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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. It will be modern in the 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 the planning of great socialisms 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, the aesthetic and imaginative particular 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. Now, Montreal, like many other intellectuals, was 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 Automatism 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 his disciples of the Automatist school. In Relève global, how could a person whose mind was structured in such a classical manner as his, enamoured of grammatical forms, sensitive especially to imperceptible lilts 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 subconscious and the instinctive elements, all assimilated automatism, such was the approach Borduas used. His work, like that of Claude Gauvreau (his dearest and foremost disciple) the need for the pictorial experience.

By Jean ÉTHIER-BLAIS

Automatism in Montreal

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 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. Now, Montreal, like many other intellectuals, was 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 Automatism 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 his disciples of the Automatist school. In Relève global, how could a person whose mind was structured in such a classical manner as his, enamoured of grammatical forms, sensitive especially to imperceptible lilts 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 subconscious and the instinctive elements, all assimilated automatism, such was the approach Borduas used. His work, like that of Claude Gauvreau (his dearest and foremost disciple) the need for...
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 especially significant is, was literary and not pictorial. Following the "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)

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 below zero weather and unfriendly tribes in many places. But the artist sketched constantly the lands and peoples he met, visiting dozens of different Indian peoples: Algonquins, Sioux, Blackfoot, Nez Perce, Tsimshian, and many more. 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, probably Hubert de Gallant. The writer pointed out that the west could provide innumerable romantic subjects for 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 said, 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 dusky hounds — the savage and his forest wigwam... Légaré ignored the challenge. It was Kriehoff who won "rich laurels" from the Quebec winter views, and Paul Kane, an Irish immigrant boy who arrived in Toronto about 1815, 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 telegraphy, then into portraiture 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 New Orleans by painting the portrait of a river boat 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 two years. That first winter of 1841-2 he copied old masters in Rome. Théophile Hamel from Quebec was there that same year to begin his European training. Hamel wrote home of exciting parties where he danced with girls from London and Edinburgh. Kane put off marriage until he returned home. In that spring when he relaxed in that "noisy and favourite place", Naples. Late that same year he went to London and saw George Catlin's celebrated collection of canvases of Indians from the American west. There Kane suddenly found his own métier, life with the wanderers of the prairies. Kane's close friendship with the half-breeds confirmed it but when he repainted his portrait of a Huron chief, he decorated the man with ribbons and silver ornaments which removed some of the fearsome qualities. Romantic wigwam encampments and Indians spearing trout by torchlight caught his eye. At Sainte Marie, John Ballenden, the Hudson's Bay Co. factor, declared Kane mad to even consider a solitary sketching trip to the Pacific. The factor arranged a meeting between the artist and Sir George Simpson, the company governor living in Montreal. Simpson was a colourful figure; he visited the north-western posts annually and was known to perform feats of Indian dance, a ceremonial exclusively for men. The artist was evidently allowed to be there because they thought of him as a harmless young boy. It is possible that he could make a "second self" through his sketches. At Fort Edmonton Kane danced along with the canoemen as they relaxed for one night from travel while a "Scottish fiddler jerked out reels". Kane's own escort was a half-breed Cree girl whom he painted later. Festivities were in that great conference room used by company officials for parleys with Indian chiefs. We are told that it was decorated with murals but the subjects would not have been appropriate for the walls of the Vatican; unfortunately Kane made no sketches of the hall. He was 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 paraded through the hamlet which had been made in Quebec City, and with an escort of over twenty men to see that she arrived safely.

Kane was with the canoe brigade that same autumn of 1846 as it hurried from Edmonton to the west. He was back and over the first range of the Rockies in a continual 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 Colville where hydro dams have now completely removed all traces of the picturesque falls and where an old Indian lady, widow of a chief, told nostalgic stories. One particular Indian woman the great numbers of salmon caught there. Kane recorded the salmon fishery in sketch after sketch. The Arkada reached Fort Vancouver opposite the present city of Portland before Christmas. It was that critical year when British politicians, with a sudden realisation of the need for expansion, were agitating for the acquisition of the whole Oregon territory to the United States, and the Hudson's Bay Co. 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 on 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, parallels of which are hard to find except 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 sketching 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 amazing collections of early Cana­dian paintings and sketches. 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cities in the world, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, Paris, and Nanterre have been enjoying the large surfaces they offered 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 surmounted this difficulty and succeeded in brilliantly animating the walls allocated them.

The murals

In Montreal, Coward chose to accentuate the height by controlled trickles of paint whose blue shadows and sky-like colours vary within a series of thin 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 range of colours of blue.

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 naive, Déry brings gentleness and spontaneity; he changes our visual habits without shocking, by his luminous presence, in a much 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, integrated with branches and semi-circles. The surface that Montpetit had was double, cut by Notre Dame street. But Montpetit created a unified work by 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 to what extent the participation of artists should be situated at another level altogether: that of the development of the environment itself. For as positive as this initiative may be, a sort of port tax paid to the democratization of culture, it still seems a half-measure. Does the solution lay, as François Gagnon foresees (1) in the exchange of the possibilities and the participation of artists and the people in the creation of the works of those we call artists? Perhaps.

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 confusion, their work can make us see the sky at large, the sun in its 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 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 enlarging the model, the artist risks falling into the decorative. Nor is the solution found, the artist risks falling into the decorative. Nor is the solution found.

What matters is found in the fact that the model 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 risks falling into the decorative. Nor is the solution found.

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 forms of participation remain to be defined.

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 tapestries are silver 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, 2 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 she has restored and made beautiful again, like a homcoming, like a pilgrimage to one's origins.

That is the setting where she pursues her work, her looms are the source of her rebellion, 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. She is the soul of the music, beyond nervous energy.

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.


(Translation by Yvonne Kirbysan)
But it was her only love. When she left school, she obtained a position as a draftswoman 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. 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 along on the voyage! I began 'tapestry.'"

There are long and strange roads in finding one's destiny, one's most intense feelings, an awakening of the 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 at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. "I believe I will 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, one could create immense tapestries, and that is what was most important to me." In 1966, she 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 first prize. Near the end of 1967, she went to Kyoto where with Kawasaki Oriental and local craftsmen, she 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 being ignored.

I picture her on that autumn morning, on her farm at Grondines, galloping on her Canadian breed mare called "Tautili" (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 can stop the march of time," wrote Małkowski. So she made a trip to Greece, to find new horizons.

In 1961, she obtained a position drafting maps of the Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales, at the Palais Universitaire in Sorel. "I was the only woman. That was in 1964."

Two years later, the Arts Council granted her a special grant. She returned to Paris in 1968. It was along on the voyage! I began 'tapestry.'"

"...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."

Arthur Villeneuve is near his end, his last exhibition, "France," is not going to transcribe into joual (TR: uneducated speech) the remarks of Madame Beauchemin. But such as they are in the mental world, they are a very important human heart, with the substance of which was reproduced in "Beauvoir and Madame Beauchemin.""

"Well on September 13th, I was after sewing in my kitchen when suddenly there's this knock at the front door. I go..."
...some misprint obscured his thought: The same day, and in the same newspaper, Jacques Bergeron, 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 keeping 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 naive and naive or lais­sement-art" of these "days" must be respected because "Mr. Waddington insisted on emphasizing that the works of Mr. Villeneuve were of naif indeed even primitive art, but of a rare quality'.

On February 28, 1961, the Progrès du Saguenay published a photograph rep­resenting Madame Arthur Villeneuve 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 Strozzi 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 carried a review under 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 admired. 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, with such an embodiment of their region, as the canvases bought by the council attest. The manner in which he was rehabilitated in the local press, which is known however, lets us imagine the "ebb and flow" of the new and the old. He who lets his paintings "fall into disuse" is usually a "naive" painter that we are beginning to respect, according to the "austrat-" of the leisure industrialists, an "austrat" of the working class. People began by ridiculing it, then it was respected. It is thus that this art we did not want to take too seriously was called naif because it revealed, arising out of the working class, the existence of an immense 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 artists like Rousseau. It 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 had 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 6 weeks ago in the Villeneuve documentation. Edmund Alleyne, Stanley Cosgrove, and Alfred Pellan are the artists most frequently mentioned in relation to Villeneuve in his documentation.


(5) "After having painted (sic) for three years, The Artist's Museum is previewed" in Le Phare, Sept. 23, 1960.


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

(11) "Arthur Villeneuve: 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 Guillou/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? Grey horse? They are from all companies, as are the contracts which are as varied as their diverse backgrounds.

Jacques Guillou, 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 design for newspapers 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 Guillou and Associates or in the client's, according to the case.

In spite of its manner of proceeding, the Guillou-Labastrou-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 are made 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-Scholastique, due to the presence of Morley Smith, known for his work on Montreal metros. The most office, which never grants contracts to a firm but to individual graphists, entrusted to Laurent Marquart, specifically, the creation of two stumps, now issued. The knowledge of architecture and related fields that Jacques Guillou 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 Guillou/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 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 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 arrangement of the metro cars, 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, 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 concern for the subject and possessing skills in administration and commercialization which always see man as the starting point of a production".


In the Phare: "Good luck to the figure of the canvas".

In the Montreal press that we mentioned earlier, the terms "naive" and "primitive" appear six times.

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 and work on form or on function, 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 form with a social consciousness, 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 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 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 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 real and, for the same building, the ladies and gentlemen signs for the lavatory doors; etc., etc.

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Viewpoint on design and designers expressed by Jacques Guillou, Roger Labastrou, Laurent Marquart and Morley Smith.

In cooperation with the firm of Jacques Guillou/Designers Inc.
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 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 travelling between Montreal and Sainte-Scholastique. The ordinary approach would have been: "Let us make a train and put passengers on it." In fact, we found that a plan can evolve from the fundamental idea. Thus, 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 technology, he reestablishes equilibrium. But industry is only slowly coming to 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, under the stipulated budget, and seen the product well incorporated, we are satisfied and really feel we have performed the required service.

Does design intervene in public projects?

Rarely! That is why we see so many projects intended to help people, 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 detestable conditions, than to take necessary measures at the beginning? Are healthy and happy families in proper housing better for the environment 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 population that these cities that isolates 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 make a budget 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 purchase the design workshops at the Montreal exposition. 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 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 fundamentals 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 1930'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. In Denmark, for example, approximately twenty 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 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 be necessary to have a large number of designers, and they 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 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.

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 WEENE

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 Place de la Concorde - which inspires the creators are multiple and they come from different levels: public works, architecture, 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, 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 services.

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 ironical anxiety, that something to be universal it necessary had to be very unconvincing at even 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 and sound enough 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 American border, and find 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 ornamental statue or a 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 that 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-
ing it to the new liturgy without harming its artistic value.

The other appearance of the interior of this monument, erected in 1801 according to the plans and specifications of abbé Pierre Conrefroy, hardly suggests the very Versailles-like magnificence which clearly inspired the taste of interior decoration; indeed it is amazing to discover in the heart of the French countryside things that France reserved for its kings!

The general arrangement, and more particularly, that of the sanctuary and choir-loft, is of a remarkable grace. Corinthian style pilasters in sculpted, gilded wood-support the entablature which surrounds the choir, that is to say the ambulatory 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 centre of the sanctuary is the retable of the High altar: a masterpiece of cornice treatment 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 not at the expense of the very fine. In the centre of the sanctuary 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 reduced to its simplest expression and is too small! The area for spoken pronouncements has been reduced to its smallest extent and is too small! An area is more than a piece of furniture! Grouping celebration of a service today includes the spoken liturgy and the Eucharistic liturgy, and it may be noted that more and more the importance of the spoken liturgy is increasing. The sanctuary of the Sainte-Famille church has really only one foyer! In considering everything, however, and maintaining my reservations, I feel 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 have been increased if the Committee of Monuments had 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 a dream in full colour! And the church was set fire to one of these unguarded houses must be thinking in similarly unreasonable terms!

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)
sight and pigs, turkeys, chickens and secrets no bigger than ants. The scale or the smallest — made, like miniature pets, of hard ceramic — is so minute that market-women display them heaped like grain in bowls. They’re known as “ricetoy”. Another favorite Christmas scene is the Flight into Egypt: Joseph leads the burro on which Mary is perched with 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 does the work vary from province to province and from pueblo to pueblo, but all sorts of comic dolls and effigies. Also of papier-maché are the masks and mules and horses on sale during the feast of Corpus Christi.

Most distinctly Mexican is the sombre fiesta 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 kinsfolk, picnicking on their graves in the cemeteries, and as families have been do in Mexico, and on this day he is saluted like an old friend. For some days before the fiesta, women set up stalls in the streets to sell little animals, grinning skulls and coffins, glowing baskets of fruit and all sorts of other wild and weird objects colored and sometimes containing gunpowder that explodes and scatters small toys — but all sorts of comic dolls and effigies. 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 finemuseum, 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 festejas. They also sell souvenirs made with cheap plasticware, and toys that children are sold almost nowhere else. Threatened with this flood of goods and ideas, I try to imitate Noah and collect two of everything as I haunt the small markets and street stalls. I seek the handmade toys and miniatures that 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, dare to imagine. This incident of the sombre fiesta of All Souls.

Best of all, a tiny pig made from a pean shell. Remove his snout, insert a live fly, replace the snout and watch him roll his eyes, wiggle his ears! He’s a joke, a minute joke in the sly, deprecating Indian manner — a cruel joke, if you like. But very Mexican.

Images like these go back to the remote pre-Columbian past, as do the fired-clay whistles in the shape of birds. Native 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 art-snt of mass media too often corrupts the craftsman’s eye, so that the innocent vision becomes slick and knowing. Whole souvenir shops are filled with the meretricious junk that results.

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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 stop, and that she may get a lift. 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 Ménerbes leads to a venture that is still astonishing. Because Françoise Gilot is horrified by the scorings that swarmed over Picasso, and has dared to tell her husband that she hesitates to tie up her life any longer with Picasso, Antiques, and the world, is to be endowed with an amazing museum. Marie Cuttoli, “the great friend”, as Françoise Gilot calls her, suprises the couple at Menerbes the day after this scene and rescues them from this misunderstanding by inviting them to her villa at Cap d’Antibes. Françoise, determined to live no longer with the scorpions of the old fortified town of Vaucluse, persuades 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, 1919, he had first lived with Dora for the rest 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 Chateau Grimaldi, which then housed a public collection of sculpture, was a man of intelligence and good 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 Brissac: “One day, on the beach, I met the curator of the palace. Timidly he asked me for a drawing... People are always asking me for drawings. Is it for you?” Immediately he 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 Chateau Grimaldi... It would perhaps be preferable that I paint something there...” “He was delighted... 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 Sime credit for it. But that is of little 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 here 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. In her memoirs Françoise Gilot does not stop visiting the Mediterranean, but 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. It is not only Picasso who hardly dares to think of it: “I do 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 Vallenet, who relates the story, adds, “He seems to pull out the little...”
by little the roots that he had anchored in the soil of Spain to transplant them on the banks of the Cap d’Antibes which 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 Cottolis, welcome him, and also Cannees, Golfe-Juan, and Monte-Carlo, Moungins, 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 years before when 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 Moungins, which Paul Eluard introduced him to—where he lives today with his second wife Jacqueline Roque—he spent his first summer with Dora Maar. Madame Cottoli 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 been to him when he had seen her for the first time at the 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, they have been described in those monstrous, deformed women, issues of the depts 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 Antiquity that has in common with the Renaissance only an insatiable curiosity for discovery. An Antiquity that spurs “all mythology, tradition, and imagination to the force of its Intelligent 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 throws himself passionately into his work. In the few few hours, 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 “Joia de Viva” of 120x250 centimeters and the triptych “Satyre, femme et centaure” of 250x360, 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, the story 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 force appearances to delate their immemorial 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 éternelle” flank to the monument, “La potière avec trois pommes sur une 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 ‘46. Prompted by a Dionysian impulse Picasso throws pell-mell, centaurs, maenadens, flower-women, fauns, and goats near the sea shore where they were born. The contour drawings, in a continuous stroke, without smudges multiply and enrich the work, an Antiquity that has become the work of autumn 1946, or oils, or oils and enamels; some of very large dimensions such as the “Joia de Viva” of 120x250 centimeters, and the triptych “Satyre, femme et centaure” of 250x360, and in addition there are thirty drawings.

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 city of Antibes, to the North the snow-covered mountains 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 village of Marie Cottoli. An adroit museum administration enriched it with important works: a beautiful one by Steen, an Atlan, sculptures by Germain Richier erected 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. 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 Picasso you will have to come to Antibes. Only a plastic confrontation that is found there is probably unique in the world; it should be conserved in its integrity and its integrity, without any concession being made, without being broken up.

(Translation by Yvonne Kirbyson)