TO SERVE THE FUTURE

By Andrée PARADIS

At the present time, can we really question a culture (language, art, literature, architecture) and observe the forms of social organization, without feeling the need of direct experience? Art is action. To act upon the one who perceives, to awaken, on the one hand, the knowledge of the destructive forces which threaten collective life and, on the other hand, to insist on the dynamic changes which are continually taking place, on the availability of the resources which regenerate. Art exists only if it allows the intensification of exchanges and human relationships, only if it recreates life.

Life, City, The City in the Museum, many books on the City, sociologists, philosophers, art critics, town-planners, economists and many others are studying the problem. Why this explosion? Because there is an immense body of work to be done, a complete reorganization to be undertaken beginning with the forms of thought, a real cultural transformation to be assured and "All the future of man on earth", according to André Wogenscky."depends in very great measure on what town-planning and architecture will become, on what will be the organization of our physical environment". The City, as it concerns us, is this first priority of a very great problem. To think of the City is to think of Life. The study recently published by the Club de Rome, an association of thought and research on the future, with the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), speaks of a state of emergency. While keeping a cool head, there is reason to be troubled about the futility of so much effort, produce of intelligence, of courage, of imagination, to resolve the difficulties which the modern city, the destruction of nature and the demographic explosion present.

It is above all necessary to recognize that the harm is deeper, that it comes from a fundamental separation approved by the majority of the scientists and artists of the 20th century, and which is still badly perceived in the whole. How does Jacques Monod define this sickness of soul in Hasard et la nécessité? "Modern societies, woven by science, living on its products, have become dependent on it like an addict on his drug. They owe their material strength to this founding ethic of knowledge and their moral weakness to the systems of values, ruined by knowledge itself, to which they still try to refer. This contradiction is fatal. It is this which is digging the abyss which we see opening at our feet. The ethic of knowledge, creator of the modern world, is the only one compatible with it, the only one capable, once understood and accepted, of guiding its evolution."

Tomorrow the ethic of knowledge will probably be the only acceptable one because it rests on respect for creative man, guardian of the sublime and of the demand for going beyond the ordinary. It could thus allow the man who accepts it lucidly and who uses it, to pursue his old dream: to build the future. (Translation by Mildred Grand)

CHANGE LIFE . . . CHANGE THE CITY

By Bernard LÉVY

Change life . . . change the city. The alternative is beautiful. Change the city: the choice seems clear. Almost protected from vain speculations. At grips with the actual. Hurried. Too much? Perhaps, Perhaps not. And if we were to change the city . . . life, our relationships — our caste relationships as well — would they be improved more easily?

Change the city: what a wager! And yet, who has never built his city? The offices of architects are filled with designers who are only waiting for a signal to accomplish their city, or, failing that, to transform the city in their way. Plans of all kinds are accumulating in drawers or on the shelves of libraries: from the rediscovered primitive village to the cybernetic city, from the concrete city to the inflatable city. Innumerable reasons — calculated or not — support, justify, legalize ideas and intentions beyond any suspicion but not less to be dreaded and feared. Doctors, sociologists, philosophers, geographers, mathematicians, historians have added their theories to a concert which heads toward wholly possible babelisation. Economists and politicians also
to the urban crisis exist? The question is not new. The answers of the new citizen's conscience seem to open promising horizons because they presuppose another form of common choice, a new policy. Reflection limits itself here to the identification crisis in the city considered as an esthetic value. The reflection takes place in the heart of a more global reflection on the urban conscience and its objectives.

What is urban awareness?
1) It is fundamentally the discovery of a setting — urban environment — the product of collective will, of historical socio-economic phenomena placed side by side of which the combination makes up an extremely complex network of interrelations at different levels: power (political, economic, . . .), communications (transport, information . . .), dwellings . . .
2) It is also the discovery of a society which is becoming urban, that is to say the assembly of a number of autonomous individuals, independent but also bound together by a unity of social possibilities and especially by the urban phenomenon. It is in reality a matter of a force which is real but scattered, fragmented. Is this gathering a simple aggregation or the placing side by side of several conglomerations of distinguishable units?
3) It is finally the discovery of a possible end to the problems of growth out of which results the industrial city, that is to say orientation toward an uncertainty of its own, an urban problem free of the problems of growth and which considers in the very first place man and his development.

Thus the urban phenomenon joins wider involvements and very probably includes them since, to a certain extent, we are heading toward total urbanization. The awareness of this global phenomenon is accompanied immediately by another awareness: society is completely sectioned off, divided, partitioned. How can we qualify these decisions, the privileges that are granted, the distribution of collective powers? It is a matter of a force which is real but scattered, fragmented. What would be the appearance of such a city?

It is difficult to foresee it. It would in any case be a faithful mirror of the will of different majorities of its inhabitants. Such a concept would involve a cultural awareness followed by radical changes in education. At its limit, it would lead to a transformation in the very heart of the urban phenomenon and everywhere it is broken up. It is there, doubtless, that it is necessary to seek a cause for the formidable passivity of the most important people involved: the citizens. They do not manage to seize the practical reality (politics) of a whole which systematically escapes them and which they refuse to identify. What would be the use, consequently, of changing the city? Others would make it over to their views, that is to say in the image of their utopia, or, still worse, of their idle fancies.

Change the city, then? Yes, but how?
(Translation by Mildred Grand)
There is a fundamental distinction
Technology for the city works very
That is precisely what is not work­
merations of mercantile and industrial  civili­
developed beginning with simple conversa­
no purpose. Is it the city or man which is
inhuman?
Cabet. Think of severely geometric cities, of

THE UTOPIAN CITY, THE HUMAN CITY

Around the Vie des Arts microphone there are four questes: Marcel Belanger, professor in the Faculty of Geography of the University of Montreal, Michel Lipcourt, advisor in the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs, Michel Razan, French art critic and Yves Gouther, a Quebec artist. Subject: the Utopian City. Moderators: Mrs. Andrée Paradis and Mr. Bernard Levy.

By Utopia we do not understand the meaning which the 19th century gave to this term. No question here of building a city as Fourier, Saint Simon or Enfantin could have done.

To speak of an Utopian city is in itself a form of Utopia. The objective of such a debate is not to achieve any such city. To speak of it consti­tutes an Utopia since everything that we are going to say has little chance of being channeled officially, at least toward an existing power.

We consider as a working theory the fact that the city was originally conceived for man; well, it is no longer human. Under these conditions, an Utopian city is a human city. It is that city which is involved here.

M.L. — An optimistic remark to begin with. There are many examples of ideas which have developed beginning with simple conversations. So, why not dream...

M.R. — We must understand each other on the term Utopia. The Utopias of the 19th century were not Utopias, since they came about for better and for worse; most present cities come out of the same thought, they are a little less inhuman. That is all. Think of Cabot. Think of severely geometric cities, of their feeling of bookkeeping, of their tradi­

M.L. — Double awareness: awareness of the realities which one can build up and awareness of the power to limit these realities. It remains to put in place mechanisms, mir­rors which allow the population to look. These mirrors ought to offer a richer reflection than dull reality.

Y.G. — Human, inhuman, that is what we should clarify. Utopian: what should one consider? Architecture? Planning?

Urban Awareness

B.L. — It is exactly during the course of this debate that it will be necessary to analyse these ideas. For the last few years urban awareness has been making itself felt: what do you think of it?

M.L. — We are witnessing a renewal of the power of public opinion in North America. It is large enough to see the revival of the Democratic party in the United States; to take note of the stopping of the Spadina highway in Toronto, to appreciate the value of the awareness of the citizens. From now on, committees of residents have the right of veto on programs of area renovation. These same committees can even plan such pro­grams and follow their fulfillment step by step.

M.B. — This awareness, which is going on right through city-planning, properly speaking, arises from the difficulties caused by regional planning. In Quebec we have lived through an era where the citizens believed in tech­nocrats. The well-known defeat of their enterprisers is at the origin of an awareness of the public which is perhaps not yet very clear, but is still real.

M.R. — It is a matter of an anti-nineteenth century attitude. The predominance of trans­port over habitat has become tyrannical in the 20th century. Cities are no longer cities but highways. There is no longer a question of urbanism under these conditions. Thus com­mittees of residents constitute a capital phenomenon. The city should arise from decisions of its inhabitants. The idea is still new and I am not sure that it is popular yet.

Y.G. — I do not think that one can speak about citizens’ committees and an anti-nineteenth century attitude. The rest must be considered as equip­ments. Speculators still succeed often in twisting the law. The few successes of groups of citizens are not very satisfying. Public protest is not a sufficient guarantee. Perhaps it is necessary to think in more radical terms.

M.L. — Can the population act otherwise than by protesting? It is not aware of realities other than those which it has in sight. To the question: “What do you want?” it answers in a negative way: “We don’t want construc­tion or highways…”

B.L. — Perhaps the population is not aware of its actual power, and, in consequence, does not express itself. We are rediscovering the notion of the right to limit these realities. For the last few years urban awareness is not global but partial at the moment.

M.R. — The two phenomena are parallel. If the people were aware of their power, we cannot see very well what they could demand. On the other hand, we know very well what they do not wish to have.

M.B. — Why? The public can want precisely what seems to be its good and which is its bad. That means that an entire population can live in the most complete Utopia and think, for instance, of rural life, of paradises, of a certain prehistoric age...

Toward The City State

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M.L. — Double awareness: awareness of the realities which one can build up and aware­ness of the power to limit these realities. It remains to put in place mechanisms, mir­rors which allow the population to look. These mirrors ought to offer a richer reflection than dull reality.

Y.G. — Distorting mirrors, in fact?

M.L. — Distortions, certainly, offered in terms of possible options. Then, a desire for libera­
Architects in the Service of Everyone

B.L. — We are speaking of the urban phenomenon and up to the present there has been almost no question of housing, habitat, architects, urban planners, etc.

A.P. — . . . And not even of art?

M.R. — These elements were contained in what we said. We did not name them. Perhaps this is the first time.

A.P. — Perhaps it is because the city should be a work of art.

M.R. — Yes, but not only that.

B.L. — What would be the place of the architect?

M.R. — But first what is an architect? It is generally a master of works who collaborates with another specialist — the urban planner — who is often also an architect. The city planner often forms an idea of the city and an idea of the habitat without concerning himself with knowing if these images correspond with the needs of the inhabitants. There are historic examples like that of Le Corbusier with Pessac. In the twenties Le Corbusier built in a style which was ultra-modern for its time, a workers city near Bordeaux, at Pessac, with terrace-roofs, pilings, windows in the length, etc. Workers and their families were settled there. Only lately, at the time of an inquiring, it was observed that these houses now had pointed roofs which contained attics and that the pilings have been used to enclose garages. Very simply, the people reconstructed their ideal house. There was a disparity between the mind of Le Corbusier and that of the inhabitants. Who is right?

M.B. — Has the architecture of transition begun to develop?

M.R. — Yes, not only for offices but also for the building of homes.

M.L. — Flexible architecture also constitutes a form of architectural transition.

M.R. — It is a matter of an architecture where the divisions are mobile, which permits the architect to change them. In another specialist — the urban planner — who is often also an architect. The city planner often forms an idea of the city and an idea of the habitat without concerning himself with knowing if these images correspond with the needs of the inhabitants. There are historic examples like that of Le Corbusier with Pessac. In the twenties Le Corbusier built in a style which was ultra-modern for its time, a workers city near Bordeaux, at Pessac, with terrace-roofs, pilings, windows in the length, etc. Workers and their families were settled there. Only lately, at the time of an inquiring, it was observed that these houses now had pointed roofs which contained attics and that the pilings have been used to enclose garages. Very simply, the people reconstructed their ideal house. There was a disparity between the mind of Le Corbusier and that of the inhabitants. Who is right?

B.L. — Would such ideas limit the mobility of the people?

M.L. — People move very often in North America. However, these moves are not all linked to a simple dissatisfaction, but rather to civil changes in the family: marriages, births, deaths.

Y.G. — It is easier to change houses than to modify the one we occupy. At present, at least.

B.L. — But then the architect has only a rôle as advisor or as critic. Since everything is preconceived, prefabricated, he has no more to do than to make his selection.

Y.G. — Actually, the architect is the victim of the financier. At this moment, the supply of apartments of one or one and a half rooms exceeds the demand by 30 to 40 per cent. On the other hand, more than 70 per cent of the families in Montreal would need two to three extra rooms. There is the whole gap between the interest of society and that of the promoters.

B.L. — Therefore there is reason to question the social order.

M.B. — For me, it is first of all a matter of the principle of development: either the principle is economic and only economic or else it is economic and also ecological.

M.L. — The State can control land speculation if it wants to. It would be enough that a people’s will should strongly urge it to do so. That would involve the prohibition of speculation, the development of competition, the determination of prices. The result is the definite halting of urban spread, the protection of green spaces around urban areas, the control of pollution in the centre of the cities. There would be many other consequences.

B.L. — I am impressed by the importance you give to planning.

M.L. — I am simply saying what would be the powers of the State. There are other means of arriving at strong control: experimental projects, polling, analysis of needs, etc.

B.L. — Computer society?

M.L. — No, not at all.

M.R. — The great danger would be to hand over the minds to the computers.

B.L. — Would not the cybernetic city — I am coming back to that — offer to each the freedom to modify his urban space as he wished?

M.R. — That would be too dangerous.

A.P. — The ideal city would be a city where we have hardly any needs.

B.L. — That is difficult, perhaps.

Y.G. — No, because we are witnessing more and more a curling of consumption of goods.

We prefer to renovate houses rather than to demolish them.

M.R. — That’s understandable: people know what they have, and they do not know how to be satisfied by what they have.

Y.G. — People like what they have, and they do not know how to be satisfied by what they have.

M.R. — That’s understandable: people know what they have, and they do not know how to be satisfied by what they have. By destroying an area, even a very unhealthy one, we destroy an organic city which exists and which we replace by a system without organization.

M.B. — We are living in an Utopian society.

If we examine planning programs, whether they be urban or not, we perceive that they cannot be separated from a territory of which they develop only scattered areas which will serve as models. This is truly the step of an Utopian thought, which, for a long time has introduced these sub-universes to us. How can you expect people to have confidence?

A.P. — What kind of accomplishments lead us inevitably toward new Utopias?

M.L. — Perhaps not if we grant that the city is a zone of converging where a whole series of systems which can be compared to servo-mechanisms isolate us, gather us together, protect us, expand us. It is for us to increase these rate of profit, for us to humanize it.

M.R. — I believe that the superimposing of all the networks which make up urban life condition the liberty of the city dweller. Professional systems of leisure, family systems: they all go along in different directions. There is one of the fundamental differences between the city and the parish. In the city, one can very well have no connection with his neighbours but many relationships with people through the channel of the systems.

The Human City

M.B. — It seems to me that we are at the core of the problem: problems of habitat, culture and territory. We generally evade these real problems because we do not know where we are going: it is certain that they arise in terms of territorial organization. We are in a world where individuals share several areas: we exist at different levels. Certain of these relationships are those of the street or the district, others are relationships of the city, the province, the country. One cannot prevent oneself from realizing that we are heading toward a world where territorial functions tend to polarize around the very specific needs of the professional milieu when it is the case that the "alternative" or "heteronomy". We are going toward a sort of structure where these professional relationships will determine our preferred relationships, our most important links with other human beings.

It is impossible not to see that this is a constant theme. And, since we are discussing the problem of habitat and culture in terms of territory, we cannot eliminate the dimension of a continued attendance of a same number of persons or of a same human group, if we wish to speak of humanism or even of humanity. The recognition of the other can be accomplished only on that condition. I do not intend to defend the parochial ideal or an outline of fascist life where people would be regimented. I believe it will be necessary to find a formula which will favour interaction between individuals to the greatest extent. But it is important that a part of this interaction should come about in a certain degree, and at a certain level, with the same individuals.

M.L. — I have another definition of humanism. I think we will have attained conditional humanism when we have the power of no longer using our power to abstain from erecting buildings of 30 stories and to limit ourselves to elaborate studies, to dispense with a thousand technological follies, to reach a certain moderation. Thus the urban fabric will be densified and profitable from a human point of view. We will be able to devote ourselves to intellectual tasks, to creative tasks.

B.L. — Is this how you foresee the urban future?

M.L. — I don’t know. Is there a distinction between the goal and the step toward it? In this case, creating the city becomes the finality of the city. It is not a heaven which must be reached by passing through the purgatory of present technology. To discuss the city is found in a certain way, to attain the finality of the city.

Y.G. — We rarely speak of the individual. For me, any definition of the city and any finality of the city must consider the individual in the very first place. The community is an aggregate of individuals. That, to me, is fundamental.

M.B. — I believe that I have already explained myself on the matter of urban finality. I would like simply to emphasize, in ending the danger there would be in following political ideals which would lead us into ways which are a little backward, those of bureau-Straussianism. I believe that we need a kind of supreme organ which ought to solve all our problems. What I am against is the absence of critical attitude toward the increasing of this phenomenon.

M.R. — The city is the privileged place of production and consumption. One of its finalities would be to plan this production-consumption for man, and not for the city-object. This inversion of rôles will perhaps create a new urban system. Although we can foresee it with difficulty.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
THE GREEN INFILTRATION
An attempt to integrate vegetation into the city

By Christian Lalonde

The text which we reproduce here is a résumé of the thesis of Mr. Christian Lalonde titled The Green Infiltration. Therefore you will not find here all the technical details but only the general principle which determines the conditions of the green infiltration.

Mr. Lalonde is a graduate of the University of Quebec in Montreal.

Five o'clock Friday night. Get out of the city. All with the same hurried gestures, there are a thousand of them, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, sometimes more, in search of a little less brick, asphalt or concrete.

Some space, pure air, greenery: magic words. So away they go, not too far in spite of everything, looking for nature to be found again. Or failing that, to be re-invented. Get out of the city.

There are those who do not leave. Spring, summer, autumn, winter: they are relentless in making household plants survive under ridiculous conditions. How can one cultivate a passion under which it is not always time to oxidize. It is certainly not an end to better the bases of needs. But we must certainly recognize that the vegetative habits permeating the present urban life are much more adapted to the life of the city than to the life of the country. In short, the city-country is to be created. To reconcile these two extremes is utopian. And yet means of softening the city do exist. Certainly, but how do we introduce more nature into the city? How shall we integrate vegetation into the city at the beginning? This comes back to determining the conditions of the green infiltration. This is the whole theme of this study.

Montreal is only in the tenth rank of big world cities for its green spaces. And yet — who would have believed it — the metropolis of Canada benefits from a privileged geographical position. It is situated on the forty-fifth parallel. Thus, compared to London and Paris, located more toward the north, Montreal and their rate of growth. A big, healthy, leafy tree is much more fit to deaden the noises of the city, to fight air pollution and to produce more oxygen than any other small plant. On an equal area, it creates a green volume — its foliage — much more important than shrubs or grass. The green ash, the red oak and the honey locust are three thorns that would be the best adapted in Montreal.

Sun, rain and even pollution: here united are the ideal conditions for a green infiltration. We can even say that the amount of pressure. Cross streets and skyscrapers change winds into violent air currents, which prevents all vegetation from growing normally. The general direction of the winds in Montreal is oriented west-south-west. It would be enough to set against this some successes of urban planning in order to curb this force. Vegetable windbreaks, naturally (trees again), but themselves protected by special architectural structures.

In reality it is therefore a global modification of urban planning which could bring about a penetration of the plant element in the city. Without considering the variations of pressure. Cross streets and skyscrapers change winds into violent air currents, which prevents all vegetation from growing normally. The green ash, the red oak and the honey locust are three thorns that would be the best adapted in Montreal.

The first beneficiaries: the trees. These, in effect, would be the first to increase their boughs, their rate of growth. A big, healthy, leafy tree is much more fit to deaden the noises of the city, to fight air pollution and to produce more oxygen than any other small plant. On an equal area, it creates a green volume — its foliage — much more important than shrubs or grass. The green ash, the red oak and the honey locust are three thorns that would be the best adapted in Montreal.

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In reality it is therefore a global modification of urban planning which could bring about a penetration of the plant element in the city. Without considering the variations of pressure. Cross streets and skyscrapers change winds into violent air currents, which prevents all vegetation from growing normally. The green ash, the red oak and the honey locust are three thorns that would be the best adapted in Montreal.

Sun, rain and even pollution: here united are the ideal conditions for a green infiltration. We can even say that the amount of pressure. Cross streets and skyscrapers change winds into violent air currents, which prevents all vegetation from growing normally. The general direction of the winds in Montreal is oriented west-south-west. It would be enough to set against this some successes of urban planning in order to curb this force. Vegetable windbreaks, naturally (trees again), but themselves protected by special architectural structures.
Montreal, More or Less, which was to upset — And its contents normally considered among artistic motives. It sought the collaboration of artists, architects, town-planners, different projects had been studied, although, there too, it would have been necessary to take other imperatives into account. Moreover, before arriving at the definite form, different projects had been studied, precisely with the intention of going out of the confines of the museum, so as to show the public that, if Montreal were not to come to the museum, it is rather the museum which would have gone to meet the people. In this view, the museum became a simple centre of information transmitting to the public the itinerary to be followed. One of these projects consisted of distributing the exhibition in five sections of the city, in places easily accessible and integrated into the everyday life of Montréal. For example, I suggested to a theatre group that they should find an unoccupied house and install themselves in it to play the roles of a typically Montréal family, while the public would have the right to ring at the door and to visit the fictitious tenants. Another aspect of the same project: they had the idea of showing a history of Montréal in the streets, by placing posters specifying the state of the building, its rent and its real owner on several buildings, among which was a house on Clark Street in Mile End, which I therefore believe that by its presentation, Green Spaces has given rise to an uneasiness coming from the fact that we are neglecting the public and communal aspect of our city. The citizen, real capital element of every urban mass, is not always favored by the uniform and inhuman skyscrapers, pollution, green spaces, as well as the application of an adding and subtracting element which we intended to reach, it is to the title of the exhibition that it must be attributed. A title which certainly alludes, as you have emphasized, to the adding and subtracting concept of the planning of the city, this same planning which withdrew as a last resort the automobile traffic and give it over to pedestrians, as do so many other cities across the world. In Montreal, accepting of this measure would not be marginal, but in perfect accord with the predominant character of the city as indicated earlier. Thus, from a problem which is found universally, like green spaces, one can arrive at bringing out specifically Montreal. It will be concluded that Montreal presented a startling exhibition, the Green Spaces group exhibited a survey of fences (an allusion to the mazes of big cities). In Montreal, the community spirit of the city is such that public squares, meeting places, and even the streets reflect its real urban and civilized character, and which are completely deprived of this spirit which animates a city worthy of this name. Shapeless and without character, these cities were created by a race having a profound distrust of urban life. Have you visited St. Louis? You will see that it is a city without a soul. The old heart of St. Louis no longer has the right to ring at the door and to visit the fictitious tenants. Another aspect of the same project: they had the idea of showing a history of Montréal in the streets, by placing posters specifying the state of the building, its rent and its real owner on several buildings, among which was a house on Clark Street in Mile End, which

THE CITY IN THE MUSEUM
René ROZON interviews Melvin CHARNEY

From the eleventh of June to the thirteenth of last August, The Museum of Fine Arts of Montreal presented a startling exhibition, Montreal, More or Less, which was to upset more than one traditional scheme. Because its theme, the arrangement of the city, is not normally considered among artistic motives. And its contents — to which we shall return — were to be found outside the conventional boundaries of a museum known for its artistic austerity. Finally, wishing to appear as the reflection of a metropolis in development, the exhibition was at the same time, through purely visual techniques, a radical denunciation of an outmoded conception, and yet at the same time prevalent, of urbanism, that is to say recourse to the primary notion of addition (new projects) and subtraction (demolition).

The enterprise was new and ambitious too. It necessitated prolonged analyses, probes and discussions; it sought the collaboration of artists, architects, town-planners, different action groups, without omitting the participation of the provincial and municipal governments (which withdrew as a last resort) Balance sheet of this effort: a collection of documents (amongs which were posters, photographs, comic strips, advertising, different plans of the city); audio-visual productions (including the film Urbanose, a documentary series in ten parts, produced by the National Film Board); urban games (allowing the public to modify the configuration of the city at will); neo-realistic paintings (ordered by telephone); multiples (which the visitor could unhook and carry away with him); bidimensional pictures (which the spectator had the leisure to cross) linked by a labyrinth formed of fences (an allusion to the mazes of big cities). In the short space of two and a half months, they succeeded in bringing this project to fruition, — huge, it goes without saying, and difficult to coordinate, so complex was it, in full summer (considered as out of season) the museum registered more than 52,000 admissions, a record number in attendance, for several years, for a single exhibition. The exhibition was really stimulating and thrilling to visit. It was, however, not without gaps and raises many contradictions. We have noted a few of them and have submitted them to Mr. Melvin Charney, architect and assistant professor in the Faculty of Planning of the University of Montreal, who was on this occasion the advisor and the co-ordinator of the exhibition.

VdA — The problems raised by the exhibition and linked to its planning — underprivileged wards, uniform and inhuman skyscrapers, pollution, green spaces, as well as the application of an adding and subtracting element...
an important monument in the evolution of the architecture of the city.

Another method of setting up an open exhibition had been contemplated with the assistance of the Central Council of National Unions of Montreal, which was favourable to this project. A formula of compromise was the CCNU first suggested to holding the exhibition at the museum, and presenting it later in different areas of the city. Unfortunately, the CCNU had to withdraw.

In the face of the impossibility of wholly fulfilling these projects, I realized that the only way of coming out of them, if we really wished that the exhibition should come to pass — and moreover there remained little time after all these steps — it was finally necessary to make maximum use of the actual resources of the museum. Just the same, we succeeded in maintaining certain elements of the exhibition outside the museum: Green Spaces organized visits by bus for the public across the city, and Mauve, a feminist group, besides displaying an environment in a window of Dupuis Frères department store, was given an instructional assignment.

Certainly, the museum, by its very nature, is not reality itself, but the reflection of reality. And the reflection of reality is art, one cannot escape from it, and it was necessary to admit this. But to be in a position to reflect it adequately, we preferred to assume this reality by its content — in other words, we wanted to be sure that, in spite of the limits imposed — including budget and limited staff — we had never had an exhibition so committed, so political, in the history of this city, and so much developed on an artistic plan. Did you know that to create an exhibition of this kind on Montreal, its established order, in the field of artistic creation as in that of the conception and the organization of an exhibition, and to reconstruct the whole from reality, from the actual life of the people who live in Montreal, which has been too long unknown? Nevertheless, it is in this reality that we rediscover what is unique in Montreal, and it is to the extent that we will be able to be inspired by it that we will be able to communicate with the people who live in it, and thus lead them to reflect on their own life, one of the important roles. It seems to me, of the art of our time. V.d.A. — Save Mont Frères, Point Zéro and Alternatives, made up of citizens aware of urban problems, participated in the preparation of the exhibition. They faced up to many problems, a very valuable step, but without offering solutions to solve them, sometimes leaving the visitor puzzled. On this matter, I have no hesitation not missed a unique opportunity to enlighten the visitor and inspire him to take means of positive action to solve the problems raised, in order to better his lot?

M.C. — The real problem in Montreal, as in most large cities, is not the formation of small autonomous groups, which are in the last resort powerless, but the formation of a common front to exert pressure effectively on the authorities who do not always take into account the real needs of the citizens. One of the aims of the exhibition was to make people conscious of the very existence of these different action groups taking shape, as well as of the diversity of their purposes. But, indirectly, the visitors, while going through the exhibition, were forming in spirit a kind of common front: they no longer felt isolated or lost and they realized that there were other people concerned with the same problems. Besides, I do not believe that it belongs to a museum of fine arts to suggest ready-made formulas to the public. Because the field of action of the visitor is elsewhere, in political. The best one can do within the context of a museum is not politics, but rather to educate the public politically, to sensitize it to the necessity of acting, while hoping to incite it and promote in it this desire to effect the necessary changes in the priorities of the planning of Montreal.

V.d.A., your city clearly with its defects are utop­plan. There are, nonetheless, some cities which are beautiful and captivating. And Montreal is one of those rare, attractive cities on the North American continent. The exhibition seems to have neglected this positive side. If certain policies of planning of the city of Montreal leave something to be desired, others have been clearly successful, as witnessed by its public transport system (the subway line and its stations), the conception of the underground urbanism of the downtown area (one of the best examples in North America) and the preservation of an historic condition. Montreal is therefore not without convincing examples. If they are worth being encouraged, why not having taken note of them?

M.C. — What you have just mentioned are all examples which arise from an official urbanism imposed on the city. Let me explain.

Yes, we have a subway: however, the planning of the city still favours the vehicle. In Toronto, the citizens were able to stop the construction of the Spadina highway. But not in Montreal where we are in the process of introducing a highway right in the centre of town. That is pure genocide.

In what refers to the aforesaid subterra­nean city, it was never planned, but was going to be born by accident, like all good city plans across the world. On the other hand, it must be said that this underground city favours purely financial interests: it does not belong to the citizens, but to the owners of the buildings which shelter it: the idea of the street no longer exists in this case, and the corridors which replace it are controlled by policemen in uniform in the service of private companies.

As for Old Montreal, it is the historical Disneyland of Quebec. From a section falling in ruins and practically uninhabited, it became, once renovated, a privileged section, with shops, restaurunts and luxurious apart­ments. But the real Old Montreal is found in Panet Street where the people still live under historic conditions. Yet, no one thinks of saving this area, no more than the buildings of the workmen's quarters of the 19th century, no more than the public squares of St. Henry.

No, it was precisely through keeping a certain backward movement through a link with this official urbanism that the exhibition was going not only to innovate, but to touch favourable points, very favourable even. For it was, in my opinion, a clearly positive exhibition, which adopted not the official point of view of the planning of the city which might have been expected, but rather the point of view of the citizen. You will understand that the appreciation of a city begins with the judgement of the people who live in it. It is with difficulty that these two entities can be dissociated. We wished therefore that the people should be proud of their city and I would even go as far as to say proud of their slums. Besides, is not the capture of con­science the first step toward its own libera­tion? Actually, it was a very optimistic exhibi­tion and deeply based on the popular charac­ter of Montreal, that is to say which took note of the majority of its inhabitants, although the middle-class preoccupations, which are joined with them, such as pollution and green spaces, have not been excluded.

Finally, I agree with you in saying that Montreal is a beautiful city. But will it be so much longer? For our governments, our town­planners, our system of developing the re­sources of the city are unfortunately in the process of spoiling everything of value here. However, city­planning is a sufficiently developed discipline and the authorities take use of every means to put it to use (as proved by the isolated and futile case of Old Mont­real). But as long as the political and econo­mic structures will not respect its demands — historical and geographical context, and above all the human potential of a built-up area — it is in vain that urbanism is advanced, it is nothing in practice, and is no longer in the way of preserving the character of a city like Montreal, even while improving it. As long as our way of life is different from that of other cities and as long as we are capable of reflecting these differences in the physical organization of our city — and it is that, actually, which the true notion of city­planning encompasses — Montreal will remain an interesting urban centre and pleasant to live in. To tell the truth, it is the only thing worth the trouble to encourage.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
percentage doubled, then, in 1967, climbed to sixty-four percent. More than 650,000 vehicles of all models travel in the streets each day. The residential boulevards are occupied by drivers. Certainly, to the swift Bonaventure road, the LaFontaine bridge-tunnel are built. Bonaventure, LaFontaine: names which recall a more tranquil era. Other roads remain in the planning stage: the highways of the Thousand Islands, St. Scholastique airport. Still others, like at that time, are crowded with tourist feelings. And the ancestor common to all these roads: the metropolitan boulevard. Daily, morning and evening, each hour, 9,000 vehicles pass there in both directions. It is no longer equal to the task: it has become a health risk for those who dare to dream.

Montreal: a road network of more than a thousand miles with highways, downtown arteries, residential streets and others. An odd administrative jigsaw puzzle. A nightmare in the parking of automobiles, those devourers of space. We even take possession of building lots in Old Montreal. History yields to parkings which occupies nearly sixteen percent of the downtown area. More than four million square feet!

A Solution?

1967. I smile, hesitate, then deposit my ticket. A dull noise, I go through the turnstile, a walk of a few seconds and the subway train arrives. Five words to the square mile. Joy is erased with routines. They promise me many developments in order to appease my impatience. Ten years from now they will go from sixteen stations to thirty-six. The user will travel rapidly between Verdun and Anjou, without neglecting the site of the Olympic games. The figures of the Transport Commission tell the story: 843,000 passengers in 1970. At the beginning of 1968, there were more than 904,000 people each day. Thirty-five percent of the people move by car against twenty-five and a half percent by public transport. Just the same, the MTC has already won one battle, that of the centre of town: seventy percent of users travel by it.

The Rebirth of Concrete

I am listening to the guide, a geographer. My eyes look upward. A centre of town which is reviving. We believed it given up to an apathy of several years. In the example of the Stubborn, of the French-Canadians, group themselves near Place Ville Marie, near the skyscrapers of the Bank of Commerce, IBM, Bonaventure Place, Château Champlain, etc. The sky is disappearing, sees itself conquered by masses of concrete. It resists little before the planners of space.

In another new movement, from now on we are moving toward the east, in contrast to seasonal moving. Place Desjardins will share the two sides of St. Catherine St. with Place des Arts. Farther along, the Chinese quarter awaits the white invader, federal officials who will be accommodated in new blocks. The old Latin Quarter will be revived with the downtown campus of the University of Quebec. The Dupuis store will aggravate the epidemic of public squares. And, down there, opposite the living centre of Montreal, the Radio-Canada building contrasts with the immediate environment. At the east of the Jacques Cartier bridge, the Quebec provincial police defend law and order in glass headquarters, without counting the many and luxurious towers of dwellings, success plan to the future. It is necessary to sacrifice some so-called historical monuments. Besides, what I see today will be a memory in 1980.

The sidewalks overflow, supporting an incredible weight. A downtown area where are crowded 150,000 people a day. A commercial centre with hundreds of shops and stores. Distinguished also by its subterranean life. Long corridors link the Place Victoria to Place Ville Marie and Place du Canada. A religious and historical centre of town with its Old Montreal, its churches, mostly old, Catholic and Anglican. Restaurants, terraces set up on the edge of the pavements. Art rubs shoulders with cabarets. Hotels work with information centres. Three important daily papers compete with the electronic press. Newspaper stands monopolize the street corners.

In the west, where people work, eat, sleep, use facilities, walk about, learn. Better still, the people humanize these masses of concrete, caress with the eye the few rare green spaces or the trees in tubs. A heavy traffic, auto horns, crunching of tires, strike their eardrums. Neon signs, advertisements, posters play subtly on their subconscious.

The Centre of town: a city within a big city.

Witnesses

Districts, islets give evidence of the degree of wealth and multiculturalism of Montreal. The Rebirth of Concrete asserts itself: middle-class houses, images of a well-off minority. Corners of greenery where the streets wind, frequent traffic stops. They protect their environment by removing noise and pollution, the frame shops, the tobacco shops, nevertheless takes place. The mountain attracts them. Language defines the boundary less and less. Wealth replaces it.

Quadrilaterals divide the francophone sections. Straight streets and heavy traffic. Two institutions illustrate and recall the rapid urbanization of this society. One, the church, sees its role diminishing. The other, the credit union, is attracting an increasing number of members. The French-Canadian citizen is struggling with materialism. Commercial centres are becoming more numerous, creating a very near economy. The corner restaurants, the centres of popular movement complete the picture.

LIVING ISLETS

At the heart of Montreal, I feel the cross of poverty. East-west, North-south sectors sheltering dwellings shared between French-Canadians and immigrants. Sidewalks encumbered by story high, large mass buildings. Sidewalks which are transformed into playgrounds. Backyards where people hold discussions.

In this metropolis of contrasts, there are added the regions occupied by the academically: a kind of islet within an islet.
We think of its political and legal institutions, of this unique fact of a mountain in a city? Many, many things. A few lines are not enough to tell everything. What shall we recognize each other. A fog hides the perspectives from me, a deafness hardly allows a few noises to penetrate my silence. I nonetheless begin to understand. Montreal is more than a city, it is an environment offered to all the senses.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

CLAUSE TOUSIGNANT

By François GAGNON

An exhibition by the Exterior Services of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

An important retrospective exhibition of the works of painter Claude Tousignant of Montreal comprises fifty works (40 paintings and 10 prints) produced between 1951 and 1972, will be presented in twelve centers across Canada from January 1972 to November 1974, and also during October 1973, in the Canadian Cultural Centre in Paris.

Itinerary of the exhibition, 1972-1974
January 12 - February 11, 1973
National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
March 15 - April 30
Winnipeg Art Gallery, Winnipeg
May 25 - June 24
Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal
July 15 - August 15
Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver
October 1 - October 31
Canadian Cultural Centre, Paris
December 1 - December 31
Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton
January 15 - February 15, 1974
Memorial University, St. John’s, Nfld.
March 1 - March 31
Dalhousie Art Gallery, Halifax
April 15 - May 15
Confederation Art Gallery and Museum, Charlottetown
June 1 - June 30
Edmonton Art Gallery, Edmonton
July 15 - August 15
Undecided
September 1 - September 30
University of Sherbrooke, Sherbrooke
October 15 - November 15
Owens Art Gallery, Mount Allison Univ., Sackville, N.B.

A series of exhibitions from one museum to another, even if not planned, can sometimes include instruction. Thus, an important Claude Tousignant retrospective, organized by the National Gallery of Canada will follow the Borduas and the Automatists exhibition, Montreal 1942-1955, presented last year at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal. In a few months, the opportunity of re-living one of the important movements in the history of contemporary painting in Quebec will be given to visitors interested in the two showings. Claude Tousignant has been, with Guido Molinari, one of the chief contributors in the dispute over automatism and the drafting of plasticien proposals.

One cannot miss perceiving, looking back in time, that Automatism appears in history, clad in a theory of pictorial abstraction, badly adjusted to the works which it was supposed to defend. The questioning of the representation of things and persons seemed so radical to the automatist painters and to their public, that to explain it they resorted to an exclusively plastic vocabulary. Thus, Borduas' gouaches of 1942, if they were titled "Abstraction", were designated first by the title "Abstraction", followed by a single number which told its place in order. Reporters' commentaries inspired by the exhibition of these gouaches in the Hermitage Theatre, the same year, also spoke only of abstraction, calling upon music which evokes moods without, for what it is worth, suggesting precise forms, proclaimed the virtues of a single plastic language of lines and colours and tried out frenzied verbal transpositions, these alone being judged capable of taking account of going beyond all significance, they believed, in their experience. And yet, several of these gouaches were still obviously figurative. It is without effort that one can now detect in them here a bird, there a woman's head or a torso or even a Harlequin. Much more, when Borduas brings about during the year 1945 a significant return to representation, as in La Femme au bijou, L'Ile enchantée or Le Nu vert, etc., he continues no less to give his canvases numbered titles, such as 3,45, 4,45, 5,45, which are really the dates of production and should be read, "made in the month of March, April, May, 1945."

At the very moment when the representation of objects was abandoned, as in most of the gouaches of 1942 and of the oils of 1943, more definitely from 1946 with Borduas or in the first canvases of Fernand Leduc (1944), of Pierre Gauvreau (1944) or in the water-colours of Riopelle (1946), the notion of object and, correspondingly, that of sign standing out on a background was maintained. The object had lost its conventional form but kept its structure as an object. We were far from the explosion which American action painting had caused it to undergo, except with Barbeau, perhaps (the astonishing Tu­multe à la chaise crispée is from 1946), but we know what difficulties Barbeau had in maintaining this type of suggestion in the face of the plastic agreements implicit in the automatist group. Even non-representative, the automatist propositions were less abstract than one would have liked to believe.

Having taken its point of departure in spontaneity, Automatism was perhaps influenced to neglect the fact that the spontaneous, like instinct, is structured and includes its determinants. The non-premeditation of works, which was the fundamental principle of automatisms, involved the fact that the process of the destruction of the concrete appearance of the figure, their structure as object in a tridimensional space, risked being maintained, even unknown to the protagonists.

The old space box, inherited from ancient habits going back to the Renaissance, resisted the assaults of non-figuration and the Para­chutes végétaux were at their ease there, like
the soft watches of Dali.

It is on this last point that criticism of Automatism by Plasticism takes on all its meaning. The abstract character of automatist production was challenged first by the plasticists, then in the name of a new structure by Claude Tousignant and Guido Molinari. If one wished to achieve a truly abstract painting, it was necessary to renounce not only representation, but the slightest echo, not on the hand and of all suggestion of tridimensional space on the other. From 1956, as a joint Molinari-Tousignant exhibition demonstrated, the stakes were down. A strictly bidimensional painting is proposed, without objects, and from that point it develops along another line.

One by one, what Matthew Baigell called "depth clues" disappear. The superimposing of one element upon another, which so clearly suggests depth, is avoided, the surfaces simply being placed side by side. Impressions of gravitation, of distance or even of orientation (left field and right field), on account of the references which they make to natural space, are prevented. Making use of circular surface, Claude Tousignant surely shows that he intends to avoid the traps of the rectangle in which one spontaneously distinguishes a top and a bottom, a left and a right, and on which the planes situated near the bottom of the picture risk appearing nearer the viewer than the planes situated in the top. For planes of different dimensions distributed on the surface painted in such a way as to form the illusion of atmospheric space, a plane of large dimension having a tendency to come forward and to seem closer, than a smaller plane placed at its sides, are substituted bands of equal width, following each other in vertical stripes in Molinari's work, or in concentric circles and in oval bands more or less in length in Claude Tousignant's. Plays of texture on the planes are also eliminated. A textured plane disappears on a plane which is not textured. The surface of the paintings of the plasticists is, on the contrary, treated with a painter's roller, in such a way that even brush marks should not alter the perfect flatness of the surface of the picture. Finally, for the tonal colour which retains variations of shade according to whether one adds more or less white or black to the same tint, they substitute a saturated colour, avoiding all play of contrasts which, for example, would cause a bright red area to stand out on a pale blue background. This exclusive use of saturated colour brings out such a quickening of the pictorial field that one might believe it. In reference to Tousignant, an op painting. This is an unfortunate interpretation, because it reduces to a secondary effect the whole of his production, which turns on more crucial research.

While rejecting the plays of the third dimension, Plasticism first discovered the fundamental idea of the series and then began a new research in the field of lyricism per excellence, pure colour. In effect they replaced the object with the series, more coherent with what science teaches about the structure of the universe, a vast undulating field ruled by the repetition of recurrent series, opposed or progressive. Thus, instead of following each other at the pleasure of I don't know what fantasy, as in the paintings of the American Gene Davis, for instance, the concentric bands of Tousignant obey a system of succession which a prolonged and attentive contemplation can rediscover.

But at the same time what has become for Claude Tousignant the essential principle of pictorial research, the problems of spatial structure having been put in place once for all, is colour itself. It is especially colour that we risk allowing to escape from our considerations, as criticism has sometimes given the example, being occupied with the only definition of the space structure of the plasticists. With the pre-eminence given to colour, it is all the dionysian lyricism which we would be tempted not to see in this painting strictly defined structurally, which is re-invested with its full powers. Let us wish, in ending, that the Tousignant exhibition will offer a brilliant demonstration, I was going to say accelerated, of the energetic quality of pure colour.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
Four young bookbinders graduated from the École des Arts Graphiques in 1947. Ian Trouillot, on a scholarship from Haiti, goes back home. Louis Grépinich starts teaching his craft. Jean Larrivière specializes in Ottawa in the restoration of old books. In 1949, Pierre Ouvrard opens a bookbinding studio with Marcel Beaudoin who graduated one year after him. This took much daring, a sort of calculated risk because America, as opposed to Europe, had few bookbinding craftsmen. In Quebec, where this art has been passed on from one generation to the next, there were not many well-established studios: the Chabot studio in Quebec, that of Viennese Bélanger and The Gazette bookbinding department under the direction of Ernest Boudreau in Montreal. A few well-known isolated craftsmen such as Louis Forest, Gérard Plamondon, and a few amateurs of high standing such as Mrs. Carl Starn, devote themselves to interesting research. However, Quebec, as a whole, is not ready to support these four new bookbinding partners formed to new ideas by Albert Dumouchel and the great currents of contemporary bookbinding.

Pierre Ouvrard, bookbinding craftsman — as he likes to be called — has equally the respect of tradition and a passion for research. Leather is always the basis of his bookbinding, with the exception of a few experiments with materials such as cardboard, leather, mountain goat skins for the very luxurious bindings, English morocco, practical and resistant shagreen, prepared with chemical dyes in beautiful colours, French bookbinding leathers dyed with plant dye according to techniques of the oldest and most refined, and that must be "brought out" by exposure to light for two or three months in order to stabilize the dyes — leathers so fragile that the perspiration of a hand marks them and therefore limits their use to very luxurious bindings.

There are many ways to dress the leather. Most notably, in counteret, appliqué, in relief, smooth, veined, burned with acid, stamped with pigments or gold... It is at this stage that the bookbinder’s technical research is put to use where he juxtaposes, mixes and extends one with the other the ancient and modern processes as well as his own discoveries. The leather with glue or carved as a whole and counteret into the cover. The gold impressions we often see must be reworked with acid as for an engraving. The irons that characterize the Dentelle styles, take on a modern character, almost unwonted, with Pierre Ouvrard. An original iron, designed by the bookbinder and engraved by an engraver will serve only on the binding for which it was created and only once. Finally, the leather, which has been enriched, or based on understanding and an affinity as deep as that which he had with the nature of his inspiration, however, none of these associations has been as lasting, as enriching, or based on understanding and an affinity as deep as that which he had with the Saint-Gilles paper-factory of Saint-Joseph-de-la-Rive, with Mrs. Félix-Antoine Savard who founded it and with Georges Audet, craftsman paper-maker. Those who have never seen this marvelous hand-made paper still do not know that a simple sheet of paper, dotted with hawkweed petals, inflamed with fern heads, tree leaves or moose moss, can become a poem before the writing. Pierre Ouvrard has instinctively known that nothing would better reflect our belonging to this land and he uses this paper abundantly on his bindings of Canadian books. To cite a detail: to gather this moss, also called caribou moss in other regions, a sort of parasite that develops on old evergreens, the paper-makers must organize expeditions in a forest reserve at their disposal. Who could find anything more authentically Québécois?

Conscious both of the privilege that he has had as well as of the exigencies of the perenniality of his craft, Pierre Ouvrard transmits this approach to art of bookbinding that was given him in an almost unique way. Under his guidance, at the École des Arts Graphiques, the Ahuntsic Cegep, numerous bookbinding enthusiasts have been initiated into his difficult craft, learning the same traditional gestures, precise and meticulous, acquiring with patience the mastery of the most delicate operations, gaining the respect of their professor for their own concepts. Ten of them now practice their art professionally, either in the restoration of old books, artistic bookbinding or library binding. We are still far from the French cultural climate where there are perhaps ten thousand bookbinders and where artistic bookbinding is considered an art just as painting. But still, we are also far from the day when Philippe Beaudoin did not want to form more than two classes of bookbinders, for fear and with reason, that no matter how determined — and that they were — they would not be able to earn their living with their craft. However, Quebec bookbinding which was at the outset, like everything else, utilitarian, is now in great demand by art lovers, even, if only one bookshop to this day — the librairie Garneau in Quebec, under the direction of Mrs. Jacqueline Rioux — has all year a showcase to show the work and sell it as well. It can be said that in conformity with the vision that Philippe Beaudoin had, a new bookbinding school has been born in Quebec. From this angle, the work of Pierre Ouvrard takes on all of its importance since he was one of the only ones to persevere in the art of bookbinding. The task is now his to create a synthesis of an artistic and technical tradition of Europe and the Québécois spirit. (Translation by Hélène Marcoux)
JIM RITCHIE: ANATOMIES IN MARBLE

By Jeffrey ROBINSON

Jim Ritchie comes back to Canada in October for his 13th one-man show, his seventh in Montreal, this time at the Waddington Gallery. He has been an every-other-year commuter from Venice on the south coast of France to Montreal for over a decade.

"I left in 1959 to live in France. Most of my work is done here although I also do some work in Carrara, Italy. Why I'm working here is a very complicated question, and the answers all revolve around factors like the quality of life, the fact that I can work outdoors all the year round, the fact that the marble is here. Naturally there are a lot of problems working here because I want to show in Canada. After all, that's home. Shipping and customs are, every-other-year, a huge problem. Yet I believe that working where the marble is, where it has always been carved, is the right way for me."

Each of Ritchie's one-man shows features new work. In recent years he has stopped working in clay and chosen instead to work mostly in stone. He has also chosen to make his work a living thing.

"For the most part I am carving directly, without a maquette. Yes, large pieces need maquettes so that the workers who help to rough out work can have something to guide them. But most of my work is done directly with the stone. With it, I work with the stone so that, eventually, a form grows. That's an important word, grows. It's a living thing. Firstly it grows in my mind and then one day I start to exteriorize it. It grows as an extension of myself, the idea I've had, the techniques and knowledge that I've acquired."

Putting together a show means almost two years worth of work.

"Carving takes me a long time. It takes me about 24 months to turn out 15 pieces. It's rare that I ever spend less than six weeks on a piece of say 200 pounds. For something that size, I start with a block of about 400 pounds, working mostly with a bush-hammer to find my forms. The final filing and polished finish, that's very time consuming, defines the sculptures outlines. I know there are faster ways of doing it, but I can't do that and still produce the quality that I insist on producing. What I in effect am doing then is destroying each day's previous sculpture to make a slightly different one until there's nothing more to do and the piece is complete."

Many people seem to be impressed with the stones themselves but James Ritchie feels the sculpture is the important thing. The stone itself is his catalyst for what will come.

"I let some stones sit around for many months before I start work with them. I have to get a feeling for the stone. We build up a relationship, if you will, the stone and I. But the audience should be concerned with the work. That's what's important. Yes, some stones make better media than others. I work in onyx, black marble, Portuguese rose marble, to name a few. And I have a favorite in white Carrara marble. I like it because it has a luminous quality which is ideal for my work. But the work is still the important thing. I've recently just completed a 12-foot tall work to date from a three-ton block of white Carrara marble. The piece completed weighs about 3000 pounds, is almost five feet tall and is called Life."

The word "life" seems to be apropos as Jim Ritchie has made sculpting his life.

"It's something I've been doing all my life, although I didn't start selling until 1949. It was the Galerie Agnès Lefort, on Sherbrooke Street, where I made my first sale. And it's interesting because looking back nearly two dozen years, I can see how far I've come and also how far I've yet to go. And maybe that's why I work as much as I do. I'm a compulsive worker. Seeing where I've been shows me where I'm going. The more I do, the more I can do."

And just where is he going?

"To THE sculpture. It's like writing THE novel or painting THE oil. It's the thing that every artist I guess strives for. I'm trying to do that and every large work to date is another step in that direction. I've acquired over the years the knowledge of my own work and how to separate the good from the bad. This is a turning point. It's knowing instinctively if a piece is good. And that's important as knowing that it's new. It's something the viewer can experience. A sculptor, I think, must be an inventor. He must create forms that have never existed before, not even in his own mind. Then it becomes a truly valid statement. It's a unique experience. It's something the viewer can share because it's a totally new experience for him also. When I was eight years old, I made things out of plasticine to fascinate myself. And things are much the same now. I must fascinate myself. I must always take the risk of losing a piece by changing it to make it better, to make it more fascinating. I must take the risk of losing a piece by changing it to make it better, to make it more fascinating."

At the heart of everyday life

And six months later, following intense labour during which Anne Kahane obtained the constant aid and collaboration of Jean-Léon Deschênes, one of her former pupils.
the finished work entirely occupied the available space in the studio of the sculptor, it also took up the other rooms of the ground floor, bringing about the strange sensation of a dwelling created and arranged exclusively in terms of a work of art, which exists and breathes only by it, a live presence in the heart of everyday life.

The impressive dimensions of the sculpture, 29 feet long and 10 inches deep, obliged the artist to divide the work into three distinct sections which would be reassembled only upon arrival at their destination. Moreover, Anne Kahane will go to Pakistan, which pleases her greatly, in order to supervise personally the installation of the sculpture in the entrance hall of the embassy situated in Islamabad, the new capital of the country. And it will be only at this moment that the artist will really be able to perceive the work in its totality, to evaluate the visual impact and the degree of integration of “The Sea” in the architectural whole, in the setting and the surrounding environment which will be its permanent home.

“We are all born of the sea.”

Of an abstract character, this work displays itself in a horizontal fluctuating order, an immense formal field, and expresses the continuous movement where forms and volumes arise, evolve and transform themselves in space evoking the universe unceasingly recreated by the ebb and flow of the sea. Certain volumes with particularly open contours curve inward in space, diminish and melt imperceptibly in long undulating planes. The blond pine, sometimes white under the light, breathes only by it, a live presence in the heart of everyday life.

The sculptor will speak to us at length of the sea, of her preference for the coasts of Maine; the elementary volumes, the pronounced stylisation of the forms, their initial simplicity will evoke a primitive world interpreted with an innate sense of humor and satire, animated above all by a profound compassion. There will follow other works of more abstract conception — narration, folklore aspect disappear — revealing a progression of an increased severity, condensed into a few essential forms, very bare. An inner dynamism and an expressive intensity will characterise the series of sculptures titled Fallen Figure and Broken Man, created during the years 1963-1965; they have as their central theme a disjointed body, projected in space, suddenly immobilised in its dizzy fall. Almost all these works were produced in wood, pine and oak; the idea of construction, cabinet-making, which belongs specifically to wood, interests the artist greatly. She would like to make a cabinet and would be pleased to see, over her work-bench, a sign with the inscription “Cabinet-maker.”

Window of two Worlds

Since 1951, Anne Kahane exhibited her works regularly in Canada and abroad, receiving the Grand Prize for Sculpture in the Artistic Competition of the Province of Quebec in 1955, participated in the Biennale of Venice as well as in the Universal Exposition in Brussels in 1958 and in Man and his World in 1967; her sculptures are found in several museums of this country, in private collections and in public buildings, such as Place des Arts in Montreal.

A retrospective, grouping her works of the last fifteen years, took place at Sir George Williams University, in 1969. A professor of sculpture at this institution, this new activity gives her satisfaction; teaching encourages varied human contacts which are valuable to her. She will willingly say of her pupils: “They teach me more than I can teach them.”

“Cabinet-maker.”

By Pierre-Ed. CHASSÉ

Over the past few years Art Price has emerged from a self-imposed seclusion, into one of the major sculptors of our country. One has only to travel across Canada to witness his work either at some of our air terminals or doing some of our public buildings like his most recent one for the new post office building in Ottawa. Although one can still see the impact and the influence Canadian Indian and Eskimo art had on Art Price in the past, what we now see is a much freer expression by the artist. Their conception like their execution is a reflection of that still virgin land which is ours and of its
Like him he seems to move silently with works mushrooming from one ocean to the other, perhaps silent and looming at first, but soon standing firmly against the Canadian background proud and somewhat defiant. Like Zadkine, he has a deep sense of space and height, using the earth as well as the sky to give a feeling of mobility to his work. Well aware of the relation that must exist between the architectural and the sculptural for works intended for public buildings or similar projects, his work is conceived bearing this in mind. Like Paolo Soleri, the structures of the future intrigue him, and it is clear that he has given it some thought. From what he has done recently, it would appear that he agrees that the functional can and should have aesthetic qualities as an essential condition in its conception or design. With a reputation which is reaching further and further with time, Art Price has done and is doing far more for the Canadian image than we have given him credit for so far. It is Lynn Chadwick who told me not so long ago: “Look out for Price, he will outlast and outgrow a great many.” This he may well do. In the meantime we must recognize that he has contributed significantly to transform the generally mundane, large-sized public buildings or utilities into something more aesthetically dramatic.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF BILL VAZAN

By Gilles TOUPIN

The limitations which the artists of former times knew are henceforth abolished. There are no more boundaries, no more preconceived ideology; only a great forward-looking force which takes root in the very mysteries of creation and of man. Art is chaos, and its expansive consciousness makes of it without ceasing, during the course of its historic evolution, the anarchy of chaos. When I look on my work table at the photographs of the many facets of the work of Bill Vazan, it appears evident to me that this artist continually explores the universe. There are postcards which he has sent me, the book of the Ligne mondiale, photos of works of exterior and interior, summaries of videographic achievements, etc. All means are good for him to attain knowledge and dreams... These different tangents of the work of Vazan could make us believe that he is on the lookout for a style which he has not yet found and that his paths of exploration with contradictory appearance, which go from the picture painted on an easel to a form of conceptual art, present no personal identity. This is not the case. His progress has no nonsense about it but possesses, on the contrary, certain unifying principles which we shall try to outline.

Three years at the College of Art of Ontario, one year in Paris where he attends the École des Beaux-Arts without much conviction, to prefer later to hitch-hike through Europe, his return to Montreal in 1964 where he rediscovers in a hospital bed, after ten years of abstention, the joy and the need of creating. A few water-colours, some drawings, will lead him in 1963 toward those oil paintings furrowed by threads of iron like fields of chains which already unconsciously reveal certain structures organization which remind us of bird’s eye views. In 1964, small black structured signs on a white background suggest, this time, mock-ups of urban planning as if it were a matter of real

vastness. He is without question the Canadian artist most closely related to the primitive arts of the country. Like his father-in-law, Marius Barbeau, the well-known Canadian anthropologist and historian, the clayes of the Haida of British Columbia like the totems of other Indian tribes of Western Canada fascinated him early in his career. Although their influence was less felt, some of the several birds in flight executed by Art Price over the years show clearly that stages spent in the north had a certain effect on him. Whatever their size, his sculptures always give the impression that they were conceived on a very large scale. This probably explains the reflection of the vastness of the land which he tries and very often successfully conveys. He could better be described as an essential sculptor of the Canadian wilderness perhaps as Tom Thompson was in his paintings. Neither of them could be properly described as urban artists. Although generally figurative and only a step away from realism, his work conveys, and often with force, thoughts, impressions, feelings and moods very distant from the subject or the form used to achieve this. The subject is strictly an expedient, nothing else. He is somewhat of a perfectionist who leaves nothing to chance. The end product offers little room if any to add or subtract anything.

That road Art Price took from the beginning was a hard one. Painter, illustrator, film director, stage decorator, he came to sculpture gradually. The beginning may seem to some like a form of hesitation. I do not think it was. Circumspection would be a more appropriate word. Looking back at what he has done, and what he has not done, it becomes obvious and clear that Art Price knew what he was doing, what he wanted to do and which path he would follow to do it. From this retiring man, one could not expect sudden impulses or surprising flamboyant gestures. Every approach is rational, properly analysed and never accidental. Spontaneity resides in the conceptual approach but not in the execution which bears clearly the stamp of an artist in absolute command of his material and never the other way around. The great simplification seen in recent works reveals without the shadow of a doubt that even the most radical departure to the bare elements or to the very essence of the subject is not without risks, but with Art Price, the idea or the spirit remains pre-eminent. The hours of the day which are always too short, the work of the past and his personal achievements, etc. All means are no more boundaries, no more preconceived ideology; only a great forward-looking force which takes root in the very mysteries of creation and of man. Art is chaos, and its expansive consciousness makes of it without ceasing, during the course of its historic evolution, the anarchy of chaos. When I look on my work table at the photographs of the many facets of the work of Bill Vazan, it appears evident to me that this artist continually explores the universe. There are postcards which he has sent me, the book of the Ligne mondiale, photos of works of exterior and interior, summaries of videographic achievements, etc. All means are good for him to attain knowledge and dreams... These different tangents of the work of Vazan could make us believe that he is on the lookout for a style which he has not yet found and that his paths of exploration with contradictory appearance, which go from the picture painted on an easel to a form of conceptual art, present no personal identity. This is not the case. His progress has no nonsense about it but possesses, on the contrary, certain unifying principles which we shall try to outline.

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town-planning. Curiously, the following year (without his forgetting his previous research, as we shall see later), Bill Vazan proceeds to hardedge. Large pictures which resemble interiors of the man-made medium. From these pictures, the idea of another possibility of exploration was born by chance, as often occurs in a work of art. While playing with one of his daughters in the sand of Wells Beach, in Maine, he saw her write her name on the beach with a stick. At this moment, in the mind of Vazan, there was born the idea of art, which was, incidentally, beginning in the United States. To grasp the idea of external space had always been the essence of his development. On this same beach, he lay down and had himself covered with sand. Upon getting up and seeing the imprint of his body on the beach, he thought: “Why would this not be art?”

Many exterior works in which Vazan took up again the principles of his geometric pictures while dividing expanses of land into zones were created. The only evidence of these works (aside from the work itself and photography) he fashioned on a beach of the East coast a kind of sculpture in sand which gave the impression of being an immense pitfall. The tide destroyed the work little by little, as the different slides of the artist show. He created in the forest lines of polychrome which he called his light lines, where the sun in refraction played gently with this material. At Beaconsfield, he activated space and seeing the imprint of his body on the beach, he thought: “Why would this not be art?”

The history of the world then becomes a perpetual re-creation. The notion of a fleeting quality includes work and man, with a certain wistful achievement. It is there that what I called the linguistic preoccupations of Vazan enter into play, signifying, whether it be the lines or the pictures or the works of the outdoors, and are not always integrated in a map-making fashion in the normal signifying of geographical maps and they are preserved in the personal semantics of the artist.

The work of Vazan, with or according to geographical maps, stems directly from this play between nature and culture. The map, in itself another kind of language, another sign, a little like Chinese writing. This archetype of human knowledge which is the map is not necessarily codified with Vazan. Space, atmosphere, light, distance, time are often merged in an empirical way in his achievements. It is there that what I called the linguistic preoccupations of Vazan enter into play, signifying, whether it be the lines or the pictures or the works of the outdoors, and are not always integrated in a map-making fashion in the normal signifying of geographical maps and they are preserved in the personal semiotics of the artist.

The mystery of the lines of Vazan remains, even if we have tried to distinguish in it some rational conclusions. It resembles those very ancient lines of Nazca in Peru, which seemed to mean nothing when seen from the ground, but which revealed meanings visible only from above, it is toward these heights that the works of Bill Vazan unceasingly lead us. They are a part of this new sensitivity to the playful which is awakening in contemporary man and which is making a wonderful chaos of art.