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Citer cet article
Poets of the urban world in the future?

By Andrée PARADIS

Every society has the urban appearance it deserves. The one it gets from the past, which it preserves, and the one it fashions from day to day to respond to new needs. In turn, the urban appearance expresses the preoccupations, the character, the level of cultural and other interests of a society. It will be as much as 20th century cities, products of the industrial revolution, the real expression of the multiple phenomena of current changes?

The reports, the inquiries, the scarcely optimistic studies on the evolution of the urban phenomena make one doubt it. It seems that even in the planning of great socialism is the most advanced, people have limited themselves to taking advantage of the forms from the past, and that in the planning of projects, they have taken the path of least resistance by reflecting tendencies rather than making real choices. Now, a city, born from a few decisions, architects, designers, and politicians are constantly pondering the need for plans and programs that would take into consideration all the pressures that are developing and acting on the city area.

This September, in Amsterdam, the time came for art critics, meeting in an international congress, to examine the interaction of man in his surroundings, and the changes he makes in the natural environment. The artist makes us sensitive to this new reality, he is the agent provocateur. The critic, for his part, is obliged to be the conscience, the Eye, and to participate in the general process of creation by his analytic function.

The absence of a spiritual climate in the industrial city or its extremely reduced place is an overwhelming testimony. In spite of numerous appeals, there is still widespread partitioning, fragmentation— as long as there will be architectural and interdependence of ideas, man will feel he is a foreigner in the place where he lives. He will have only one ambition, to get away from it.

Art is a perpetual field of inquiry, it is also the supreme area for self-reconciliation. To respond to the problems of cities, the urban buildings is to compromise the possibility of efficiently foreseeing and composing the life of tomorrow. We can determine the level of civilization according to the degree of planning, and the presence of poets of the urban world among the ranks of planners contributes to raising this level.

In the meantime, the wall as symbol gives the street its colour: between four walls the mural rediscovering its humanizing function, it revives the concrete.

Professor Habrankov from Eindhoven said: “Design does not concern itself with ordinary things”, But does Design not seek to understand the message of the man from the North? “Treating the ordinary, is allowing the ordinary man to act. It is not creating housing, but making the act of dwelling possible. It is not projecting cities, but it is arranging gardens in which it is possible to cultivate dwellings.”

The poets of the urban world, those who profess love for the ordinary should become as gardeners. The gardener does not create, he cultivates.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

Automatism in Montreal

By Jean ÉTHIER-BLAIS

Automatism, in the form it assumed in Montreal, likelihood other intellectual movements, was fostered by the war. A person unfamiliar with Montreal from 1945 to 1950, would not be able to imagine what constantly renewing hopes this city held for some French Canadians. The singular action of Hertel and his literary group had widespread influence since the author of Strophes et catastrophes had left the Jesuit order. Hertel provided the innovation of intellectual discoveries and the pointedness of a priest who on one hand rejected romantic poetry for the benefit of Claudel, and on the other hand despised the authoritarian decision of Father Doncoeur, whose doctrine animated Relève and Nouvelle Relève. At the same time, Gabrielle Roy was preparing Bonheur d’occasion (TR: The Tin Flute). The mental, moral, and physical misery was quite obvious. It had only to be given meaning. Montreal, like many other intellectual approaches symbolized and prepared the outburst that occurred at the end of the forties. This change in feeling was crowned by the fundamental certainty that Borduas and his friends (like all French Canadians) had of being inserted into their own particular historical development. They rejected the French Canadian past only to the extent to which they thought of themselves as its heirs and transformers. Before denying it, they affirmed their right to possess it completely.

This feeling of belonging explains why the Automatist school in Montreal oriented itself so insistently and fervently towards the Middle Ages. I think that history will note that Montreal Automatism, while fully assuming its aesthetic role, was first, for a time, historically necessary. Neither Borduas nor his friends implemented the essential part of the Automatist message of Breton; but, what use did Breton himself make of his doctrine? To what extent was it adapted to the pictorial experience? What was the meaning of the psychological to and from Breton displayed in his relationship with the Mexican muralists? How could a person whose mind was structured in such a classical manner as his, enamoured of grammatical forms, sensitive especially to imperceptible ilts of the language, have completely surrendered himself, were it only for a moment, to the total abandonment that automatism required? The same is true for Borduas, who retained from automatism only the gestural initiation, a pretext to a spontaneous reflection. Spontaneity, a return to the spirit of childhood, meditation on the first suggestions of the unconscious, the synthesis of instinctive elements, all assimilated automatism, such was the approach Borduas used. His work, like that of Claude Gauvreau (his dearest and foremost disciple) had two aspects, pictorial and historical.

The tradition of Breton is rediscovered in Montreal. Considering Borduas’ signifier of Refus global, the analysis of this text in its objectivity as a written, thus historical document (the objectivity depending on the acceptance of eventualities) reveals that these aesthetics led them to a transformation in depth of the universe. It was a complete refusal of war, a re-
Paul Kane, painter of the West
By J. Russell HARPER

The material in this article is based on portions of a book by the author, Paul Kane's Frontier, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1971.

Paul Kane (1810-1871) had a quiet disposition; it gave him a gentle rapport with the silent Indians. He became Canada's most famous painter of the many Indian tribes from the Great Lakes to the Pacific during one of history's longest and most adventurous sketching trips. From 1845 to 1848 he travelled constantly by fur trade canoe, on horseback, by foot and snowshoe. Kane went from Toronto to Victoria and back, in constant danger below zero weather and unfriendly tribes from wild rapids, desert heat, fifty degree and snowshoe. Kane went from Toronto to Mobile, Alabama. From the Montreal "Automatist era", one can wonder if Automatism in its direct form, with its psychological results is possible in the world of reduced dimensions of the canvas. There is a direct relationship between the idea of automatism and the infinite. Art is based on the ideas of concentration and reduction. Within precise historical dynamics, Borduas and his friends wanted to bring meaning back to life through art. To existing values they added this most important value that depended at once on the order of things and the beauty of forms. In Quebec that is called Automatism. In the light of History, let us readily retain its meaning.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
head of navigation on the Columbia River they turned south. Later he was to sketch Indians fishing at Fort Colville where hydro dams have now completely removed all traces of the picturesque falls and where an old Indian lady, widow of an elderly chief, told, now remembered as a young woman the great numbers of salmon caught there. Kane recorded the salmon fishing in sketch after sketch. The brigade reached Fort Vancouver opposite the present city of Portland before Christmas. It was that critical year when the British politicians, newly turned over the shoulder, were glibly turning over the whole Oregon territory to the United States, and the Hudson's Bay Company was building a new fort at Victoria as their base of Pacific operations.

Several months of sketching along the Pacific took Kane into the Willamette Valley already settled by numerous French settlers from Quebec and Scottish families who were former Hudson's Bay Company employees. At St. Paul's Mission maintained by Jesuits from Montreal, he painted the newly-completed church, the first brick building erected in the Pacific coast. Further down the Columbia he saw Mt. St. Helens erupting, the last active volcano in North America. There were Indian canoe burials to record as well as the process of head flattening by Indians to give them a more aristocratic appearance.

Further north, he sketched for several weeks at Victoria, picturing Indian houses, women weaving on primitive looms, the highly decorated canoes, and ritual dance masks, on which he was able to find exact in Russia where some were taken from Alaska at that time.

The wandering artist returned to Toronto in October 1848. An exhibition of four years of sketches was held in the Toronto City Hall. It excited universal admiration. Here for the first time Ontario saw a visual record of the west and it was one of the most important that the artists had in their thoughts there as a place for expansion. Not many years later, the Hudson's Bay Company had to release its monopoly and the west was opened for settlement.

Kane's immediate task after returning home was the painting of a series of canvases from his sketches as a more permanent record of the west. He asked for government aid in a hundred years before the Canada Council, politicians were aghast at the thought of giving money to artists, but they did land him during a two hour debate in the House (undoubtedly the precedent has not since been repeated), and they gave him £500 to paint 12 portraits of the chief people of Victoria, which were exhibited at a box under the spare bed and brought them out on wet Sundays for examination by Kane's wife. Eventually the collection was sold to H. J. Lutcher Sterk of Orange, Texas. Through the generosity of his widow, they are now being made available for public exhibition. The sketches, combined with the canvases, present a superb panorama of Kane's artistic accomplishments. This is enhanced by the lively view of Kane as the recorder of history and of the Indian life in the Canadian north-west.

(1) Quebec Gazette (Quebec), 13 Dec. 1883.

The Macdonald Stewart Collection: A tribute to the common man

By Michel LESSARD and Huguette MARQUIS

The recent trend to collect old objects whose use injects personality into modern surroundings attests at once to an appreciation of our history and to a reaction against a dictating, Lancasterian universe. These objects our ancestors used, skillfully made, with aesthetic concerns, forming part of our heritage, invite us to do better; this will afford craftsmanship its due place. Such is the basis for the Montreal Macdonald Stewart Collection, which groups together objects used in XVIIIth and XIXth century French homes. Mr. David Stewart and the Macdonald Tobacco Company purchased a unique collection of fireplace tools, pewterware and tin-ware, and lighting devices from a French collector, M. Hottermans. Along with some exceptional sculptured wood panels, they were exhibited at Terra des Hommes last summer. The most striking part of the collection are the household articles, in which the craftsmen went beyond purely functional concerns in the forging and ornamentation.

One of the most amazing collections of its kind, the group includes many kitchen utensils, designed for use on an open hearth which established the reputation of French cuisine from the XVIIIth century. They also provide a link between French and Quebec production, inspired by the mother country, more similar objects appearing in this country in the colonial period. We owe owe open hearth to the Macdonald Stewart Collection exhibition for having staked on contemporary Canadian art rather than on established values, as the Rothmans Company did by assembling a collection of French tapestries signed Le Doux, Picard Le Doux, etc.

The selection of the Benson and Hedges Company is clearly more up to date. No doubt the idea of painting on walls is not new. Léger had expressed the wish to see such a street in the city painted blue, another yellow. Vasarely again took up the idea in Art and Plastics. In the last few months, several...
cities in the world. Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Paris, and Nanterre have been enjoying the large surfaces they offer artists. The Benson and Hedges Company had the wisdom to leave the choice of artists for the Montreal and Toronto murals to specialists in the art field: directors of museums. Another positive point in this undertaking was that there was no longer a question of commissioning works which only a minority would be able to enjoy; instead, it put original art within the reach of everyone, in particularly busy places in Montreal and Toronto.

The artists enthusiastically responded to the invitation. The six painted walls constitute healthy signs in the urban environment. Each artist created in his own style. None was frightened by the gigantic size of the surface, as new as this scale for working might have been. They all overcame this difficulty and succeeded in brilliantly animating the walls allocated to them.

The murals

In Montreal, Coward chose to accentuate the height by controlled trickles of paint, whose distribution and colours vary within a series of six colours. The sinuous lines of lively colours on a light blue background make the viewer look downward and compel him to actively inspect the work and again set up the play of colours within the artist's serene and poetic art.

Déry drew a stylized tree, enlarged with concentric rings as a stone makes in water, on a sky blue background, the same as Coward's. Without pretence, almost naïve, Déry brings gentleness and spontaneity; he changes our visual habits without shocking, by his luminous presence, so much out of the ordinary, and yet familiar.

Montpetit reveals himself to be more ambitious than Déry, multiplying the monumental scale will only intensify the first impression. Although I have only seen the model, the stage that has been crossed is not as decisive as it may have appeared at first. The work remains integrated in the humanist and formalist tradition. The painted wall is not an area of invention for the painter. At most he is permitted to confirm the mastery of his talent and to measure himself against the scale of cities. The dimension is such that it prohibits research. Subject to the necessity of expression, the large mural is the architect's risk falling into the decorative. Nor is the solution that chosen by the Chicago artists who, after the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, used walls to illustrate some revolution to be waged. What can art gain in once more becoming only narrative and didactic? Their intention is the risk of no more reaching the public than leaflets distributed on the sidewalk.

But the poverty of urban aesthetics displayed by the presence of painted walls shows us what extent the participation of artists should be situated at another level all together, that of the development of the environment itself.

As for Solomon, he used an unpleasing wall that was not completely flat, having reliefs of three feet in some places. He cleverly exploited these protuberances instead of trying to conceal them. These four vertical masses are accentuated by the colours that project them into the foreground, while another rectangular block on the bottom of the mural acts as an intermediary between the background and the reliefs. Clouds unfold at the top of the mural and strike an unexpected note.

The third Toronto mural is signed Rayner. Of the six it is surely the least interesting. Gratuitous and decorative, it is an example of a mural "made to please". A frieze on the bottom is not integrated into the size of the composition and so to speak negates it. Although I have only seen the model, I do not think the actual sized production will improve the quality. On the contrary, the monumental scale will only intensify the first impression.

A stage reached

On the whole, the initiative was decisive; artists have proven that we can have confidence in them. They confirmed that in the greyness of cities, colour is indispensable to life and that in the present day urban culture, their art, a little more and more exciting, and harmonious, strike a refreshing counterpoint. By making art come out of museums and galleries, the Benson and Hedges Company took a step forward.

But for all that, has the gulf that separates art and the public been narrowed? Are artists with a more and more exacting social conscience entirely satisfied with this new form of participation?

All things considered, the stage that has been crossed is not as decisive as it may have appeared at first. The work remains integrated in the humanist and formalist tradition. The painted wall is not an area of invention for the painter. At most he is permitted to confirm the mastery of his talent and to measure himself against the scale of cities. The dimension is such that it prohibits research. Subject to the necessity of expression, the large mural is the architect's risk falling into the decorative. Nor is the solution that chosen by the Chicago artists who, after the Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, used walls to illustrate some revolution to be waged. What can art gain in once more becoming only narrative and didactic? Their intention is the risk of no more reaching the public than leaflets distributed on the sidewalk.

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For as positive as this initiative may be, it certainly seems that the integration of the artists into society must be made by a change in the past convention between artists and viewers. The privileged intermediary, the architect, might have something to say in this questioning of the status of the artist. For a long time, he has been turning a deaf ear to this.

The gulf of participation remains to be invented. People will say all that is an utopia! But could utopia not become reality tomorrow? And are these painted walls not able to sustain our dreams, to concretely show that there might be a valuable participation of artists in social life.

Micheline Beauchemin

By Claude-Lyse GAGNON

Micheline Beauchemin fondly looked over photographs of the Saint Lawrence river, most of them taken at spring thaw. At that moment, it was as though she were spell-bound. "The river is so beautiful. It moves me deeply. It influences me. When my tapes are silverly and pearly they are referring to it."

Since her return from Japan where, in Kyoto, she executed the liveliest and largest theatre curtain in existence, the immense tapestry for the Opera House of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa, she has chosen to live near the river she loves so much. At Grondines, 22 Chemin du Roy, in Portneuf county. Her looms, multicoloured wool, nylon and acrylic thread, and bits of metal have transformed the attic, now a studio, in this old Quebec house that has restored and made beautiful again, like a homecoming, like a pilgrimage to one's origins.

That is the setting where she pursues her work. She is a rebellious and warm, as every creation made of life itself must be. She is a tall, slender woman with sparkling eyes. Elegant, with the feline-like grace of dancers. And like them, her frail frame conceals the ability and energy to shake off fatigue and go on and on, the sound of the music, beyond nervous energy.

She has a very active intelligence. She is sweet and vulnerable, yet she has a shrewd head for business. And she is consistent.

In her innermost self, she has lived only for what she loves. Even if nothing were easy, "Some seductions are so powerful" wrote Baudelaire, "that they can only be virtues". Micheline Beauchemin, from the beginning and thereafter, believed only in her art, only in this realm, and in a few people. The misery and suffering mattered but little.

The road

The Beauchemin. A Quebec family in which there are many engineers. Her parents, not too enthused to see her entering the Montreal Fine Arts School.
But it was her only love. When she left school, she obtained a position weaving at Marine Industries in Sorel. "I was the only woman. That was in 1951." Among all the beginners it was she who had the smallest salary, she remembers this discrimination.

A year later, but not going out and by making sacrifices every day, she had some rather slender savings. But she was pursuing her dreams, one of which was to go to Europe to study. She arrived in Paris and she enrolled in three schools: painting, drawing, stained glass. Stained glass windows especially interested her. Soon she made a trip to Chartres. This went on for almost five years. However, in the meantime, one spring she decided to go abroad, perhaps to rest. By hitchhiking, she reached Greece where she was to spend eight months.

"Everyone there was embroidering, weaving. The women were working wonders with wool. They had such fine, ancient techniques. Like Penelope, but I was along on the voyage! I began tapestry."

There are long and strange roads in finding one’s destiny, one’s most intense feelings, and understanding one’s soul. And the reason that we exist for a certain time, so short a time, comparatively a few seasons.

She returned to Paris in 1957 with tapestries and windows. She won the first prize for stained glass windows at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. In 1958 she returned home. More determined and now certain of the art form that inspired her. She rented a small room on St. Matthew street. "I went to people’s homes to teach painting to earn my bread on which I chewed sparingly to buy wool. I was very depressed. I recall it as a very difficult period. I was neither funny nor sociable. I also found a job in the costume department at Radio Canada but I regretted every hour away from tapestries.

In 1959 she held her first one-woman exhibition. It roused Delatte’s interest. I can never forget it, not because it was such a success, but because it was an important step. Proof that she could go even further.

Two years later, the Arts Council granted her a bursary. She left again. Destination: Japan. Because of their immense looms, Japanese craftsmen have developed special, very advanced techniques. She was also fascinated by the country. "I was dreaming of tapestries as big as cathedrals, as large as our rivers. I so wanted to give importance to this art."

Of course, I am exaggerating! However, I learned that in Japan, craftsmen create immense tapestries, and that is what was most important to me. In 1966, I returned to Japan to draw, to execute the model for the theatre curtain of the Opera House of the National Arts Centre. It won the 1967 prize. Near the end of 1967, I went to Kyoto where with Kawasaki Orimono and local craftsmen, I was able to create this tapestry which is 45 feet long by 200 feet wide, and weighs 4,000 pounds. I stayed there 17 months, working from sunrise to sunset. That will no doubt remain the major work of my life..."

She says this with a certain nostalgia, I can imagine why. After the excitement of constructing such a great work into which she put so much research and work, in which she invented the tapestry of the future, she needs some new challenge. Someone who has had a great love will always find another.

And the world

But, knowing Micheline Beauchemin, the important work is always the one of today, of tomorrow. It is enough to learn the anguish and idealization she experiences considering her next work, her surprise at inspiration.

I picture her on that autumn morning, on her farm at Grandins, galloping on her Canadian bred mare called "Taoli" (moon lady), a lovely mare with a shiny black coat. Very late the previous evening, she had finished a tapestry and seemed exhausted. But when she returned from her ride with her cheeks glowing, she was a different person. After lunch she settled down to the loom, chose wool in iridescent colours of the forest in autumn, and worked until evening. A few months later, returning to her home, I saw the tapestry. It was a hymn to the human heart.

In short, she has discovered new continents in tapestry. She has left on a sailboat, bound for the unknown and the infinite. "No one can stop the march of art, no more than they can stop the march of time," wrote Maïskowski, "it is to the painter that the soul托s."

The Barber Painter

Arthur Villeneuve

By François Gagnon

For nearly fifteen years Arthur Villeneuve has been pursuing such an important and extensive exploration that it is beginning to command respect everywhere. However, this order of things did not come about by itself. We would like to relate how it all started.

Beginning in 1957, Arthur Villeneuve undertook to transform his house, one wall after another, not forgetting the ceiling, the interior and the exterior into what he called "The Artist's Museum"; this was a very personal human ambition. His viewpoint opposed the usual approach which assured everyone the "comfort of knowing" the site. Discouragement lay in wait for the Villeneuves. A journalist from the "Northern News" commented: "Everyone there was embroidering, the "flattering comments" of "Montreal artists" had led them to expect different remarks from their town councillors. Who was to be believed, the notables of Chicoutimi or the experts of Montreal? But especially in what way did the lack of a likeness of the sites and buildings suffice to disqualify a proposition for painting? Such a reproach was made to a photographer, but to a painter? Is the painter not supposed to reveal sites not as they were in reality, but such as they are in the mental world, as they are filled with anguish and idealization?"

In short, the perspectives of her course are changing.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
Perhaps some misprint obscured his thought. The same day, and in the same newspaper, Jacques Bergevin, who believed the art of Villeneuve worthless and who “still does not manage to understand the admirers of this unusual painting”, wished “good luck” anyhow to the “figaro of the canvas”, for he was a “Saguenay citizen who is honourably earning his living by painting.” He will handle the brush in the best way possible...”

And he added: “The unexpected visit of Waddington last week has ended all discussion.” The Lingot® of Feb. 23rd also reported on Waddington with whom it had an interview. The “personage in the field of the arts who is elaborating a program for these days” must be respected because “Mr. Waddington insisted on emphasizing that the works of Mr. Villeneuve were not of naive indeed even primitive art, but of a rare quality”.

On February 28, 1961, the Progrès du Saguenay published a photograph representing Villeneuve and his canvases in front of the bus which was to take them to Montreal for the great adventure. The caption read: “Tonight the Montreal critics will pass judgement on Arthur Villeneuve and his works.”

They didn’t that night. But on March 4th, three greats of the Montreal press, La Presse, Le Devoir, and the Gazette had spoken out for Villeneuve and his works. Jean Sturazin entitled his article, p. 24, “A douanier Rousseau of the Saguenay?”, Yves Lasnier, “A marvellous naive painter: Arthur Villeneuve”, and D.Y.P. p. 10, “Canadian Primitive Painter”. On March 8th, 1961, the Progrès du Saguenay was a retre of the headline: “The exhibition of Villeneuve’s works was a success”, one could read: “The Montreal critics enthusiastically greeted the work of Arthur Villeneuve describing it in the most flattering terms. Almost all the canvases exhibited in Montreal were hailed. This phenomenon is an infallible confirmation of the quality of Villeneuve’s work, this proves at least that the Chicoutimi painter is reaching his audience and that the latter is experiencing a manifest interest towards the works whose creation is rich in purity and freshness.” The same article announced that the council of the city of Chicoutimi had acquired a canvas by Villeneuve representing a scene of the memory-carnival. Things had gone full circle.

We do not know how the citizens of Chicoutimi came to reject the art of Villeneuve in which such an embodiment of their region, as the canvases bought by the council attests. The manner in which he was rehabilitated in the local press, which is known however, lets us imagine it. The ebb and the flow come from the same place. He who lets his ink dry has previously been able to learn his hatreds from the same source. This source, moreover, is well known. It is a cultivated culture that designated as mud what it now called naif”, that asked people to burn what it now asked them to adore... and to burn.

When, after the folkloric art of country people, and in the face of the “entertainment” of the leisure industrialists, an authentic aesthetic appearance among barbers, customs officers, or postmen, people began by ridiculing it, then decided to exploit it. It is thus that this art we did not want to take too seriously was called naive because it revealed, arising out of the working class, the existence of being free creative potent among individuals who had bypassed both schools in which to be trained, and recognized styles in which to express themselves. If the working class does not yet have artists like Rousseau or Villeneuve or Cheval, it is that it does not even have the conditions of leisure permitted the barber, customs officer or postman. Not even that. Listen to Yvon Deschamps, you will see.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

NOTES

(1) “In what year did you seriously work at painting?” asked Gilles Goyette, who worked in journalism himself. “In 1957, answered Villeneuve, I decided to make a career of it. I devoted more than five hours a day to painting”. “Arthur Villeneuve: there is nothing to say” in Le Phare (Chicoutimi), Jan. 30, 1963, p. 7.

(2) The Soleil (Quebec) of August 10, 1959, soberly signals the event.

(3) “The Artist’s Museum interests the council” in Le Soleil, dated only several days in the Villeneuve documentation. Edmund Alleyne, Stanley Cosgrove, and Alfred Pelland are the artists most frequently mentioned in relation to Villeneuve in his documentation.


(10) According to the wording on the invitation card.


A brief survey of the design question

By Denise COURTOIS

In cooperation with the firm of Jacques Guillon/Designers Inc.

There is a plaque of an elegant simplicity on the wall which supports the vaulted main entrance at 305 Youville Square, in old Montreal. Across a paved courtyard, ringed with old stone walls, on the second floor of a house dating back to the French régime and recently renovated, there are offices whose walls of tinted glass, rugs, furnishings, and lighting, blend the intimate and the functional. Just what we would expect from the occupants, associates who are four in number like the immortal musketeers. The Musketeers of Design. White horse? Grey horse? They are from all companies, as are the contracts which are as varied as their diverse backgrounds.

Jacques Guillon, who opened the office about fifteen years ago "aware of a need to fill a vacuum existing in Canada where no industrial design was being done by designers in participation with industry, as In Europe and the United States", trained as an architect, as did one of the associates, Roger Labastrou. The two others came with different experience, that is graphic, industrial, and industrial design for Morley Smith.

The firm got going gradually in the physical as well as human sense of the word. While setting up a well-administered office, adapted to the changing demands of the market, for which each associate was responsible, the four men searched for the best formula to work together. They think they have found it in the last three or four years. Even if it is the individual experience of any one of them that brings in a contract, they discuss it as a team, they each express their ideas, sometimes there is lively discussion, and they finally reach the best solution for the client.

In the production stage, as meets the needs of the project, all of them or else, two or three of them, watch over the production, backed up by the work of a dozen draftsmen and studio employees. When it is a question of a prototype, it is executed either in the offices of Guillon and Associates or in the client's, according to the case.

In spite of its manner of proceeding, the Guillon-Labastrou-Merquart-Smith team is not, does not intend to be an anonymous team. It makes itself known in terms of the individuals who make it up, and numerous contracts are won because so and so is a part of the team. In the course of 1971, the firm made an advance study of the means of transportation between Montreal and the future airport at Sainte-Blanche, due to the presence of Morley Smith, known for his work on Montreal metro cars. The most office, which never grants contracts to a firm but to individual graphists, entrusted to Laurent Marquart specifically, the creation of two stamps, now issued. The knowledge of architecture and related fields that Jacques Guillon and Roger Labastrou have, often brings the team to participate in projects concerning housing and urban life in general, projects, moreover, in which other knowledge available within the partnership is also of use.

The productions of Jacques Guillon/Designers Inc. are too numerous to be listed, but we can judge of their diversity by mentioning, large and small, which this office handled, and gave their special touch, in the last four or five years: Furnishings for Habitat 67 and for the National Arts Centre in Ottawa; a model showing the forms and functions of the brain at the Universal Exhibition, long and detailed work executed in close collaboration with a brain surgeon; graphic symbol of the Montreal Metro and its varied applications in stations and their entrances; suspension, exterior aerodynamics and interior arrangement of the metro cars; seats of fibreglass, fitted with cushions that can be removed by pressing on a button and replaced by other standard cushions, while the old ones go to the workshop to be fitted with new covers — that was unheard of for a public transit system; the air and space pavilion for Man and His World 1967; design of the large garage of Numatic Inc., for the conference of industrial designers in 1967; exhibition display of the promotion-presentation of the new airport, in three rooms/three plans: photographs, slides and diagrams, plans and results; study of the interior for the design of a high speed train; plan for the suspension system of a dual function locomotive, for passenger trains and goods trains; signs to promote Canada in Europe; composition of fabrics, introduced by Design Canada; symbols and initials and their applications to exterior graphic image of an association, league, factory, shop, social corporation; schematization of the architectural plans of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Montreal and, for the same building, the ladies and gentlemen signs for the lavatory doors; etc., etc.

All these projects have brought the four associates a solid reputation, medals, joys, frustrations, and a common conception of design, expressed in the following interview. Professionally, all four see themselves as "technicians endowed with a concern for sociology and possessing skills in administration and commercialization which always see man as the starting point of a production".

Viewpoint on design and designers

expressed by Jacques Guillon, Roger Labastrou, Laurent Marquart and Morley Smith.

What is design?

A word used at random! Designers have been trying to agree for a long time on a definition, without success. Let us say that it is a process of creativity which can exist in a lot of professions, which considers the aesthetics of form with a practical application: its objective is to serve well the receiver of the product, of the object, of the service: man. Yes, it is a whole made up of three parts: man, function, and form. An inseparable whole. Doea beauty not arise by itself from the design which most fulfills its function of serving people? The best airplanes in the world, the Concorde, and the Tupolev, are also the most beautiful.

And who is the designer?

There again, no unanimous decision may be reached. It is a complicated profession, constantly engaged in its own research. There are general designers like us, and there are also specialists, who are designers in the strictest English sense of the word, who research on one specialization, on form, or both, in a restricted and specialized field. If they research aesthetics without there being some question of innovating or radically improving function, it is more fitting to call them stylists. There are also those who are searching for a style, with a certain elegance, by exploiting the taste, if not the bad taste, of the public, and they dare to call themselves designers. That's funny!

How do you conceive the 'true' designer?

He is endowed with an imaginative, inventive, and even intuitive mind. He possesses a technical knowledge of materials in general and particularly of those with which he may be called upon to work. He keeps himself up to date on developments in a lot of fields. He has a social conscience and a deep understanding of man. He is not an inventor. He is not an artist. His role is not to create something in itself, but to create for man, by understanding, if not guessing at the profound desires and inner aspirations which go beyond the surface form, or both, but in a restricted and specialized field. If they research aesthetics without there being some question of innovating or radically improving function, it is more fitting to call them stylists. There are also those who are searching for a style, with a certain elegance, by exploiting the taste, if not the bad taste, of the public, and they dare to call themselves designers. That's funny!

You each have a specialty, how are you also general designers?

We are general designers because our field of action is vast and diversified, as opposed to the specialist in a factory, who always deals with the same product, often without being able to modify very much what already exists. In a large project, we become one of the cogs of a team of many disciplines in which design intervenes in a large way, who research on one specialization, on form, or both, in a restricted and specialized field. If they research aesthetics without there being some question of innovating or radically improving function, it is more fitting to call them stylists. There are also those who are searching for a style, with a certain elegance, by exploiting the taste, if not the bad taste, of the public, and they dare to call themselves designers. That's funny!
If it is a small project entirely under our control, all four of us work on it, at least at the design stage, just to have an overall approach to consider the question from numerous angles. These days we have to work as a team. We must bring out all the aspects of a problem and consider all the possibilities in order that the final product may serve man without creating conflicts or disturbing him, physically or inwardly.

Is it complicated to reach this goal?
No, the solution is simple. The final objective, man, is also the starting point.

For example?
When we studied a rapid transportation system to service the new airport, we proceeded as follows: a person is in a seat, the seat rests on the floor, the floor is that of a train, and the train is traveling between Montreal and Sainte-Scholastique. The ordinary approach would have been: “Let us make a train and put passengers on it”. But this is not enough. For example, in our office, in the recent case of a newspaper vending machine, we studied the arm movement of the user, as well as the atmosphere and urban setting where the machine would be put in use before beginning manufacture. Most of the factories would have done the opposite and said to begin with: “We will make the casing with a metal press.” Because that is produced quickly and cheaply. Without worrying if the resulting machine will be difficult to deal with or be of an offensive ugliness.

So of what use are industrial designers?
They are, as it were, the means of communication between industry, the product and the consumer. When an operation is vast, many hands and minds are involved, somewhere along the way the idea is forgotten that the final product is intended for the common man, the public. Because the concepts of the designer are different, even if he also evolves with the technological and social laws in the Germany of the 20’s. And perhaps they understood it was necessary to make furniture that was good and beautiful and answer the needs of the people, they brought about the birth of the Scandinavian furniture industry, one of the greatest successes of design.

Is design also subject to technical and financial restraints?
Yes. The necessary machinery or the ideal material do not always exist. And financial obstacles exist for us as for everyone. The initial cost of a mould can be prohibitive if the production is to be limited. Our road signs can be too costly in the size requested, etc.

But designers also know that life is full of restraints. If we face an obstacle, we modify, without ever losing sight of the objective. Believing that we will be able to finish a project 100% as planned, is utopian. When we have successfully finished a project within the required time, we can only keep to the stipulated budget, and the consumer has the product well incorporated, we are satisfied and really feel we have performed the required service.

Does design intervene in public projects?
Rarely. Alas! That is why we see so many projects intended to budget completely missing their objective when they are finished. Perhaps they are technical or financial successes, but they are failures on the human scale. The authorities are waking up too slowly to design.

Why? Is design so expensive?
Expensive in relation to what? In housing for example, is it not definitely more expensive to force thousands of people to live in insalubrious conditions, than to take necessary measures at the beginning? Are healthy and happy families in proper housing less valid than direct investments for health and education? We are going to spend a great deal of money on air and water pollution because we have finally admitted that it was deleterious for man and his descendants. And visual pollution then – think for a moment of the entire human movement of the user – is also psychologically harmful isn’t it?

If a designer must work alongside the town planner, the architect, the sociologist, the microbiologist, etc., the design budget is set up at the initial stage of the project, at the same time as that of other specialties to be integrated in the financing plan. We can even phrase it this way for what we consider to be important. It is rather a question of a change that is up to the directors of enterprises, the promoters of projects and the municipal authorities.

What does the public say?
Only an informed public can react, and it is badly informed about the matters that affect its daily life. From the point of view of design, the best thing is to exhibit good design. We saw the crowds rushing to the Passion show whose design was a total success. Why do people like the Montreal metro? Because architects and designers were involved in its conception and made it something other than a simple tube like that in New York, Paris.

For better information we must especially reach the groups and persons who influence decisions of the level of industry as well as governments. Such is what happened in Denmark, 15 or 20 years ago, in the field of furnishing. Because they understood it was necessary to make furniture that was good and beautiful and answer the needs of the people, they brought about the birth of the Scandinavian furniture industry, one of the greatest successes of design.

Is that where design was born?
It is surely the first major example of design at the service of the general public. But design discovered its fundamental laws in the Germany of the 20’s, with the Bauhaus. In searching for the basic need, to eliminate what was superfluous and overelaborate in the style of the 1900’s, and thus arriving at the cube and the straight line, this group led the way in showing that form arises from function.

What is the situation of design in Canada and elsewhere in the world?
It is faring well in Europe, especially in countries where the authorities encourage it. The best example is England, where the government itself decided to transform industry after the last war, by creating a Council of Industrial Design. In Canada, the central government is timidly beginning to imitate this example. This is only fitting at a time when there is so much talk about the environment. But for all of the population to benefit from it would require an intimate collaboration among the three levels of government. We are still pretty far from this!

How does one become a designer?
Designers generally are produced by changes within certain professions. This happens when engineers, architects, technicians, sculptors, decorators, or painters leave their own profession, or rather expand it, to the benefit of design.

What is the situation of design in Canada?
The situation of design in Canada is expected to change completely. What are we defining today will not perhaps be true tomorrow. Today we are creating a graphic symbol or an apparatus for an enterprise, but tomorrow, who knows, we may be planning the physical functioning of the company and deciding where to place the truck loading zone, where to situate the receptionist’s office. But the function of design will stay the same, and to carry it out, it will become possible for the greatest possible number of designers to remain autonomous and free. They are taking a chance on surviving on being absorbed by industry, commerce, governmental agencies, the society and the economic world awaken to design. But then, they will sink into an already prepared system and will be cornered, with their hands and feet tied, instead of developing their ideas, discussing them with others in a wide field of action, and being able, on the level of design of course, to contest other ideas within the team of many disciplines. Designers should combat the specialization that is hanging over their heads, as well as over the rest of the world, and which is so dangerous for the mental and psychological survival of man.

It is far as far as Canadian designers are particularly concerned, their future rests in the international field. With our small population, the local market is restricted, but the entire world is the chessboard of the designer who conceives his products in terms of international criteria.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
The Canadian Cultural Centre
By Guy WEELEN

The Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris which was opened in April, 1971, truly began its activities in October, 1971. It was installed with taste and refinement in a beautiful building situated in a geographical location — the Esplanade des Invalides, which is a disappointment in the centre of Paris. It was pleasant and harmonious, but, yet easily accessible. Articulated in such a way that each activity finds a favourable space there, and also specific or flexible at will, comfortable. It is physically pleasing. But this ease would not be a criterion of quality in itself because of the direction of the centre. Guy Vlaminck, who is trying to apply this in the best possible way, assisted in his task by Guy Plamondon, official in charge of the animation services.

If culture uses information, and we would not be able to understand it without extensive information, it also exceeds it. We could even say that culture is information. Like humans, culture is an infinity of twins and leaves piled up by succeeding seasons, thus by time, it supposes a duration. But actually, like the leaves and twigs, cultural events are superimposed with a great rapidity. To extend the image, in our time, culture would no longer be able to exist, but also a dynamic force. Its richness would be judged much more by its dynamism than by the deposit it tends to build.

Thus in a year of operation, many Parisians of every description visited it, but the displays were equally numerous and varied: music in its classical, contemporary, and popular repertoire; plays, recitals, exhibitions of oil paintings, sculpture, ceramics, covering the various perspectives of Canadian creation; theatre, poetry, films showing the different directions of the cinema; discussions with illustrations, and two important conferences, Mécanologie and Art and Communication. Devoted to problems that surpass the Canadian setting but which concern the conscience of everyone. As we can realize, the rhythm was rapid, the diversity of expressions and disciplines was great. Intentionally, the traditional, academic categories were involved to the benefit of a wider and more general view. In fact, there is no longer any cause to maintain the formerly classical distinction between major and minor art. Henceforth, and this is a contemporary phenomenon, the arts are interdependent. The sources which inspire the creators are multiple and they come from different levels: public

licity and design fertilize painting, the spoken language transforms the structures of written language; the music of films and pop take classical themes, chamber music takes up the popular melody. Individualism breaks out. In our society, all creative activities at all levels intersect. If their influences interfere to make up a manner of being, the expression of a culture.

The action undertaken here does no so much attempt to display something specifically Canadian, as to allow Parisians to become aware of Canadian life, of Canada there. Thus, there is no question here of giving a look at Canada, prepared in advance, or corresponding to some prefabricated model, but of showing and conveying its exciting richness, the abundance of its endeavours, the dynamism that animates it.

Maurice Fleury, well-known music critic, was right to say in his account, The place of Canadian music in contemporary production, which is being presented at the Cultural Centre now:

"What is most striking on arriving in Canada for the first time, is that the countryside is completely turned towards its future which is embodied in its dynamic youth, freed of social, religious, and cultural prejudices, a youth impatient to make its own music, and to lead its own destiny away from the beaten track of conformity.

Exactly, the new music in Canada is a matter of men and not principles and not politics. There are so many creators, so many distinct personalities. So many works, so many indications given to the four corners of the world. Each of us has only to understand this at the right moment. Indeed it comes on like a great and fertile disorder."

So Canada without disguise, beyond the cultural propagandists, which may be honourable but which cultivate too much a narrow nationalism — is approachable for everyone. The first concern of a sound cultural action is that every person be free to choose, to find what suits and excites him in the rich material, that has happened finally shown, to form a judgment. On the other hand, we expect that each one will show discernment, and will express an uncompromised reaction. It is not fitting to hope for or to expect compliments, but we wish to have real exchanges which are beyond worldly complacency and kind words suited to the occasion. If the Parisian is led to lose his illusions about Canada, and we certainly know what these conventional illusions are worth, whether for better or worse, he will have had his opportunity to discover what Canada is, to feel the sheer force of it. Very often we have not obliterated the human qualities of the imagination, sensitivity, and poetic emotion. If, during a few decades, in the framework of an industrial civilization, some fine minds have been lost to taking these qualities into consideration, they are noticing their error today, and in many areas we can regret their short-sightedness. Something was behind the international success of the slogan: "Power to the imagination."

Every true cultural action must furnish the individual pursuing his search with an ever greater variety of possible choices.

The prodigious dissemination of information which will shortly be even greater, inevitably leads to this, as it pushes us irresistibly towards a constant widening of meanings. In this too, the times has ended when one could declare, with some ironies, and much anguish, that for something to be universal it necessary had to be very uncouth and very coarse.

A culture can only validly accomplish its action if it becomes aware of its universal vocation. Addressing itself to man, all things considered, it addresses itself to all men. For some, that will probably seem a common place remark, but a quick glance around is enough to realize that this notion, which we like to think is elementary, has not yet penetrated into the customs of governmental institutions.

It is pleasant and even more, fortunate to note that Canada has understood very well the meaning of its cultural action whose first quality is generosity.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

Iconoclasm and restoration
By Norman PAGE

The liturgical reform implemented in the last few years in the churches of Quebec has given rise to a vandalism and to forms of iconoclasm that would have made Savonarola blush, but which seem to leave our Minister of Cultural Affairs rather indifferent.

More by ignorance than ill-will or simony, at least we should hope so, many priests, wanting to carry out at a low price the liturgical renewal recommended by the Council, have let fall into the clutches of wily second-hand dealers and ravenous antique dealers the most precious works of liturgical art that have gone astray among all the shoddy and imitative stuff which a secular dust had covered in the same desolate grey.

To be convinced of this, certain museum curators should be curious enough to go window-shopping in the antique shops of Montreal, Quebec, or cities situated on the Atlantic border. And many sculpted wood candlesticks, rare bronzes, or even these beautiful chasubles woven in gold that are in great demand these days with flamboyant hippies, degrading what is sacred! One only has to go into any chic living room to discover some black leather chasuble painted wood hanging by one foot, quite happy at not having shared the fate of its twin, hanging up like some Cupid in the adjoining bedroom.

A few rare churches have, however, escaped pillage and improvised restorations. The Sainte-Famille church in Boucherville is one of these privileged monuments.

All one need do is someday drive down the picturesque road that goes along the river, south east of Montreal, to discover in the heart of the former seigneur of Governor Pierre Boucher, with what singular skill an excellent architect and a few responsible priests (we can not ask more of them) have succeeded in restoring the gracious interior of this church and adapt-
The sober appearance of the exterior of this monument, erected in 1801 according to the plans and specifications of abbé Pierre Conefroy, hardly suggests the very Verailles-like magnificence which clearly inspired the tasteful interior decoration; indeed it is amazing to discover in the heart of the Canadian countryside things that France reserved for its kings.

The general arrangement, and more particularly, that of the sanctuary and rood-loft, is of a remarkable grace. Corinthian style pilasters in sculpted, gilded wood support the entablature which surrounds the choir, and the balustrade is constructed of delicate interlacing of both sculpted and gilded wood. The Louis XVI arch is decorated in painted panels and especially with sculpted medallions that are unusually fine. In the center of the sanctuary is the reliquary of the High altar; a masterpiece of construction is a large replica of the one which Father Augustin Quinial had planned in 1737 for the church at Lachenaie, sculpted around 1745 by Gilles Bolvin. The two side altars in sculpted wood, painted and gilded, are the work of Louis Quévillon and were executed in 1802. The pulpit, which is perfectly arranged by the same sculptor and dates back to 1803, as do the two bas-reliefs in sculpted wood that are situated on both sides of the central tableau entitled The Repose of the Holy Family, a copy made in 1819 by J.-B. Roy-Audy from a painting attributed to Carle Van Loo.

In 1959, the Department of Cultural Affairs, through its Committee of Historical Monuments, officially listed this church among its historical monuments and recognized, through two successive grants, the work of conservation and restoration which had already been undertaken since 1958, but more completely since 1969, under the direction of architect Claude Beau­lieu, at a point when the architecture and decoration of this church had first to be freed of unfortunate characteristics and cumbersome additions. The restoration consisted in thoroughly cleaning the galleries on the sides and those of the rood-loft near the organ, in restoring the transepts to their original condition and refitting the altars, in putting pulpits back in the nave, and, in the sanctuary, freeing the two magnificent windows obstructed by niches, in removing the numerous plaster statues, in restoring the altar-piece of the side altar of Saint-Géné­rux, in changing the lighting of the sanctuary and the nave, in repainting the choir and the nave while conserving certain basic tonalities, in achieving a careful balance in all of the decoration, by carefully refitting the sanctuary according to the new liturgical needs.

All this work was executed with a refined sense of art and an immense respect for the original work. The predominant colors, blue, buff, and gold harmonize with sculpted wood gildings once more in the light which now streams from the four finely paneled windows. The central tableau was slightly lowered so as to free the cornice; the two other impressive paintings by J.-B. Roy-Audy, formerly on each side of the High altar, now decorate the transepts; to the left, Saint Peter succoured by an angel (1819) after Ch. de Lafosse, and on the right Christ on the Cross (1826) after J. Monnet. All the panelling, modillions, foliated scrolls and holaxes have been restored, the windows reveal lengthened, the balustrade completed; the lighting arrangement was modified according to the original design of the architect. In the naves, the statues of the Cross done in plaster was replaced by a less complex period work that was taken out of storage. A pity that the recent confessionals could not have been replaced by those reassembled to the sacrifice. It is also a shame that the installation of the new doors was not the same treatment as the outside doors which were restored by a master. We might also have regretted over the too deep royal blue of the sanctuary carpet, the fragile armchairs for the celebrants and the truncated seats were retained in the enclosure of the sanctuary, but no must admire the new altar facing the people which an astute clergyman was able to spot in time. This is a magnificent tomb in the Roman fashion, of sculpted and gilded pine; for a long time the property of the sisters of the Congregation, no doubt, it came from a chapel of a religious order in Old Mon­treal.

It is often very difficult to arrange a period sanctuary according to the new liturgical standards without radically destroying the equilibrium of an architectural volume and the unity of the whole; every church in which, for example, the area for the sanctuary was not arranged, is by the same sculptor and dates Roy-Audy, formerly on each side of the High-altar, now decorate the transepts: to the right, Saint Joseph leans on his staff and Mary, a green and yellow religious fiestas. There are tiny nativity scenes, the holy bale, pink as a shrimp in his straw, while a green and yellow Joseph leans on his staff and Mary, a stout figure in white and blue, kneels stiffly beside her. Ox and ass look knowingly on. The group is surrounded by tiny
sheep and pigs, turkeys, chickens and eggs no bigger than ants. The scale or the smallest — made, like miniature pots, of hard ceramic — is so minute that market-workers display them heaped like grain in bowls. They're known as “rice-toys".

Another favorite Christmas scene is the Flight into Egypt: Joseph leads the burro laden with their dainties; Mary is hugging the child; an overweight angel brings up the rear. That such an angel could actually fly with those gold wings would be a miracle indeed.

During Holy Week, craftsmen in papiermaché show off their skill and fantasy. Not only the figures vary but the costumes, faces and other figures, vividly colored and sometimes containing gunpowder that explodes and scatters small toys — but all sorts of comic dolls and effigies. Also of papiermaché are the masks and mules and horses on sale during the feast of Corpus Christi.

Most distinctly Mexican is the sombre fiestas of All Souls. The Day of the Dead, celebrated on November 2, corresponds to our Hallowe'en. Families spend the day quietly communing with their departed kinfolk, picking on their graves in the cemeteries. A packet is left of confetti-filled balloons, which are later popped over the graves in Mexico, and on this day he is saluted like an old friend. For some days before the fiesta, women set up stands in the streets to sell little animals, grinning skulls and coffins, glowing baskets of miniature fruit and all sorts of other wild and wondrous objects modeled in colored linsugar. These sugar-sculptures are left on the graves of relatives, vestigial sacrifices. More vividly than words, they express the Mexican feeling about mortality, so different from our own. They are at once much more macabre and much more festive than anything we, with our curious prudery about death, would dare to imagine. What's more, on the Day of the Dead some market women peddle toy coffins. Figures of priest, acolytes and pallbearers are fashioned from drinking-straws and colored paper, their heads made from chick-peas. The prize of my collection is a moving toy funeral of gaily painted straws and colored paper, their heads and feet made from pecan shells. Remove his snout, insert a garden-party. Best of all, a tiny pig made from a clay piggy-bank with flowery scenesc. Images like these go back to the remote pre-Columbian past, as do the fired-clay whistles in the shape of birds. Nativty scenes show Mediterranean influence, carried across the Atlantic by Spaniards. Some sugar sculptures betray their nineteenth-century English origins in Staffordshire pottery. Others, I'm sorry to say, recall Walt Disney.

For it's not just the machine that threatens the honesty and natural good taste of Mexican toy-design. A trend to cuteness has been helped along by middle-class demand. The anti-art of mass media too often corrupts the craftsmen's eye, so that the innocent vision becomes slick and knowing. Whole souvenir shops are filled with the meretricious junk that results.

Anyone who sets out in search of the true mini-Mexico will see what I'm talking about. Luckily, Mexican enthusiasts are taking action to resist the trend. One of them, José Chavez Morado, an artist and collector who is director of Guanajuato's fine museum, has set up a committee to encourage the folk-arts in his state. They award prizes and diplomas for the best work submitted at the great fiestas, which are held between Christmas and the Day of the Dead. Artisans make toys and souvenirs with cheap plasticware, and toyshops sell almost nothing else. Threatened with extinction, the hand-made has been helped along by middle-class demand. The anti-art of mass media too often corrupts the craftsmen's eye, so that the innocent vision becomes slick and knowing. Whole souvenir shops are filled with the meretricious junk that results.

Golden age was there, like in the canvas that I had painted in Paris. Then I understood that this countryside was mine. And Antonina Vallentin who relates the story adds: "He seemed to pull out then little..."

By Jacques LEPAGE

A woman runs down the road that stretches out toward Marseilles. The July sun parches the earth in the highlands of Provence where Picasso is trying to find peace and quiet. The young woman, his companion, is hoping that a car will pick her up and protect her from the pursuit of that swarthy lover. But from the automobile that pulls up and stops it is a furious Picasso who emerges: "You are mad. Why do you want to leave me?"

This incident of Menerbes leads to a venture that is still astonishing. Because Françoise Gilot is infuriated by the scorn she is subjected to, she hesitates to tie up her life any longer with Picasso, Antony and the world, is to be endowed with an amazing museum. Marie Cuttoli, "the great friend", as Françoise Gilot calls her, surprises the couple at Menerbes the day after this scene and rescues them from this mis
by little the roots that he had anchored in the soil of Spain to transplant them on this earth. The exile has found in the south of France the future permanent setting of his life."

Picasso, in fact, is going to prolong his stays there. Then settle there for good. The Cape of Antibes, where his friends, the Cuttoli's, welcome him, and also Cannes, Golfe-Juan, and Monte-Carlo, Mougins, and finally Vallauris. In 1935 separating from his wife Olga, distressed, he buries himself at Juan-les-Pins; but this place, one of his favourites, aroused his desire to work, and he recaptured there his creative activity which had been abandoned for a year, where Man Ray lent them an apartment, the war surprised him in September, 1939. There he painted "Pêche de Nuit" which would become the first work to one day be in the Picasso museum. In the meantime at Mougins, which Paul Éluard introduced him to,—and where he lives today with his second wife Jacqueline Roque,—he spent his first summer with Dora Maar. Madame Cuttoli has a handsome portrait of the young woman, painted at this time, one of the very first. He represents her still with short hair, as she had promised to him, and at the age that he had seen her for the first time at the Deux-Magots, "but already with the false platte wrapped around her head" that she wore "while she let her hair grow out at Picasso's request".

Picasso's relations with the Mediterranean have been very productive. As early as 1923 they have been established in those monstrous, deformed women, issues of the depths of the sea, where mythology was born, "Le Rapt", that he painted then, introduces into his bestiary the centaur which, in 1946, is going to appear more frequently in his drawings and canvases. It is what Picasso calls antiquity when he speaks of it with Dor de La Soucheʳè but an Antiquity that has in common with the Renaissance only an insatiable curiosity for discovery. An Antiquity that spans "all mythology, from the Pharaohs to the Etruscans" and of whose "Intelligent fervour" and discloses in its quest those intuitions "which haunt the mind of the first mortal men and their children of prehistoric times". So Picasso gives way to the totality of man. Picasso does not depart from this search. On the contrary, he lives, as in that light that permitted Cézanne to pull out the essentials of a landscape at the expense of its momentary appearance, "La Femme étranglée", he weighed in comparison to the moonlight potter with a potter's poem on the table. "Composition", "La Femme Couchée" bear witness to that sobriety that purifies to the point of severity the burning eroticism of the works of autumn 1946.

Prompted by a Dionysian impulse Picasso throws pebbles, centaurs, maenad, flower-women, fauns, and goats near the sea shores where they were born. The contour drawings, in a continuous stroke, without smudges multiply the indications of a fulfillment of the flesh that rejoices in its frenzied freedom, "La Joie de vivre." Is Picasso remaining in an indisputable happiness. The deities that he uses emphasize his bliss in love: Antibes is the only time when there is any kind of relief in the almost permanent tension, between violence and death, which forms the thread of Picasso's work. Even the many "Maternities" after the birth of his son Paulo, remain marked by the poet's desire to abandon to the joy of the present moment, this tenderness in voluptuousness.

Picasso returns to Antibes the following year. He advises La Souchère to exhibit the paintings. But the curator points out to him the dilapidated condition of the place, which does not frighten the painter. "You hammer in a nail", he says, "and you hang." La Souchère then begins to place the painted panels but continues to refuse to show them, except to Picasso's friends, Éluard, Françoise Gilot, the painter of "Guernica", and the poet who sees the very image of fertility, proclamation, and birth... To round off this collection some lithographs were added, most of them bearing reference to Françoise Gilot, given by Marie Cuttoli, who added to her gifts a tapestry, "The Minotaur". It is about her that Picasso told La Souchère: "She didn't fool you." Let us add that the museum has some sculptures from 1926, monumental heads of Marie-Thérèse in the form of a bust with a prominent nose and round eyes make them resemble some barbarian goddess.

In the years that followed, Marie Cuttoli asked that Picasso be made an honorary citizen of Antibes. This served as a prelude to the decision taken in 1947, on the suggestion of the curator La Souchère, to erect a castle that was then dedicated to the Grimaldi family, the Picasso museum.

Vallauris also has important works of Picasso: a bronze: "L'Homme au mouton" and "La Guerre et la paix", one of the most notable works by the painter of "Guernica"...

Today, restored, the Picasso Museum stands on the sea front, overlooking the ramparts. It is one of the most beautiful places in the world. To the North-East lies the snowly chain of the Alps, and in front of it the open sea, and at sunset there is the Cap d'Antibes where is tucked away the villa of Marie Cuttoli. An adroit museum administration enriched it with important works: a beautiful one by Stael, an Atlante, sculptures by Germaine Richier erected in the open air near a murmuring fountain in the shade of a patio.

But let us return to Picasso, the master of the place. What we see here is an incomparable unity, Time, place, and inspiration are united as in a classical tragedy. And Picasso realizes this so well that he has never authorized that any piece be removed from the museum. Even for his great retrospective in Paris in 1967, the rule could not be broken. Uncompromising, Picasso will tell those who want him to yield: "If you want to see the Antibes Picassos you will have to come to Antibes..."

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)