Texts in English

Yvonne Kirbyson

Numéro 65, hiver 1971–1972

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/58987ac

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Poets of the urban world in the future?

By André 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, the will to be modern 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 if 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. As a result, town-planners, 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 an artistic meeting in an international congress, to examine the intervention 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 obligated 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 just as long as the 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-reconstruction. To ignore it in the planning of great 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 rediscovers its humanizing function, it revives the concrete.

Professor Habraken 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.

Automatism in Montreal

By Jean ÉTHIER-BLAIS

Automatism, in the form it assumed in Montreal, like many 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 contributed to the widespread influence since the author of Strophes et catastrophes had left the Jesuit order. Hertel provided the innovative 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 depilated the authoritarian decision of Father Doncoeur, whose doctrine animated Relève and Nouvelle Relève. At the same time, Gabrielle Roy was preparing The Tin Flute. The mental, moral, and physical misery was quite obvious. It had only to be given meaning, and the Automatist school, like any other existential solutions, such as Hertel had become (and who, moreover, was an exceptional man himself), the Quebec middle class had grown accustomed to accepting the inevitable, better yet, of making the best of it. This Inevitable was known as Godfather Pellan, after having been Basin.

Beneath the superficial passivity, Montreal society was in fact mobile enough to offer itself the luxury of having collectively an at once good and bad conscience. This gave birth to Automatism.

Everything at that time was based on the idea of confrontation. Painting, in the final analysis, would have been only a pretext, quickly transcended. Was it a question of a conflict of generations? Yes and no: the disciples of Borduas were young, but Borduas, Marcel Brezina, Maurice Gagnon, and Hertel were in their middle years. In the heart of the Société d'Art Contemporain were many people of good will including John Lyman, Robert Elie, and Louise Gadbots; the need for change was felt at all levels of intellectual activity. New ideas were treading through from New York; Hertel knew and admired Fernand Léger; the collection of paintings of Louis Rougier permitted young Montreal painters to see the range of modern tendencies with their own eyes during wartime. Finally, the inventive and imaginative Pellan brought a new technique back from Paris; his virtuosity in itself, in this context, represented an extraordinary opening to the universe of forms. Without knowing it, but almost suspecting it, Quebec turned towards America and Europe. The diversity of 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 the global intellectual movement. 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 Rene Char's poem 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 or 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 modern school? In other words, how could a person whose mind was structured in such a classical manner as his, enamoured of grammatical forms, sensitive especially to imperceptible bits 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 sacred, plays a role. It is the instance of the automatic, in all its intuitive and instinctive elements, all assimilated automatism, such was the approach Borduas used. His work, like that of Claude Gauvreaux (his closest and foremost disciple) had two aspects, pictorial and historical. His tradition, like Breton's, is written and signed the signers 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-
fusal of a world without love, a refusal of the religious golden calf, a refusal of anti-cultural attitudes, and especially, a refusal of the regrettable sclerosis of Quebec society. The adoption of this position, at once cultural in its principle, and political in its application, relates Quebec Automatism, in its very dynamic definition, to the great Surrealist trend. Moreover, it is dependent on it only in that respect. The ambivalent personal position of Borduas with regard to Breton thus occurs on the level of aesthetic ideology. The theatre of Claude Gauvreau comes closest to Surrealist Automatism, an era in which, significantly, was literary and not pictorial. Following 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 beauty of forms. In Quebec that is called Automatism. In the light of History, let us readily retain its meaning.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)

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 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 from wild rapids, desert heat, fifty degree below zero weather and unfriendly tribes in many places. But the artist sketched constantly the lands and peoples he met, visiting dozens of Indian peoples: Algonquins, Sioux, Blackfoot, Nez Perce, Crow, Cheyenne, and many others. He recorded the appearance and customs of these peoples when Europeans had not yet stripped a proud people of all but the barest vestiges of their native ways.

Such a painting trip had been foreseen during 1833 by a Quebec newspaper critic, Le Canadien, who observed: "The artist's brush. Actually the author made this comment when discussing Joseph Légaré's most recent landscapes picturing Quebec and in which, for the first time, a Canadian artist had effectively captured the local scene in such a way as to give it a "Canadian" character. After congratulating Légaré for his devotion to Canadian subject matter, the article continued: ...it has often excited my wonder that our native painters have not devoted some part of their time and study to the scenery of Canada. To their shame, be it spoken, they have neglected a field from which rich laurels will yet be won. (...). Our winter views — breaking thro' the ice — Indian camps by night the mounted Sioux, chief of the Western wilderness, and the bivouac on the prairie-hillock — the chase of the Mounted Police, the savage and his forest wigwam... Légaré ignored the challenge. It was Krieghoff who won "rich laurels" from the Quebec winter views, and Paul Kane, an Irish immigrant boy who arrived in Toronto about 1819, who won similar praise for his paintings of the colourful west.

Artistic training in Canada was virtually non-existent. Ontario had even fewer painters than Quebec and Kane began his career by decorating furniture in Conger's Toronto furniture factory, switch­ed to tavern signs, then to costume, and then went on to laboriously painting crude portraits which delighted the middle class merchants, doctors and lawyers then establishing themselves in Toronto and Cobourg. Portraits were virtually the only type of painting then in demand. Kane's closest Toronto friends in 1834 were two American painters, Samuel Waugh and a William Bowman who worked briefly in that city. Bowman actually was earlier in Montreal, but Antoine Plamondon's attack on murals he had painted for Notre Dame Church was so violent that he found it expedient not to linger there any longer. Both men convinced Kane that European study was necessary for real artistic success. Kane was ambitious. He crossed the American border, paid his way down the Mississippi to Natchez and New Orleans by painting the portrait of a riverboat captain when he lost his money, and then spent a year of portrait painting in Mobile, Alabama.

Kane, with replenished finances, sailed from New Orleans to Marseilles. It was the beginning of a European visit which lasted less than two years. That first winter of 1841-2 he copied old masters in Rome. Théophile Hamel from Quebec was there that year to begin his European training. Hamel wrote home of exciting parties where he dined with girls from London and Edinburgh. Kane put two Canadians back at home. George Catlin got back at Fort Edmonton again the next year when the factor's son was married and had a chance to paint the wedding party setting out for their new home 200 miles away in early January. The bride was warmly tucked into a specially decorated sleigh and painted by Catlin, who wished to paint the elaborate harness and blanket of her. "The harness had been made in Quebec City, and with an escort of twenty men to see that she arrived safely.

Kane was with the canoes brigade that same autumn of 1848 as it hurried from Edmonton to Jasper House and over the first range of the Rockies in a continuous race against coming winter. From the
head of navigation on the Columbia River they turned south. Later he was to sketch Indians fishing at Fort Colvile where hydro dams have now completely removed all traces of the picturesque falls and where an old Indian lady, widow of a chief, told him in a story which he never forgot how some women weaving on primitive looms, the Montagnais and Naskapi, but it didn't work out. Periodically he lectured on his travels. He recounted some earlier canvases, but falling eyesight curtailed his painting activities. Just a hundred years ago he died suddenly on his return home after one of his daily walks.

Kane's paintings and sketches for the most part have remained in a few collections. The Royal Ontario Museum has the greatest number of canvases and many field sketches. The National Gallery of Canada has a dozen field sketches. But the bulk of the sketches completed during those momentous four years of travel were retained by the Kane family and taken back to Manitoba in the 1830s by a son who went there as a homesteader. In his littleprairie home, he would put the sketches in a box under the spare bed and brought them out on wet Sundays for examination by Kane's grandchildren. Eventually the collection was sold to H. J. Lutcher Stark 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.

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 consumer society. 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 the objects used in XVIIth and XVIIIth 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. Hattermann. Along with some exceptional sculpted wood panels, they were exhibited at Tour 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 simply designed objects appearing in this country in the colonial period. Unlike open hearth tools in Quebec in the XVIIIth century, probably because of the gradual replacement of the open hearth by stoves. A certain continuity of tradition is evident in the decoration of Quebec made objects whose ornamentation includes forms that correspond to those of the collection. This testifies to the persistence of certain designs of popular art that reach back into the past and touch on our origins.

The Macdonald Stewart collection provides an interesting look at our origins and tradition of craftsmanship and invites comparative research. A study on ancient forging techniques might be based on the collection. Perhaps too, a travelling exhibition of the collection might be arranged so that a wider, surely interested public could be informed of the way of life and daily habits of our ancestors. This is not far from the idea of a modern version of the old, well-known collection, George Allan, and the Macdonald Company; it is a rich and colourful collection.

(Abridgement by Yvonne Kirbyson)

Urban Art

By Laurent LAMY

Dynamic and involved with living art, the Benson and Hedges Company was not content to collect art works. It had some created.

From each of three Montreal artists, Monet, Derè, and Coward, and three Toronto artists, R. Letendre, S. Solomon, and Rayner, it commissioned a work that was to be a wall painted in the city. The ancient patronage of old, of kings and great families has been in part replaced by the State and in the last few years by the great commercial and industrial companies. The United States set the pace a few years ago with the Chase Bank and diverse foundations. Europe followed suit, then Canada. The Standard Life Insurance of Canada gathered a magnificent collection of contemporary Canadian painting, the Toronto-Dominion Bank, a collection of Eskimo art. In Montreal, CIL set up a collection of Canadian contemporary art. The Rothman's Company subsidized exhibits of sculptors of Quebec and Ontario, as well as a museum of traditional Canadian painting in Stratford. Finally Letendre and Benson and Hedges credit 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 Lucret, Picard Le Doux, etc.

The founder 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 Plasticity. In the last few months, several
The murals
In Montreal, Coward chose to accentuate the height by controlled trickles of paint where the distribution of colours varies from one 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 sereno range of colours.

Déry paints 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 naive, Déry brings gentleness and spontaneity; he changes our visual habits without shocking, by his luminous presence, that is so much out of the ordinary, and yet familiar.

Montpetit reveals himself to be more ambitious than Déry, multiplying the aesthetic problems almost at leisure, since the forms detach themselves from a background animated with bands and semi-circles. The surface that Montpetit has been crossing is not as decisive as the predominant white and the reliefs. Clouds unfold at the top of the mural and strike an unexpected note. The third Toronto mural is signed Raynor. 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 intrusive to the illusion of the situation and so to speak thus 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 grayness of cities, colour is indispensable to life and that in the present day urban confusion their forms, whatever their variety, with measure and harmony, 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 exciting 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 en­larging the model, the artist who wishes to keep himself in 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? What can the artist do on the walls, where many artists have, in the past decade, found the road to the public? The painted wall is the public's world.

The Beuchemin
Micheline Beuchemin, a Quebec family in which there are many engineers. Her parents, not too enthused to see her entering the Montreal Fine Arts School.

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 future 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 veritable participation of artists in social life.

(1) François Gagnon “Art in the Street”, M 10 (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), September 1971.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
But it was her only love. When she left school, she obtained a position 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 was to some rather slimmer 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. So 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 on the voyage! I began tapestry."

There are long and strange roads. In finding one's destiny, one's most intense feelings, and unhappiness too. And one's soul. And the realization 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 Art Council annual exhibition.

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 a few seasons."

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 describe how it 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 is a very special art proposition these days. His viewpoint opposed the usual approach which assured everyone of borders where the picture stops and the wall begins; he painted all the surfaces that were within his reach. The result was an architecture paintedinside and outside, impossible to take in with a single look, giving a fair idea of the part reality plays in the mental world, an architecture whose circular, disconnected course favoured unusual rapprochements and impossible juxtapositions.

On August 9th, 1959 as the work was completed, Arthur Villeneuve opened "The Artist's Museum" to the public. This was done in a manner worthy of the work, with what was then available. Monsieur and Madame Villeneuve appeared at the municipal council to invite all the aldermen and ask them for the city's collaboration. A few of those gentlemen, encouraged by the action of the public, accompanied the Mayor to the house. We can imagine their amazement. When asked to give an appreciation of what they had seen, Monsieur Maurice Laquerre, alderman, acting no doubt as an interpreter for his colleagues made a speech the substance of which was reproduced in the Soleil:

"...from an artistic point of view (...), I cannot recommend it as a first class work. It has no nuances and the likeness of the sites or buildings drawn is imperfect."

Was the Villeneuves' turn to be astonished, the "flattering comments" of "Montreal artists" had led them to expect different remarks from their town councilors. 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 as the quintessence of painting? Such a reproach might be made to a photographer, but not 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, when they have intervened to the extent of rendering them if not recognizable, at least transformed according to its image?

The rather unenlightened verdict of alderman Laquerre left nothing good to be foreseen for the future. For a time the "Artist's Museum" aroused no reaction among the population of the region with the exception of sarcasm, easy irony, and laughter when there were not pure and simple insults and acts of violence. Discouragement lay in wait for the Ville­neuves.

At this low point, there intervened an interlocutor, Mr. Bernard Hévand, who took a notion to change the course of things. Interested in the history of religions and philosophy, medical assistant in Alberta, then a student of theology among the Eskimos (sic), then engaged in social work, finally proprietor of the Electric Company, founder of an Art Centre in Verdun, an Intellectual Centre, and a Naturalist Society in Verdun, Bernie, as he is familiarly called in the issue of the Northern News where I got my information about him, but who introduced himself under the pseudonym of Bernard of Verdun, after a brief stop at the home of his brother Bob, proprietor of the Tabagie 500 in Chicoutimi, visited the "Artist's Museum", and became excited at the sight of the monumental work. He improvised a preview exhibition that very evening, after having assembled journalists and photographers. A journalist from the Phare reporting an interview that he had with Madame Villeneuve, two years after, about the same event, thought it was very clever to transcribe into jousal (TR: uneducated speech) the remarks of Madame Villeneuve I heard and he stated that her language is more subtle than the following prose might lead one to think:

"Well on September 13th, I was after sewing in my kitchen when suddenly there's this knock at the front door. I go
Tremblay by the primitive artist of Chicoutimi at 28th to March 11th, that the credit for the discovery was for the month following the "discovery" the "an amateur painter" of a "primitive painter", who was trying to paint 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 relied on Waddington with whom it had an interview. The "personage in the field of painting" who is speaking as solicitor at my Arthur and open the house. I told him Arthur was already baptized and the house was opened...

Bernie did not stop there. Returning to the attack a few months later, he obtained a six foot canvas from Arthur Villeneuve, which he took with him and showed from one gallery to another along Sherbrooke St until he succeeded in sharing his enthusiasm with the director of one of them, the Waddington Galleries. They quickly made a deal. A contract soon bound Arthur Villeneuve to the art dealer George Waddington for two years, and an exhibition was organized for the month following the "discovery" of the artist by the art critic. It is true that the credit for the discovery was disputed. The Gazette attributed it to Waddington himself.

It may have been, from February 28th to March 11th, 1961, the Waddington Galleries were "very pleased to present the First Exhibition of paintings by the primitive artist of Chicoutimi at 1485 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal". The newspapers immediately took over the event. What am I saying, they preceded it. Back on January 15th, 1961, Paul Gladu announced the discovery of an "amateur painter" of a "primitive talent", of a "talented French Canadian" that he likened to Grandma Moses and the doyennier Rousseau. On the 21st, it was the turn of the Montreal Gazette* and Albert Tremblay in La Presse (Montreal) to speak respectively of a "genuine Canadian primitive painter" the author of "delightfully naive" works and one of our great primitives.

After such peremptory declarations, the regional press acknowledged a hit. On Feb. 18th, the Progrès du Saguenay announced that "one of ours would be in Montreal". On the 22nd, an editorial in Le Phare, which is known however, lets us imagine it. The ebb and the flow come and go... Perhaps some misprint obscured his thought. The same day, and in the same newspaper, Jacques Bertrand, 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 іnfallible confirmation of the quality of Villeneuve's work 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 bought. If this stupendous success 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 which was 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 likes be dictated, has previously been unable to learn his hatreds from the same source. This source, moreover, is well known. It is a cultivated culture that designated as mad what it now called naive", that asked people to burn what it now asked them to adore... and to buy.

When, after the folkloric art of country people, and in the face of the "entertainment" of the leisure industrialists, an authentic creative potential 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 living conditions or 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 who has something 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 summary of 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.

11. The Progrès du Saguenay: a talented French Canadian. The barber painter that we are beginning to talk about... in Le Petit Journal (Montreal), the week of January 15, 1961.

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 veiled 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 regime 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 and gentlemen signs for the lavatory and "primitive" appear six times.

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 Labastou. The two others came with different experience, that is graphism for Laurent Marquart; 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 about 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-Labastou-Marquart-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 as 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-Scholastique, due to the presence of Morley Smith, known for his work on Montreal metro cars. The commission 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 Labastou 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 a few projects 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 demonstration train; participation in 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 criterion of judgement 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 the exterior graphic image of an association, league, factory, shop, professional 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 certain psychology and possessing skills in the human and commercialization which always see man as the starting point of a production".

Viewpoint on design and designers expressed by Jacques Guillon, Roger Labastou, 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. Does 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 world, research, or even innovate, for a style with a sole view to selling, 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 even the inner aspirations which go further than fundamental needs. First he must provide for the basic need, obviously. The designer should keep sight of the quality of life without ever departing from the real world.

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

We are general designers because our field is not limited by narrowness, but rather by the breadth of the project, which 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 general way in everything that affects man, in order that the product designed in the service remain in harmony with man while it effectively fulfills its role and function,
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 view, 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 designed a rapid transportation system to service the new airport, we proceeded as follows: a person is in a seat on the floor, the floor is that of a train, and the train is travelling between Montreal and Steinte-Scolastique. The ordinary approach would have been: "Let us make a train and put passengers on it." But one then worries about the user, the arm movement of the user, as well as the atmosphere and urban setting where the machine would be put in use before it is 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 detestable 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 exteriors of the residential areas — is also psychologically harmful isn't it?

If a designer must work alongside the town planner, the architect, sociologist, engineer, 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 then decide 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 of Expo 67 rushing to the pavillons whose design was a total success. Where 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 direct information we must especially reach the groups and persons who influence decisions of the level of industry as well as governments. That 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 190'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 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. Of the 20 or so universities train specialist and general designers. In Quebec, the University of Montreal has opened a section "Town planning, development, and design". There will be more and more valuable designers.

What future do you see for design and designers? Design appears to be changing completely. What we are defining today will not perhaps 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 be necessary 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, as society and the economic world awaken to design. But then, they will sink into an already prepared system and will be only technical workers instead of designers. Designers should combat the specialization that is insinuating over our heads, as well as over the rest of the world, and which is so dangerous for the mental and psychological survival of man.

And, 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, in the heart of the centre of Paris. It is 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. Nor is it necessary for it to have been taken into account. It was not, but it has. The aspect of the human relationships is not ponderous, so that everyone, conscious of the other persons or persons, discover his place. Culture - since that is what this is all about - does not need to be tiresome, as it has been, and too often continues to be the case, in such institutions. For alert minds, the time of the mandarinat with its pomp and works is ended! Culture is a matter of life. Such is the position taken by the director of that centre, Guy Vlamin, 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 it stabilizes it. Like human consciousness, it is an infinity of things and leaves piled up by succeeding seasons, thus by time, it supersedes 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 only a matter of human consciousness, but also an historical 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 versions; recitals of poetry; exhibitions of painting, sculpture, ceramics, covering the various perspectives of Canadian creation; theatre, poetry; films showing the different directions of the cinema; discussions with illustrators, 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, both 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: publicity 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 interact. 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 and its capital. In the first case, 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.

Manuel Fleuret, the 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 country 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 models. 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 civil propagandize — 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 consider, to choose, to find what suits and excites him in the rich fare of Canadian creation; to discover what Canada is, to feel the sheer force of it. Veracious confrontations have been necessary, and all the forms of caricature and other forms of iconoclasm that would have made Savonarola blush, but which seem to leave our Ministers 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 reform implemented in the last few years in the churches of Quebec, have given rise to a vandalism and to forms of iconoclasm which would have made Savonarola blush, but which seem to leave our Ministers of Cultural Affairs rather indifferent.

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 which would have made Savonarola blush, but which seem to leave our Ministers 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 American 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 modern chubby little angel of 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 seigneurie 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-

97
The sober appearance of the exterior of this monument, erected in 1801 according to the plans and specifications of abbe Pierre Confray, hardly suggests the very Versailles-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 road-loft, is of a remarkable grace. Corinthian style pilasters in sculpted, gilded wood support the entablature which surrounds the church, behind the painted medallions of delicate interlacing of both sculpted and gilded wood. The Louis XVI arch is decorated in painted panels and especially sculpted around the stations 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 confessionalists could not have been replaced by those relegated to the sacristy. It is also a shame that the inlaid altars devised for the church have not been restored, the light in the door which did not receive the same care as the outside doors which were restored by a master. We might also have regrets 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 marvellous altar-pieces which an astute clergyman was able to spot in time. This is a magnificent tomb in the Roman fashion, with 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 celebrants and the truncated seats were retained in the enclosure of the sanctuary, but marvellous altar-pieces which an astute clergyman was able to spot in time. This is a magnificent tomb in the Roman fashion, with 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.

When the wood of the High altar: a masterpiece of composition, it is a large replica of the one which Father Augustin Quintal 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 performed by some 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 the Department of Cultural Affairs, through its Committee of Historical Monuments, officially classed 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 mainly in suppressing the gallery on the side opposite that of the road-loft near the organ, in restoring the transepts to their original condition and refitting the aisles, in putting up pulpit 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-Généreux, 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 within the decoration, by carefully refitting the sanctuary according to the new liturgical norms.

All this work was executed with a refined sense of art and an immense respect for the original work. The predominant colours, blue, buff, and gold harmonize with the sculpted woodwork, which is 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 succumbed by an angel (1819) after Ch. de Lafoffe, and on the right Christ on the Cross (1820) after J. Monnet. All the panelling, mouldings, foliated scrolls and holmies have been restored, the window reveals lengthened, the balustrade completed; the lighting arrangement was modified according to an original design of the architect. In the nave, the stations 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 confessionalists could not have been replaced by those relegated to the sacristy. It is also a shame that the inlaid altars devised for the church have not been restored, the light in the door which did not receive the same care as the outside doors which were restored by a master. We might also have regrets 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 marvellous altar-pieces which an astute clergyman was able to spot in time. This is a magnificent tomb in the Roman fashion, with 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.

I am led to believe that nothing else could have been done without compromising something essential.

Considering the difficulties inherent in any restoration, the Boucherville church, by the excellence of the complete results is a remarkable success, and its influence could even be increased if the Committee of Monuments succeeded in grouping around it a few of the very old, typically Canadian houses that are abandoned and falling into ruin at the entrance to the village. We would thus have the "historical Boucherville town square". But that must be dreaming in full colour! And you want to be sure that fire be kept on these unguarded houses must be thinking in similarly unreasonable terms!

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
sheep and pigs, turkeys, chickens and eggs no bigger than ants. The scale or the smallest—made, like miniature pears, of hard ceramic—is so minute that market-women display them heaped like grain in bowls. They're known as "rice-toys." Another favorite Christmas scene is the Flight into Egypt: Joseph leads their burros, while Mary, who holds 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 papier-maché show off their skill and fantasy. Not only the just-us-Marie La Percheron 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 papier-maché are the masks and mules of the dead some market women peddle toy skulls and coffins, glowing baskets of icing-sugar. These sugar-sculptures are left on the graves of relatives, vestigial sacrifices. More vivdly 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 funerals. Figures of priest, acolytes and pallbearers are fashioned from drinking-straws and colored paper; their heads from chicken-feather. The prize of my collection is a kinetic toy funeral of gaily painted cardboard. Turn the handle and the cortège emerges from the church door, glides smoothly into the mouth of hell. "The Mexican," to quote Octavio Paz again, "is familiar with death, jokes about it, cares little with death, jokes about it, cares little." It is one of his favorite toys and his most steadfast love.

All these things are handmade. More important, they also appear to be handmade. Wherever in evidence is the soulless precision of the machine. Some of the tiny jugs are a bit crooked, the red-headed doll wears her lipstick off-centre, the green horse with the yellow and pink cart has one ear somewhat chewed. And I'm afraid to straighten the leg of a metal bed for fear of breaking it. All of which makes it comforting to relate to the toys, in a way that's impossible with factory products. Not only does reduction in scale make the original artifacts more immediately intelligible, but the reduction itself has been humanly achieved.

Like all folk-art, Mexican toys repeat certain obsessive motifs. The death's head and the serpent appear and reappear. Images like these go back to the remote pre-Columbian past, as do the fired-clay whistles in the shape of birds. Nativist scenes show Mediterranean influence, carried across the Atlantic by Spaniards. Some sugar sculptures betray their nine-teenth century English origins in Staffordshire pottery. Others, I'm sorry to say, reflect the pursuit of their life together. But Picasso was hard pressed to work in the tiny house. The compulsory rest quickly became intolerable for him. Fate had it that the curator of the Château Grimaldi, which then housed a public collection of sculpture, was a man of intelligence and taste. A political exile, Michel Sima, a sculptor and photographer, whom he had taken in on his return from Germany (the second World War had just ended) drew to his attention the presence of Picasso, whom he knew. Dor de La Souchère suggested that he ask him for a drawing... But let us leave Picasso to give his version as related by Brassoil. "One day, on the beach, I met the curator of the palace. Timidly he asked me for a drawing for the museum... People are always asking me for drawings... but I can't..." He immediately asked me: "And suppose you gave me a painting instead of a drawing?..." "So I thought it over... and made him this proposition: "You have many walls at the Château Grimaldi... It would perhaps be preferable that I paint something there..." He agreed. He offered me the whole top floor of the museum..." Yes, I said, but I have nothing here to paint frescoes... Painting directly on the wall is too risky... If that's all it depends on..." he answered me. They brought me first some raw canvas, abominable! They also suggested primed canvas, and plywood... Finally, I settled on large sheets of fibro-cement. And I painted frescoes for them..."

Dor de La Souchère confirms this story, except that he believes that he was the first to suggest the Chateau as an atelier. In her memoirs Françoise Gilot gives Picasso the true credit for it. "It was of great importance: Dor de La Souchère hands over the keys of the chateau to Picasso and, the door closed, thinks: 'There is a great master who has at last found his place.'"

If chance has played a part in the story, everything else is nonetheless ultimately consistent with Picasso's affinity for nature. Picasso's love affair with the Mediterranean is long standing. He loved it with the passion of love at first sight. Barcelona, Collioure, Italy, Picasso did not need to say anything to me. He was delighted. It was only in 1920 that their meeting occurred. For the first time he comes to Juan-les-Pins and discovers that the countryside that greets him is that which he had painted before, as though by premonition, before having left Paris. He had told me that he did not want to pass myself off as a clairvoyant—but really I was upset by it—everything was there, like in the canvas that I had painted in Paris. Then I understood that this countryside was mine." And Antonina Valentin who relates the story adds, "He seems to pull out then little Antebes, Françoise, determined to live no longer with the scorpions of the old fortified town of Vaucluse, persuaded Picasso to rent the house of the engraver, Louis Fort, at Golfe-Juan. That house was the very place where in February of that year, 1946, he had settled for the last days of their life together. But Picasso was hard pressed to work in the tiny house. The compulsory rest quickly became intolerable for him. Fate had it that the curator of the Château Grimaldi, which then housed a public collection of sculpture, was a man of intelligence and taste. A political exile, Michel Sima, a sculptor and photographer, whom he had taken in on his return from Germany (the second World War had just ended) drew to his attention the presence of Picasso, whom he knew. Dor de La Souchère suggested that he ask him for a drawing... But let us leave Picasso to give his version as related by Brassoil. "One day, on the beach, I met the curator of the palace. Timidly he asked me for a drawing for the museum... People are always asking me for drawings... but I can't..." He immediately asked me: "And suppose you gave me a painting instead of a drawing?..." "So I thought it over... and made him this proposition: "You have many walls at the Château Grimaldi... It would perhaps be preferable that I paint something there..." He agreed. He offered me the whole top floor of the museum..." Yes, I said, but I have nothing here to paint frescoes... Painting directly on the wall is too risky... If that's all it depends on..." he answered me. They brought me first some raw canvas, abominable! They also suggested primed canvas, and plywood... Finally, I settled on large sheets of fibro-cement. And I painted frescoes for them..."

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Pikasso, in fact, is going to prolong his stay there. Then settle there for good. The Cape of Antibes, where his friends, the Cuttoli, welcome him, and also had seen before the Moulin de la Galette, 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 two years. At Antibes, 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 recently appeared to him when he had seen her that first fall at the famous café, Deux-Magots, “but already with the false plait 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 1929, he has been described as having “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 Souchère but an Antique that has in common with the Renaissance only an insatiable curiosity for discovery. An Antiquity that spans “all mythology, all the imagination of all the peoples, all the strength of its Intuitive fervour” and discloses in its quest those intuitions “which haunted the mind of the first mortal men and their children of prehistoric times”. So Picasso gives way to the totality of man. His work encompasses it, is a commentary on it, and in its most passionate moments captures its essence.

At Antibes, in August 1946, it is love that unfurls and gushes out in symbols of joy. The war is a nightmare that is being forgotten. La Souchère has finally made it possible for him to work. He threw himself passionately into his work. In those few pages we would not be able to describe the work that, from July to January, he executed with a prodigious rapidity. Paper, canvas, plywood and fibro-cement serve to support 38 oils, or oils and enamels; some of very large dimensions such as the “Joie de Vivre” of 120x2x120, the “Maternités” of 450x150, the “Satyre femme et centaur” of 250x350, and in addition there are thirty drawings.

No other museum possesses a work of such perfect unity. In five months, carried away in a whirlwind of happiness, of pleasure, with an incredible virtuosity he expresses the log-book of his life. To be sure his work is always the result of a certain story that is always only incidental. Since 1907 and the “Demoiselles d’Avignon”, he set out “to reach an absolute point summing up the universe and man, and painting after him is going to become a magical art seeking origins; it will attempt to follow the thread of the laws that govern the secrets of its substance. At Antibes Picasso does not depart from this search. On the contrary, he lives there in that light that permitted Cézanne to pull out the essentials of a landscape at the expense of its momentary appearance, “La Femme énigmatique” which serves as a model for the man “potier avec trois pommes sur une table”, “Composition”, “La Femme Couchée” bears witness to the sobriety that purifies to the point of severity the burning eroticism of the works of autumn ’46.

Prompted by a Dionysian impulse Picasso throws pell-mell, centaurs, mar­nades, 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” expresses an indisputable happiness. The defects 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 “Maternités” after the birth of his son Paulo, do not have this serenity, this 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. Finally, the mayor of Antibes, Mr. Pugnière, efficaciously intervenes and finally a museum is built around a work. Picasso does not remain idle. In 1948 La Souchère having finished placing the works notices that a large wall has remained bare. “You should paint a picture to fill up that space”, he tells him. “All right”, agrees Picasso. “You could depict an episode of the Odyssey. The companions of Ulysses changed into swine by Circe?”, Picasso crosses his arms: “We shall see”, he grumbles. Dor has three sheets of fibro-cement (360 x 250) brought into the room. In 24 hours Picasso has them covered: “Ulysses and the Sirens” has just been born for posterity.

In the years that follow, the museum is enriched with numerous donations. Picasso’s available time like his sense of improvisation is incredibly productive. No two days are alike, and in front of the building of the Grimaldi family, the Picasso museum, the famous fountain in the shade of a patio.

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 rich village of Vallauris, 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 Steau, an Atlante, sculptures by Germaine Richier executed in the open air or 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 foreseen for him during 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 Picasso you will have to come to Antibes.” The plastic confrontation that is born on the museum’s site in Antibes should be conserved in its integrity and its integrity, without any concession being made, without being broken up.