à Montréal, Miller se rendait sur le mont Royal, retenait pour
la journée les services d'un cocher et c'est dans cet équipage, qu'il
qualifiait de royal, qu'il visitait ses amis et les marchands de tableaux.
Les pourboires qu'il distribuait dans ses voyages étaient toujours géné-
ralement, le service ne lui manquait pas. Je le vis un jour dans sa chambre d'hôtel,
à Fredericton, où il ne devait séjourner que quelques heures. D'un
bou à l'autre de la chambre il avait aligné sur le plancher des billets
de vingt dollars. Il était d'excellente humeur, presque comme un
enfant, parce qu'il avait vendu une toile ce jour-là. En me montrant
les billets sur le parquet il me dit: "Tiens! Prends tout ce que tu
veux!" Personne, du laitier ou de la domestique, du collectionneur et du
directeur de galerie d'art ne pouvait rester insensible à l'envoûtement
que sa présence exerçait. Il était à la fois un mystique, un enfant,
un intellectuel, un romantique, un gourmet et, à l'occasion, un provo-
cateur espiègle. Il était bien connu à Saint-Jean et dans certains cercles
de New-York. La comédienne américaine Anna Russell était l'une de ses
amis. Il avait des amis dans toutes les classes de la société de
Saint-Jean et ne faisait pas de différence entre les jardiniers, les char-
pentiers, les chauffeurs de taxis, les avocats, les médecins et les politi-
ciens. Les gens le fascinaient; c'est ainsi qu'il pouvait réciter la génée-
logie de Myrtle, sa domestique noire, qu'il plaçait au même rang
qu'une duchesse.

Il continuait de travailler dans des circonstances difficiles malgré sa
santé chancelante. Il passa de pénibles hivers dans sa maison délabrée
et impossible à chauffer convenablement. Pendant ses périodes de
grande fatigue, alors qu'il buvait trop et ne mangeait pas assez, il
accepta de faire des portraits qu'il exécuta jusqu'à ce que l'épuisement
physique et mental l'empêcha de travailler. Il fut jusqu'à la fin débor-
dant d'enthusiasme. A chaque année Miller Gore Brittain, D.F.C.,
prit part au défilé des anciens combattants au premier rang parmi
les anciens pilotes de guerre. Pourtant, jamais il ne parla de ses
brillants états de service en territoire ennemi.

Un peu avant Noël, en 1967, il subit une crise cardiaque qui le
paralyssa presque complètement. J'allai le voir à l'hôpital quelques jours
avant sa mort. Il était devenu, comme le faisait remarquer un ami,
le calque exact des gens aux yeux creux et cadavériques qui peuplaient
ses croquis. Avec des peines infinies, il me présenta à son infirmière
à qui il tâcha d'expliquer qui j'étais. Comme par hasard, suivi de
personnes, j'eus l'occasion de voir la grande fatigue qu'il affichait
alors qu'il buvait trop et ne mangeait pas assez, il
accepta de faire des portraits qu'il exécuta jusqu'à ce que l'épuisement
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C'était là, en tenant compte de son état, une manifestation remar-
quable de sa volonté et de sa persévérance. Ce fut le dernier signe
de notre amitié.