When Marshall McLuhan succeeded in erasing the imaginary line which many thought existed between the arts and the mass media, he achieved the feat by using the insights of artists and poets who had created the contemporary aesthetic revolution. Ranging through McLuhan's works the reader discovers references to Dadaism and Surrealism, the Bauhaus, Klee, Kandinsky, Picasso and Le Corbusier — to select only a few of the many names and movements which suggest to McLuhan probes into how modern man can cope with his universe. These artists and their insights are rooted in representatives of other arts, especially writers and critics, like Mallarmé, Velázquez, Joyce, Eliot, Pound, and Beckett. McLuhan's chief inspiration, symbolism, leads to his artistic tastes and to his conviction that the new arts would encompass the new technology, as Mallarmé had attempted to encompass the effect of the mass-produced newspaper and its headlines. His whole commitment to the artist is enhanced, however, in a historical knowledge and awareness of the arts' visual, verbal and dramatic. Renaissance iconography, Romantic landscape and a multitude of other historical styles. His metaphors come from the arts, particularly his most effective ones, such as his peculiar use of mosaic for the effects of communication. For McLuhan, art becomes the portable thought on the evolution of western awareness, and, on the other hand, exerts a predominant influence on many contemporary artists. In this respect, he particularly interests Vie des Arts. Since the authoritative interview he granted a few months ago to Jean Paré for the magazine Forces, as well as the one that appeared in L'Express last year, we have come to ask ourselves certain questions about the thought of McLuhan concerning art, nature and freedom, which our contributors have tried to answer.

McLuhan's most outstanding contribution to the examination of western thought has been to make him aware of the blind alley in which it is at present. The whole problem of formal logic is questioned in a world of sound.

Electrical time is no longer the hour of the analysis of elementary processes, of deductive reasoning. It is that of the simultaneous, therefore of reflection on the sequence and the ensemble of allied problems. The upheaval in the media throws into confusion the idea of environment, the sense of perception, the ability of assimilation and the conception of the arts in general, painting, sculpture, architecture, cinema, which are becoming old forms of art in relation to the new ones, radio, television, video. Are the old forms of art, which seem no longer productive of the avant-garde, sentenced to disappear? Or are they now undergoing still badly defined transformations? Doubtless it is necessary to know what passion will animate the dynamism of the successive changes that the artist foresees and which he tries to convey to us. The art of McLuhan examining Art: "A musical house for our clear harmony", a step toward a new awareness.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
Armory Show of EAT (Experiments in Art and Technology) to those who encouraged artists to participate in experimental broadcasting at WGBH in Boston for the National Educational Television Network.

Though it might seem that McLuhan, by this means, creates a situation in which the media and the world of everyday objects subsume art, his actual intent is the opposite, for he sees art as providing the only way of controlling the process of change represented by the phenomena of everyday life. He sees the artist as providing precisely the same kind of critical perspective on the world that the launching of a satellite will do. The satellite, like McLuhan asserts, turns the world into a Globe Theatre, a global art museum with its junk reconverted into new objects of perception. This is because, imaginatively, man can now think of viewing his environment from the outside and consequently the satellite is a revolution in consciousness. The artist, like the satellite, turns the environment into works of art which create a process that eliminates previously unnoticed aspects of the world. For his prime example of this process McLuhan selects a writer, though the writer, James Joyce, has a close visual analogy as it turns out in the case of McLuhan and Joyce refer, Klee’s “thinking eye”, investigation of the way to encompass change, growth and movement in the world of forms, becomes one of the metaphors for McLuhan’s ratio of the senses, for a thinking eye playing with form can realize the ideality of the senses of a single medium. As the language of James Joyce, Joyce and Klee, using puns, verbal or visual, discover ways of breaking down the previously integrated visions of their society, forcing men to focus on the world with new eyes and creating a situation in which, as McLuhan insisted, it is not so much the new art which has been raised to the level of consciousness where it echoes in our world and therefore to the point when change and growth are at least potentially possible.

Wôlfelin called The Medium is the Rear View Mirror, analyst himself, though he could rightly argue so much in the arts that its very effectiveness controlling the process of change represented by the media or everyday objects of one generation may become the art work in the next. But art is also most significantly the consciousness of the environment, that perceptual act which releases the unconscious potential from the verbal, aural and visual clichés of everyday life. As such it is essential to the total human person and is perhaps the fundamental perceptual act required to save our ecology, which McLuhan describes as “a place where the plot has been hatched, that of an artist.” 

What then is the difference between art and other objects and other events or presentations? In one way it does not matter, for the media or everyday objects of one generation may become the art work in the next. But art is also most significantly the consciousness of the environment.

Derrick KERCKHOVE VARENT

**McLUHAN AND ART**

To read the work of McLuhan is to seek the sentence or the word which, at some place in the text, becomes a metaphor for the Vanishing Point as metaphor becomes the way to see an entire history. Though the Vanishing Point, McLuhan’s book co-authored with the Canadian painter Harley Parker, becomes a way, like Alice’s Through the Looking Glass, to move behind the mirror of the world into abstraction but also into a world where a new realism, that of the Pop artist, that of the minimal artist, that of the happening, play their role as well.

What then is the difference between art and other objects and other events or presentations? In one way it does not matter, for the media or everyday objects of one generation may become the art work in the next. But art is also most significantly the consciousness of the environment, that perceptual act which releases the unconscious potential from the verbal, aural and visual clichés of everyday life. As such it is essential to the total human person and is perhaps the fundamental perceptual act required to save our ecology, which McLuhan describes as “a place where the plot has been hatched, that of an artist.”

Let us recall a technique of the Surrealists which consisted of juxtaposing two ordinarily incompatible terms in order to cause a spark of understanding to arise between them. That is a mini-happening. One can get fire by rubbing two sticks of wood together. The same kind of ideas that Maurice Blanchot points out, by way of foreword to L’Espace littéraire that: “A book, even fragmentary, has a centre that attracts it; a centre not fixed, but which moves through the pressure on the coexistence of the real and its image of itself. A fixed centre as well, which moves, if it is genuine, by remaining the same and by always becoming more central, more concealed, more uncertain, more imperative.” As it is not literary space but acoustical space that especially interests McLuhan, his intuition expresses itself as “Acoustical space is a sphere with its centre everywhere and its circumference nowhere” (Du cliché à l’archétype). Acoustical space is one of the most common metaphors in McLuhan’s work. It is the interval of the resonance and the total simultaneousness of all human experience. Art is one of its keys.

Here is the report of a few minutes of conversation on this article (when it had not yet been edited) with the interested party: Mcl. — Art is the school of perception. Advertising tries to adjust us to its world. There we become servo-mechanisms. All prealphabetic societies are made up of robots. Wyndham Lewis said that the best definition of a robot is the person who is perfectly adapted to his environment. Art seeks to dislocate man.

Contradictions.” (Fragment 257-684)
KV. — What are the relationships between man and nature? 

McL. — In Man's Presumptuous Brain, Simeons states that our biological heritage, which allows us to adapt ourselves to our environment, has ceased to evolve for more than half a million years. Before the appearance of the least degree of technology. The brain of man has not changed since then. With the invasion of all the technologies, the only way of becoming acclimatized comes from art. Art takes up the task of evolution that nature has abandoned.

KV. — Who's? McL.

McL. — The artist reprograms the senses to render us able to survive in the technological environment. Naturally, to survive as human beings. Because man adapted to technologies is a robot-zombie who sleeps soundly.

KV. — And what about nature? McL.

There isn't any, any more. Since October 17, 1957.

KV. — Ah!

McL. — The launching of the first sputnik. The Russians have transformed the planet into a form of art. As a form of art, the planet puts us back into the situation of the most primitive man, that is, in prearchitectural states. The role of art changes radically under these conditions. It becomes crucial. Now that we have passed from the world of the eye to that of the ear, because the environment of simultaneous information is structurally acoustical, history, which belongs to the world of the eye, would be irreparably lost. Essentially, art has dissolved wholly in the noise of the eternal present of Siegfried Giedion, the author of Space, Time and Architecture. Art will have to pull us out of there.

This is the end of the conversation on this subject. After that, we went on to that of art, as requested, and we returned to the robot.

By these few remarks, McLuhan invited me to draw some important conclusions from my own experience. Why is the role of art more crucial than ever? A useful answer to this question demands a rapid return into the midst of the men who would be irreparably lost if we were to pass from the world of the eye to that of the ear, and such as it still appears in its evolving continuity to those from whom everything is not now.

Between the Renaissance and the first thrusts of Symbolism which, toward the middle of the nineteenth century rediscovered the origins of the man who had been written off by the eighteenth, echoed the more and more rapid progress of electricity, linearity imposed its law on man and on art. The rationalist current, as defined by Descartes and fostered by Newton's work, isolated man from the community according to a process which was accelerated during the eighteenth and nine-teenth centuries. It to us, and such as it still appears in its evolving continuity to those from whom everything is not now.

As very well seen by Jean Starobinski in his wonderful book on the art of the eighteenth century, it was during this era that freedom was invented. Autonomy, of which we speak all the time, is of a linear kind, whether it be pictorial representation (where the reproduction is distinguished by concern for accuracy of detail), or dramatic, or narrative (it is in the novel that this form blooms best), this mobility is applied to the contents of the work, but not to the work itself. This is the human prison presented there as free and mobile within a fixed frame. Even in the pictures where perspective prevails, this general law is strictly observed: the person, on whatever plane he may be, stands out on the background. Set in a pose or a kinetic expression, he is, in itself, the human prison only in order to follow this movement in the awareness of the viewer. The whole definition he receives from the hand of the painter is precisely accentuated only to free it always more from the inertia of the context. This is true for sculpture as well: the famous blow of the hammer that they say Michaelangelo gave on the head of his just-finished Moses is explained exactly by this sudden autonomy acquired by human representation: "Well, but what is inside?"

The role of art would be to dispel the illusion of the context or the environment, in the case of sculpture, does not have this mobility: perspective fixes it in a set position — it would mean being able to move the picture or the cathedral, but that would change nothing in the tridimensional fixity of the cathedral or painting. In technology, too, we are fixed and the person mobile. In a universe of indifferent forms, linked among themselves according to our choice and in accordance with the application of our individualized observation, we were, we are as free as the characters of our own novels.

We began to lose this freedom only when the world, with the Romanticists and especially the Symbolists, became an ensemble of signs, a time when it was the turn of nature to resist us this hope: "In a situation of an end, can we have anything left?"

"Nature is a temple where living pillars sometimes send out confused utterances: Man passes there through forests of symbols that observe him with intimate glances..."

(Quoted from Jean Starobinski, The Elegant Necessity)

As long as nature's dialogue with us is confused to impressionistic mumbles, as long as Chateaubriand's René is pursued only by dead leaves, we are still free. That is not to misuse an excessively ambiguous term, we would risk being separated from one another and from the environment, by a power of personal decision which is the foundation and the guarantee of our private identity. However, when the whole environment changes into a network of information, it seize us and, while still showing us always more haughtily roads which we would rather avoid, it makes us face new situations, not always understandable, but always there. Because we are not tied to the mast of our spatial ship, we cannot resist: we must dive into the sea of ravenous signs — we must drown there.

As a result, we are no longer free to resist in us. Or almost not: we can gain time by blocking our ears: we can stuff ourselves with tranquilizers to stop this opening of all our pores until they do not work any more or until they kill us by their very excess, in order to arrest this terrible and inexplicable advance of the monster that is eating our stomach. Our real chance to resist is that the mass of information remains shapeless, that its volume guarantees us against a single path; that it is incoherent — in which case, all the signs find the value of simple forms, supply, impeccable, obedient to our fantasies of assimilation. Our chance to balance the scale against the weight of the message is the possibility of exchanging information, of meaning, of making meaning, of designing, of playing with in the making of meaning. The more we are in contact with this meaning, the less we are alone, the more we live in the world, the more we create a reality, a common reality, the more we can invent a language that can give us a common reality.

The achievement of the individual went through a profound identity crisis which was recorded by tragedy in England and France. Art, in its different forms, replayed all the stages of this transformation for man. The categories defined themselves, and art, on the one hand, began with nature, on the other, a dialogue with an individual, and in the conquest of the latter by technology. As long as one environment is not limited by another it remains the ultimate source of the fundamental models of the human organization: but as soon as it is placed in a setting, it is the new environment that takes over and imposes its language, and everything is forever changed.

This is what happened to Einstein and his special theory of relativity: the light moves only in order to follow this movement in the awareness of the viewer. The whole definition he receives from the hand of the painter is precisely accentuated only to free it always more from the inertia of the context.
tell you this. Must one howl with the hordes because it is right, but lose one’s own awareness and the taste for museums, or else must one fight against it, because I am right, and wait in fear to be eliminated by the mob? Do we have a choice? In the western world, opinions in favour of abortion on request signify from country to country what the new novel has been teaching us for last twenty years: that the individual human person is dead, absent. Is art concerned with this basic problem? Art takes no moral position, even when it is busy only with making money. It is possible, however, that art should again become religious, that from the source of instructive pleasure it was in the eighteenth century, it should become an instrument of total survival.

Nonetheless, when art is so narrowly integrated into the very conditions of our daily reality, when our attention moves away from the object to concentrate on the sign, so to speak, instead of inviting it, art strips us of all that makes us our inner and personal self. Art turns against its admirers and sends them to worship elsewhere. We shall go back to the domes and nameless cathedrals. And we shall make niches for Saint Voltaire, asking ourselves with a great deal of confused amazement who was this demigod who spoke to us of freedom.

Yes, doubtless, the rôle of art is crucial today, were it only to send us on the trail of the new liberty.

Mr. R. H. Hubbard, curator at the National Gallery of Canada, chose to present the painting of the nineteenth century, in preference to contemporary art3. This choice, which was necessary, considering the size of the collection, promotes our understanding of old Quebec painting and the recent excellent history of art in French Canada.

Maurice Corbeil tells, in an interview printed in the first part of the catalogue, how his collection was born1. Two facts came out of his remarks: the spirit in which the collection was developed and the outside help necessary to the work of Maurice Parizeau to meet artists, such as Pellon (back from Europe in 1940) and Borduas (before the 1942 exhibition). Maurice and Andrée Corbeil also made acquaintance of other collectors active at this time. One can believe that the Corbeils were pioneers in the collecting of traditional art. If they were among the first to buy works of the nineteenth century, their initiative was to be found in a century-old movement, at a time when art collectors and members of the clergy were encouraging Canadian artists with their orders. Historical societies and newspapers were publishing articles on the works of the past. These works were praised by our traditional art. Men like Louis Fréchette, Marius Barbeau, Ramsey Traquair, Louis Carrier, Jean Chauvin, Gérard Morisset, Father Alain-Marie Couturier, to name only a few, spoke of the wonders of our art, produced under the French regime.

The rare works of this period led the Corbeils to settle their choice rather than on the painting of the nineteenth century: they understood that it was the expression of the society of Lower Canada and that it was important to know and to interpret our history. In 19534, therefore, they joined the movement of collectors, and the collection was formed and brought together, for the first time, all the artists missing from their collections5.

The Corbeils began by acquiring works of their contemporaries and this search continued at the same time as the acquisition of old art. They took advantage of the opportunities to buy works directly from the artists, without going through galleries, benefitting in this way in a better choice. They participated actively in the artistic movement of the forties and fifties, while encouraging members of the Society of Contemporary Art, artists whom they considered promising. This operation of their collection would be necessary to show us the art of Bonin, Gauvreau, Gadbois, Parizeau, Lyman, Jori Smith, Riopelle and others.

Maurice Corbeil recalls often, during the course of the interview, the outside help he obtained in the establishment of his collection. We speak of whose eclecticism is one of its chief qualities. It seems that the most important factor to have influenced the formation of the Corbell collection was the will to respect a historical knowledge of our art. The taste of the collector is no longer at stake, the choice of the works takes note of a chronology representing the greatest number of famous artists from 1800 to 1960. Among all the artists active during this period, history has already made a choice, the same one as the collector, moreover: it has preferred Joseph Légaré to Yves Tasse, Odé- Labrecque to Jules-Bernardin Rioux. This collection therefore sets the conception of the history of Quebec art: a linear evolution which goes from naive painters to our contemporaries and this search continued.

The portraits in the exhibition12 allow us to establish a first contact with a knowledge of ourselves. How do we wish to be seen? First, by the diagrammatic and almost anonymous quality of the naive painters, then by the objective description of the faces, as with Plamondon and Havel, who devote themselves to subjects the image which they make of themselves: made-up, adorned with jewels and decorations, with braid or stocks; finally, through psychological observation of the person of the twentieth century, where color and brush are the subject, in the service of an atmosphere, and they make themselves invisible, the subject remains fixed in his pose, dependent on his attributes, his formal garb.

The portrait Filmette assise (No. 3), dated 1792, is done in a sure technique. The child is represented seated in the corner of a room. Clad in a dress decorated with embroidery, he has a hat trimmed with fur and ribbon, ornamented with two bracelets, she holds a pot of flowers in one hand and a bunch of roses in the other. Her dog is sitting on its hind legs in order to be seen too in the portrait. The scene, inscribed on a medallion, is held by a chair, and the inscription is written on the dress. At the left of the room where the child is seated, there is a frame set with a rococo design. This little picture presents a scene composed of trees, a stele bearing the initials L.D., a shepherd’s crook and two doves. The monogram L.D., according to the author of the catalogue, means the painter of the picture; in my opinion, it designates rather the name of the child or the intertwined initials of the loving couple, the parents, represented also by the birds giving each other a little peck. Nor is it here a matter of a funereal portrait in which the dead child is represented with a wreath and the weeping cupids6. On the contrary, a scene of happiness is involved: the birds are kissing each other, the stele is whole.
The romantic portrait of Toussaint Decarie (No. 14), if it was produced about 1795, shows a remarkable knowledge of the European style, revolutionary and romantic, and of the ideology that it conveyed. We had always believed that this ideology had shown itself much later here. The boy wears a very high coat and a wig. He is depicted by a black stock. Drawn in an oval, the youth looks at the spectator. The softness of the green tones harmonizes with the mellowness of the touch.

The person of the energetic Mme Ruelan (No. 25) fascinates me. Plamandon, to whom the work is attributed, portrays her long hands and elevates the subject in a pose which brings out her round and sensual face where all the members are exaggerated.

Leduc, in the portrait in profile of Guy Delahaye (No. 45) links symbolic elements to his divisionist manner. A man looks at his face where all the members are exaggerated. Guillaume Lahaise had published Les Phases in 1910, of which a part was dedicated to Leduc. In 1911, Leduc created twenty-six vignettes to illustrate the volume of poems Mignonnes, alons voir si la raste... est sans épines. We do not penetrate the work in the least. Behind him stands a frieze showing Latin legends — symbol of poetry, which are joined to a wheel with three spokes, symbol of the crossroads where Guillaume Lahaise finds himself. The latter is hating at this time between a career in poetry and one in psychiatry.

The religious subject of the Fémme à l'enfant (No. 81). This theme of mother and daughter has been familiar in Quebec since the Education of the Virgin. The mother holds a little girl standing on her lap. Clothing, hat, furniture: all is a pretext to Dallaire for a geometrization of forms and a multiplication of color.

Ozias Leduc's small sketch of religious decoration reveals the paucity of interest that private collectors have accorded this aspect of our painting, and which was one of the most practised forms of art until 1940. We no longer recognize ourselves in this painting which was done some years ago. Its place will reappear when we have understood the work is attributed to a man whose style is long association. Guillaume Lahaise had published Les Phases in 1910, of which a part was dedicated to Leduc. In 1911, Leduc created twenty-six vignettes to illustrate the volume of poems Mignonnes, alons voir si la raste... est sans épines. We do not penetrate the work in the least. Behind him stands a frieze showing Latin legends — symbol of poetry, which are joined to a wheel with three spokes, symbol of the crossroads where Guillaume Lahaise finds himself. The latter is hating at this time between a career in poetry and one in psychiatry.

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The catalogue of the exhibition seems to have been made up in a hurry: one cannot possibly be able to develop freely within the confines of a form. A generous form, with sharp edges, asserts a great concern for formal clarity. At any rate, the work is attributed to a man whose style is long association. Guillaume Lahaise had published Les Phases in 1910, of which a part was dedicated to Leduc. In 1911, Leduc created twenty-six vignettes to illustrate the volume of poems Mignonnes, alons voir si la raste... est sans épines. We do not penetrate the work in the least. Behind him stands a frieze showing Latin legends — symbol of poetry, which are joined to a wheel with three spokes, symbol of the crossroads where Guillaume Lahaise finds himself. The latter is hating at this time between a career in poetry and one in psychiatry.

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Think of Molinari, Tousignant, Hurtubise. But well-developed industrial society, technologically precise formal arrangements, finished in the whole importance in the space.

From there, right to the coloured surface unfolding truly in tridimensional space, there is only one stage, which Saxe crosses very quickly (fig. 4).

From 1966, his work is expressed in very precise formal arrangements, finished by the sense of objects of art corresponding to a well-developed industrial society, technologically advanced. His language builds up, becomes richer. If one wanted to speed up the road covered, as in the movies, one would arrive at this: an orthogonal surface bursting forth on one, two, four sides and finally arrive at this: an orthogonal surface bursting forth on one, two, four sides and finally, in such a way that there remains of the first element, canvas, only fragments which are linked in a space of three real dimensions. The surfaces have gone down from the wall to stop at the ground, while keeping a minimum contact with the wall out of which they emerge. In a different way at first, then more definite, Saxe therefore progressed from painting to sculpture, after having been involved in the process of the destruction of the canvas, through formal necessity, while keeping for a fairly long time the attraction of the brilliant colour of paint.

Other works follow, composed of tridimensional modules (hexagons folded in a V) which revolve on one of their sides offering many possibilities of the occupation of space (fig. 6). Three factors consequently have an effect upon the final spatial disposition of the production: the position of one module in relation to another (identical or reversed), the position of the hinge between two modules (on the side or on the end) and, especially, the swivelling of each of the modules. The first two factors arise from the decision of the artist, the third from the involvement of the spectator. These three factors determine the entirety composed of simple modules. The multiform, almost inexhaustible, paradoxically presents no gratuitousness on account of the coherence of the basic structure. These open structures, placed on the ground, of a rather impressive size, comprising human proportions, are established in abstract terms like parallels with gestures or movements. The fact that they invite manipulation is in keeping with the way they are displayed in suppleness and severity.

The path of Saxe went from simple to complex through the successive evolution of the module at first as fixed surface (fig. 5), then surface to supply an open mobile volume (fig. 6). Then came closed modules, mobiles within mobiles and variable inside themselves (fig. 7). Flexibility within flexibility.

In a contrary manner, from 1970 the module was simplified by the return to the line: a pole of bent metal whose ends turned back on themselves form loops which allow all the modules to be threaded one inside the other in the manner of a piece of knitting (fig. 8). The pliability then achieved by Saxe in his work was an almost total freedom of movement in the model at the interior of the ensemble. Paraadoxically, the creations formed of tridimensional modules have a variable linear character, at the same time as the works composed of linear modules become surfaces with contrasts of space which if not pulled on one of the modules. The whole can change its form to a point such that it is nothing but chaos (fig. 8).

From Process to Work

By personally destroying and disputing his work, he arrived at a limit point, a place from which he initiated a turning of importance which led him to the productions presented at the Museum of Contemporary Art. A turning which marked at the same time a prolonging of what had gone before but also a very clear change in attitude in relationship to the public which was not the same as before. For several years, there prevailed for him until that time: Saxe wrote in Ateliers*: "The development in my latest works is the result of reacting contrary to an earlier series of works", and as well: "I now wanted a three-point system as a guide to continue my development of a visual clarity, in a new non-structural linked system."

By choosing common materials, ropes, pipes, wood, stones, rubber, manufactured objects such as a stepladder, a tripod, by opting for the absence of colour and by preserving the essential commonplace quality of his objects and materials, Saxe places himself outside of critical systems. By chance that he exhibits in a museum and not in a gallery. Through this set purpose toward a style reduced to the essentials, toward a spirit of poverty, Saxe changes the under-stood but always implicit covenant that he had established with his public. The attraction of colour has disappeared like that of the game inviting to participation. Thus the work of Saxe demands much more of the public. The uncompromising manner in which he uses his materials and his objects creates clearly to the viewer that there no longer exists an aesthetic object in the traditional sense, an object previously disputed by lattices, as we have seen.

The observer is therefore involved in a new reading for which Saxe gives a few clues in Ateliers: "The number of materials, slight and confined principles and procedures in each unit is critical to the total sculpture as a visual structure."

Indeed, in an ensemble like Three-Point Landing (fig. 9) the fundamental theme is the three-point structure present in the four elements of the whole. A structure which is rigid and simple in the manufactured tripod, in a more elaborate way in the step-ladder whose first balance Saxe destroys and the finality of the object by adding to it a bag which turns it into a structure with three points of support, in the flat suspended piece of wood and of knotted rope and, finally, in an element highlighting a tetrahedron formed of braids of metal and ropes.

The reading takes place arising from contrasts between the materials: rigidity of wood and softness of rope, flexibility of rope and rigidity of wood. Some contrasts between the different capacities of the materials to combine in a structure: solid materials such as wood and iron, inertia of rope. Contrasts between the plane surface of the large triangle and the volume of the other objects. Contrasts again at the interior of the triangle between the plane surface of the rigid solid and the flexible materials between raw material, material treated in the manner of a craftsman in the rope knotted by Saxe and material treated industrially.

The viewer recreates the continuous from the discontinuous set up by Saxe. He invents his own reading but crosses the usual problems with an effect of complexity. In that way, the spectator is one with the experience of the creator and walks in his footsteps. What is the meaning of this work if it is not to be a matter of experience? Unfit for any plot of a story, it says nothing more than what is there. Its subject is Saxe's work and the problems it raises. Is his work no more complex. In that way, the spectator is one with the experience of the creator and walks in his footsteps. What is the meaning of this work if it is not to be a matter of experience? Unfit for any plot of a story, it says nothing more than what is there. Its subject is Saxe's work and the problems it raises. Is his work no more complex. In that way, the spectator is one with the experience of the creator and walks in his footsteps. What is the meaning of this work if it is not to be a matter of experience? Unfit for any plot of a story, it says nothing more than what is there. Its subject is Saxe's work and the problems it raises. Is his work no more complex. In that way, the spectator is one with the experience of the creator and walks in his footsteps. What is the meaning of this work if it is not to be a matter of experience? Unfit for any plot of a story, it says nothing more than what is there. Its subject is Saxe's work and the problems it raises. Is his work no more complex. In that way, the spectator is one with the experience of the creator and walks in his footsteps. What is the meaning of this work if it is not to be a matter of experience? Unfit for any plot of a story, it says nothing more than what is there. Its subject is Saxe's work and the problems it raises. Is his work no more complex.
THE RICH ARCHITECTONICS OF BINNING

By Doreen E. Walker

Even a casual glance at the 56 works on view at the recent B.C. Binning exhibition, held at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, was sufficient to convince the viewer that there are strong references to the B.C. coastal environment in the majority of Binning's art. In the early drawings and paintings the west coast region provided the artist — somewhat consistently with forms and themes: and in the non-objective works as well, a persistency in use of earlier forms and colours was not infrequently detected.

B.C. Binning has continually stressed his basic commitment as an artist to formalist principles:

"I am more interested, really, in the idea of form than of content. Though they ultimately come together, my starting point has always been the form, the colour, the textures, the relationships, the idea of the flat canvas, the rectangle in which I work, and so on..."

And he has insisted, too, that for an artist with formalist leanings the subject is relatively unimportant: "I think it is just something to hang his hat on." However, the artist has acknowledged freely also, that the B.C. coastal world has provided him with a very strong peg. Since 1913, with the exception of limited periods of foreign study and travel, the artist's home has been in the vicinity of Vancouver, and throughout his lengthy career he has derived a rich vocabulary of forms from the coastal area which he loves so deeply.

B.C. Binning attended the Vancouver School of Art, and in 1934 — two years following graduation — was appointed Instructor of Drawing at the School, in 1938-39, seeking a broader experience and additional training, Binning went to England for further study. ("The first original modern paintings I saw were in London.") While abroad Binning worked under such eminent artists as Amédée Ozéfanti and Henry Moore, and this was also to the American continent. He remained in New York for a period, studying at the Art Students' League under Morris Kantor.

Binning's long and fruitful association with UBC commenced in the fall of 1949 when he became a member of the faculty of the School of Fine Arts. On this campus, his contribution to the cultural life on the UBC campus is inestimable. Several tangible accomplishments might be cited: founding of the Department of Fine Arts, 1955 (and Head from 1955-58); development of the Fine Arts Gallery; initiation of the Student Union collection of Canadian art (formerly known as the Brock Hall collection); organization and direction of the Festival of Contemporary Arts; and planning (with the late Fred Lasserre) of the Norman MacKenzie Centre for the Arts at UBC. Binning has stated that his basic motivation in all his endeavours was to "a little richer texture than before".

Binning's role as teacher has been an exceedingly influential one. Ron Thom, FRAIC, one of several Binning students who has achieved recognition at a national level, has written the following tribute:

"He taught me to see. He taught me to think. He was an irreplaceable teacher whose lessons have lasted."

The Binning influence has, thus, over the years, spread well beyond the confines of UBC and Vancouver. His contribution as an artist and architect in Canada was recognized in 1962 when he became the recipient of the Allied Arts Award presented by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. In 1966 the artist was Canadian Representative of UNESCO Conference, Tokyo. Further recognition included the Inaugural Award of the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, 1964-67; and Advisory Panel for the Arts, Canada Council, 1956-67. In 1971 Binning's extensive contribution to the cultural life of Canada was acknowledged when he was designated Officer of the Order of Canada.

It was, however, in the rôle of painter-draughtsman that Binning first received national acclaim, and examples of this aspect of his career were handsomely displayed at the recent exhibition. Recent reflections of the artist were cited rather fully below. However, the sources and intentions concerning these works. His reactions (and reminiscences) with regard to the pen and ink drawings of the forties (which for many were the highlight of the show), are perhaps of particular interest: one reaction concerns a recent realization of a strong formative influence for his early style of drawing:

"At one time I was terribly interested in child art. (In 1941-42 I started those Saturday morning classes for children at the Vancouver Art Gallery,) I believe that the teachings of the drawings to children provided me with a major source of influence for my drawings. I used to watch them intensely at the way they went about things: I admired the straightforward motivation that they had in doing any statement in visual terms. Their kind of directness was infectious...

The artist was struck, too, on viewing his works, at the documentary value of the drawings.

"It wasn't until this last retrospective exhibition of mine, when I looked at the early drawings with fresh eyes, that I realized that I had made some kind of historical record... These places were reproduced with a fair amount of accuracy, and you simply could not find them if you went out to look for them now. The subjects of many of these drawings are non-existant no more..."

"AFTERNOON BOAT, BOWEN ISLAND WHARF, 1945, as an event does not exist any longer. The old Union Steamships which used to ply our coastal waters visited so many on the little ports within about a hundred miles of Vancouver: Bowen Island was one of the near-assurance points, and certainly one of the most popular. It was a familiar sight to see the Bowen Island boat come in and the passengers (mainly summer dwellers and campers) disembark with their bits and pieces of provisions and freight. The happy time and informality of atmosphere which existed on the pier was something everyone took for granted. Now, of course, you do not see it any more: so this drawing is one which has become a kind of documentary record."

"VIEW OF FISHERMAN'S COVE, 1944, I think in some ways reflects more than any of this, a haphazard, rather jerry-built quality that existed all up and down the coast... the makeshift floats, the hodge podge of boats, the not always sandy beach, and the not too tidy foreshore. These things were all characteristic of the scene at that time; but the view no longer exists as such: it is tidied up! Great huge boat parks that they call marinas jam many of our coves."

"ME TOO 1, 1945, was the name of a shrimp boat that used to come into Fisher man's Cove periodically, with a hold filled with shrimp that had been scraped from the ocean floor. The boat fascinated me. I drew it many times, and which I built partly by myself. The occasion for this drawing was one of the many days (even in our summers) when nothing else. I set out to make it as accurate as possible from the point of view of its gear and its detail (including the elaborate fishing net and the stove on deck for cooking the shrimp). I don't think you will find any of these details now — just maybe the odd one still..."

"SELF PORTRAIT IN SHIP'S CABIN, 1945, is a very sentimental drawing for me. It shows the interior of Skookumchuck, the little 20 foot sailing sloop which I had in those days — and which I built partly by myself. It was a kind of moveable studio. My wife and I would spend a good part of the summer puddling around the coves, bays and little snags that you find around the coast. Frequently at meal time we would drop anchor and watch life in a little bay... there was always something happening: a small boy fishing; a man furling his sails: sometimes one rowing from one side of the bay to the other; and there were a lot of curious craft around, too... The occasion for this drawing was one of the many days (even in our summers) when it rained, and when there is certainly not much to do on a 20 foot boat. I wanted to draw the interior of the cabin with its equipment and gear. As I began to draw, my reflection in my shaving mirror caught my attention. And I decided to include that. It thus became a self-portrait — perhaps..."
as much of my feet as my face! I have a very personal attachment to this drawing, because it recalls for me the boat on which I enjoyed myself so much... and loved so much.

Binning has made statements, too, on the works which followed the early drawings: "In 1948 when I came to painting in oils, the same kind of concern occurred: the sea and the ships that sail on it. I moved, however, from the particular to the general, and there was no longer any concern for any form of documentary accuracy. In the drawings I was always set off by some particular incident or thing, or collection of things. (In the paintings I might come, on occasion, from a particular experience, but the result was always a generalized statement.)"

"In painting I was aware that if a certain collection of forms were used together, one could get a certain reaction. I once said that the business of serious joy should be one of certain joy and fun—perhaps even wit—but this seems to vacillate every now and then between the two. Of course, joy and fun, which I call a classic sense. I find myself almost turning from one to the other every now and then just to balance up."

"CLASSICAL CALM, 1948, is a generalized statement of order, yet I recall the specific experience which inspired the work: It was in the fall of 1947 at Victoria. We got up the Indian Arm on a little excursion boat. There were a number of World War II ships tied up in one of the coves. When you are in a small boat and low to the water, the large hulls of ships such as these tower above you. There is something about a ship viewed from this elevation that seems to instill a regalness about it and the great shapes, to me, were terrifically impressive. We passed the ships going up the Arm and then coming back down again, and they fascinated me. There they sat—absolutely still— in the calm water. There was something about the sense in a way, simply sitting there with all their glory stripped from them..."

"FANCIFUL SEASCAPE, 1949, like many of the seascapes of the fifties, is in a lighter vein... from an expressive point of view the subject matter of these seascapes is perhaps more of a seascape of the feelings I experience during summer holidays along the B.C. coast than an actual interpretation of this coast... In the summer time, these little boats would look so joyful—certainly it wasn't a grim scene before me—it would seem to me that it had to be interpreted with some sort of 'joie de vivre'..."

"The Seascapes of 1960 moved further in the direction from the particular to the general. I had got rather tired of all the detail of boats at this time—even in their more abstract and more general aspect. The sea itself became my main concern. It's measured and expansive. In BLACK ISLAND, I have simply tried to synthesize the main essentials that make up this 'landscape-seascape'. It was a matter of trying to get the balance of forms right... in color I tried to do more what the Fauvists were doing—of actually changing the colors to get in some total on the canvas a combination of colors that might bear little relationship to the blue sea and the green mountains, but would give the intensity... and I strengthened tensions in space in order to add breadth to the experience. I haven't really worked at this very much since that time, but for that two or three years I was working in this direction—and I might well come back to it again."

"In the mid-sixties I did a number of large emblematic works which I called Motifs. In retrospect I can see that these works refer back to my move into the landscape-paintings of 1960. I think there is a definite relationship in the form and in the use of fairly strong color. In addition to this there is a bigness of shape around B.C. that you can't get away from. I find it pretty overpowering at times. Whether you are looking at the mighty trees, or up into the mountains, or at the expansive space of the sea—there is this tremendous scale. I would imagine that this comes into these works."

"The Optional Modules were large works made up of modular units which could be assembled according to a variety of choices. I suppose they came about in several ways. One, certainly, was the architectural idea: the idea that one can work in a more fluid and three-dimensional way than just with square or rectangle paintings. (I've always been very close to architecture—in my family and in my associations both friendly and professional, and besides my children— with architects and by myself—in an almost avocational way at times, in executing murals and in the capacity as consultant in matters of color and design.)"

"Another thing that was involved with the modules was that I felt that the total involvement of people in things should be more. (The beholder wants to be part of art—and just as the artist he wants to have a creative hand in it.) I felt there should be a kind of inter-relationship: I'll give you the parts and, within certain restrictions, you can manipulate and change. These ideas started to fascinate me, and again, it was a matter of setting up a program for myself and going through it in an unrelenting way."

"These works were executed during a sabbatical year: I began working in the spring and continued through the summer—working with architects and by myself—there was a strange thing that when it was coming to winter—the colourful days changed to grey—my paintings, too, changed to grey. (I was acutely aware of the seasons.) From then on the rest of the modules were all in greys. OPTIONAL MODULES (8 modules in greys), to me, frankly, is the best one I've done..."

"These were the main steps, then: firstly the drawings, then the paintings of ships themselves, then the seascapes, followed by the emblematic Motifs, and from there into the Optional Modules..."

"I'm a former Director of the Fine Arts Gallery at UBC, was organizer of the Binning retrospective. This was his last major show at UBC before accepting the position of Curator of Contemporary Art at the Art Gallery of Ontario. In the Forward to the Binning catalogue, Baikins stated very perceptively—and with sensitivity—he was the unique qualities of his colleague, and included the following: "His conviction about the importance of creativity in all areas of life not only forms his attitude, but has led him to bring this strongly to the attention of all those aspects of the world which he touches."
The "Royal" Academy of Arts.

The world to an incredible heritage. This will follow the Chinese Marxist interpretation; painted silks or seated Buddhas. Chronology of this. Neither feldspathic glaze nor the ordinary weaving techniques incorporating warped threads in a single meter of skeins are once again reminiscent of Persian examples and centuries in advance of the rest of the world.

Also from Sinkiang, Turfan, comes a 5.2 meter, scrollarily high 10 AD (Not in the earliest existing copy of the Analects of Confucius (551-475 BC) with annotations by the famous Han dynasty scholar Cheng Hsuan (127-200 AD). Of the five chapters in this particular version only the first and part of the second are missing.

A special section of the exhibit is devoted to purely technological finds. Coming are clay moulds for casting bronze, bronze moulds for casting iron — both processes the reverse of normal procedures — and clay models for the positive moulds from which the negative mould for the final cast was made. But the most exciting is a simple yet extraordinary innovation in the casting of bronze moulds, the elaborate woks. The designs executed by batique or by knotting the silk in skeins are once again reminiscent of Persian examples and centuries in advance of the rest of the world.

McEwen already baffled criticism, by presenting a work where, for the first time, there was affirmed in a decisive manner, in Quebec, the concept of surface in the picture of all-rotating space, that of rounded forms or of volumes in the depth of a picture. It was demonstrated in the organizing of kernels, clouds, of masses of elements close together, dim or luminous. This was the assumption that, much later, Oliński would take up again in a picture such as Pink Shush in 1955, when he wanted to eliminate every idea of forms and background.

But the paintings of McEwen which followed were never, however, really informal: "If the structures of tridimensional reality have never touched me profoundly," McEwen claims, "I have always had a basic need to reunite a real spatial structure". And in his abstract work the idea of forms and backgrounds in landscapes and natural atmospheres, it is through "the lattice of lights and shadows formed by the crossing of light through branches and leaves", that he works out a way of expressing the vibration of colour which is his major concern.

Even if he admires the lyricism of Borduas and is the most vigorous hair of the atmospheric space that the latter gave value to for a long time, McEwen will soon be discontented with a type of spatial structurization borrowed from landscapes art in a too realistic way.

In a picture which marks the turning point in his work, Les Pierres du moulin, in 1955, McEwen scratches in the thick surface, perforated with blobs of colour, with new and preponderant vertical and horizontal lines, which bind his textures into elements closely juxtaposed. We can, besides, suppose that it is in a mediation on Monet that he will discover in his great monochrome series of the period the fundamental rôle which he will assign to a predominating axial element as structure of pictorial organization. And his way of proceeding by working out series based on a new coherency. But the analogies with the works of Monet. Through his axial structure McEwen affected a re-erecting of the famous horizon line whose variations and questioning in the Nymphéas appeared to critic L. Stainberg as the major problem of Monet. It was through the logic of continuous shifting, of various tensions, of various perspectives of the vertical that McEwen treated reflections, symmetrical or not, of the left and the right of the picture, the distortions and reflections to which it can give rise. As with Monet, this elimination of anecdotal references engenders a reality where the distinction between what is real and what is reflected is erased.

Even if the textures of McEwen's paintings seem to vary next almost infinitely, thickening and hardening under the varnishes, becoming thinner in plays of transparence, they still continue to constitute capillary systems, networks of continuous links, producing a modulation which even today offers analogies with the luminous quality of the picture itself shine, under the chromatic layers more or less perforated.

But the most expressive articulation of his pictures is found less in the more and more apparent quality of his graphs, which almost make sign of the text, elements which he uses, but in the very dialectic of the structurizing vertical at grips with a constant desire for the assertion of verticality and respect for the concept of surface.

Being aware of the strong tension and the firmness that his vertical axis could acquire, which had a tendency to give the picture a cylindrical shape or the oval structure of painting. This assertion of the surface radically destroyed the concept of the object in space, that of rounded forms or of volumes in the depth of a picture. It was demonstrated in the organizing of kernels, clouds, of masses of elements close together, dim or luminous. This was the assumption that, much later, Oliński would take up again in a picture such as Pink Shush in 1955, when he wanted to eliminate every idea of forms and background.

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GO IN PEACE, FRANÇOIS DALLAIRE!

By André BASTIEN

Graphist, industrial designer and architectural draughtsman, François Dallaire is, in addition, a painter whose works have been exhibited recently in Montreal: at Casa Loma, with the Moines de 35, and at the gallery of the Society of Professional Artists of Quebec.

I found that what I had desired all my life was not to live — if what others are doing is not living — but to express myself. I realized that I had never the least interest in living, but only in this which I am doing now, something which is parallel to life, of it at the same time, and beyond it (Henry Miller, Tropic of Capricorn).

There are worldly artists, princes of the ego-trip, masqueraded in propagandist ideas which serve them as talismans against boredom. With many cries and oaths, they call themselves still capable of taking flight and bare their guts to have their exercises in style admired.

There are also the François Dallaires, solitary workers, concerned, whom the splendor of their craziest visions haunts. One sees them seldom in the milieu; they have a wife, perhaps children, sometimes a job... a life like everyone, after all!

Perched up high on Villeneuve Street, François Dallaire lives in the Greek quarter of Montreal, for want of having found better elsewhere, but also through nostalgia for the Europe which he has just left. Did he really believe he could find again in these streets the delicious charm of the old labyrinthine cities, the languid step of the idlers who pass along these corridors, the cafe terraces which flourish at each intersection? Cold, filth, the stench of the city besiege his world, an apartment of five rooms shut away from everything, closed against the noise of people and the rumbling of cars.

To go to his home, one must climb to the third floor of an old building. The entrance door opens on an aseptic hall. It leads to the living room furnished with taste: an old cabinet which hides the bar; two armchairs he designed; a rocking chair bought at Sainte-Théodolise; a stereo whispering the music of the latest jazz class of Ouest; on the walls, pictures signed by Jean Dallaire: three or four canvases in the manner of the cubists and of this painter again, a few of his last works with the primitive charm of children's drawings.

His son François resembles him. He is a man in his twenties, with slow gestures and an absent look. He easily gives the impression of being absent-minded. Rarely does he take an active part in the conversation and he smiles awkwardly when his interlocutor bullies him for his evident lack of interest in it.

When the idea comes to us to ask for his opinion on an event, he answers that he never reads the newspapers, any more than he looks at the news on television.

—Life is already not so rosy, that on top of that I should poison my existence with the news.

Far from leaving him indifferent, human distress, daily field of the media of information, fills him with sorrow and disgust.

—One doesn’t take a hundred steps outdoors without seeing some unpleasant thing.

How do people manage to live?

Harmless questions have a corrosive effect on the shell of indifference which masks his personality. The best moment of his day: "Finding Paule, my wife, lying beside me, on waking up!": the most disagreeable moment: "Going down the stairs to go to work and discovering the ugliness of early morning": the people he admires: "those possessed by a passion": the man he thinks he resembles: "My father...": Jean Dallaire, who died alone in a little room in Montmartre in Paris, roared in his letters that Quebec was inhabited by barbarians.

Therefore he left again for Europe — I was very young at the time — my father often used to take me to his studio. There he let me play with his paint-brushes. When he left, it was as if I fell into a great void. I no longer knew what to do.

From these far-off years, François Dallaire retains of his father the image of a vulnerable man, tender, sensitive, a sort of sacred monster to whom everything was permitted, including dying of hunger in order to devote himself to his painting.

—With him gone, I followed my brother to the Applied Arts.

By instinct, François Dallaire would perhaps have opted for the Beaux-Arts, but everything in his life combined to make him reject this choice. For four years he devoted himself to industrial design — in which he excelled — before going to Europe to take up studies in graphism.

Whether he paints or produces a graphic he finds in his works the same purity of line, the same simplicity of execution. The few critics, come to view the works of this young beginner at the gallery of the Society of Professional Artists of Quebec last February, noted especially the influence of graphism in Dallaire’s work. At the time when the pictures exhibited last winter were painted, François Dallaire was still completely unaware of graphism.

There emerges from his painting a desire to run counter to the Ontario Woman, Pepsi, Je me souviens. “Look,” he tells us, “you are thus.” And yet where François Dallaire exposes a certain manner of living, the spectator discovers the tragedy of this way of being.

All the canvases shown at the time of this exhibition are dated from the end of the sixties. He excuses this long silence by asserting that his studies and, now, his work as a graphist, have taken all his time.

François Dallaire, do these reasons really explain your silence? And of what importance, besides, since you love Paule above everything; since in spite of your own doubts, your own agonies, you gather beauty in every place in order that our mornings may be less gray; since one day, if a few hours of real freedom remain to you, you will express in the solitude of your studio our most foolish dreams, our greatest hopes...

Go in peace, François Dallaire!

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

PIERRE GENDRON: DELIBERATE ACTION PAINTER

By Pierre DUPUIS

Born in Montreal, he studied at the École des Beaux-Arts. After working in graphism in an advertising studio, Gendron pursued the pictorial research previously undertaken outside his academic concerns and then went to France (1968). He would later return there in order, this time, to go deeply into lithography. In the meantime, he participated twice in the international exhibitions at Lugano (Switzerland) and at the Paris Biennial, in 1961. He now teaches at the Cégep of Old Montreal.

On the occasion of the opening of a new gallery in Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts (1973), last winter, Gendron presented his latest works, including those from 1970 to 1973, to the public of the Montreal area.

What do these creations reveal to us if not the desire to perpetuate pictorial tradition called Abstract Expressionism? However, sensitive to the ambiguities possibly raised
THE DRAWINGS OF SIMONE AUBERY-BEAULIEU

By Robert MARTEAU

After twenty years spent in very diverse countries, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu recently renewed her connection with Canada through an exhibition of drawings at the Galerie de Montréal. In spite of her long absence, interrupted by visits to Persé, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu is not unknown here in the field of plastic arts. Having studied for four years at the École des Beaux-Arts in Montreal, she received the Prize of the Province of Quebec in 1949, exhibiting at the same time at the Cercle Universitaire on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal. If her marriage with diplomat Paul Beaulieu was at the origin of her numerous trips, it was in no way opposed to her first vocation, and it was with a never-denied ardour that Simone Aubery-Beaulieu devoted herself to her craft.

She had met Fernand Léger in New York during the war. She met him again in Paris in 1946, where she attended his studio. In Paris again, she made the acquaintance of André Marchand, with whom she worked and to whom she is linked by a friendship of thirty years. It was through him that she went to Varengeville, where Braque received and advised her. After Paris came London; she became acquainted next with Boston and Beirut, where she lived for six years, beginning there to tackle abstraction at a time when the desert and Arab characters were fascinating her. She left the Middle East for Brazil, where she felt the impact of the tropical forest, of its luxuriance, and of the effervescence of life, all things whose surging her drawings reflected. There was New York, then Paris again, Lisbon where she took up once more and developed themes initiated in Brazil. During a sojourn in Washington, she met Saint-John Perse, whose English poems Louis Varès translated while she herself illustrated Le Poème à l'Étrangeté and made several portraits of the poet, of which one was to appear in the Saint-John Perse in Poésies d'aujourd'hui. Furthermore, encouraged by Saint-John Perse, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu was going to devote herself assiduously to poetry.

As it is rather unusual to-day to see an exhibition of drawings, I asked Simone Aubery-Beaulieu if, with her, graphic work really is more important than painting. Not in the least, it seems to her, and she thinks that painting and graphicism can be carried on at the same time by reason of the profound difference that exists as much in their development as in the way of approaching them. Still more, certainly, since drawing remains an indispensable discipline from which painting benefits. Just as she needs to write, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu needs to draw a few hours each day, free-hand, on large surfaces. What does she use? Tar which a little turpentine changes to a clear sepia tone, India ink,... For what does she have a fondness? Ivory-black used with a paintbrush or a felt pen.

—I have always had a passion for the drawings of Rembrandt, Delacroix, and Modigliani, which I was able to view in Paris, at the Katia Granoff Gallery.

She says also:—The abstract is a temptation, but I feel that I am profoundly figurative, bound as I am to this memory which chooses and preserves the most precious part of what one loves.

Facing the blank page, she loves this emotion and this trembling which go before the gesture, the line left by her which cannot be corrected. Of course, she worships Japanese painters, on account of the aim at the essential, the union of sudden violence and extreme refinement, the interior violence that subjugates ceremonial. It is true that with one stroke, controlled and spontaneous at the same time, Simone Aubery-Beaulieu knows how to make the beach vibrate where a secret magnetic force guides her. What attracts her is the sensitive core from which emanates carnal and abundant life which she knows how to make throb before our eyes, whether it be a matter of the half-breeds of Rio, the leaves of the coral tree or the walnut trees of Brazil. Her art is not baroque: generous, it joins spontaneity to precision. Simone Aubery-Beaulieu does not find her strength in spontaneous choice, but in the profound taste for promoting a blossoming, as of a flower growing in the woods, for what is stronger and more deeply buried than will. Black, white: and yet colour is present there thanks to that vital force by which the figure is shown on the surface. Nothing exotic, naturalistic or realistic: it is simply the mysterious and perpetual reality of life. Black and white: the only two colours, perhaps.

Was it not with black and white that Borduas fulfilled himself best and most intensely? asks Simone Aubery-Beaulieu.

Loyalty presides at her work. With Simone Aubery-Beaulieu there is the sense of the way and the search. She also knows that severity, instead of restraining, exalts the source where the work is unceasingly reborn.
JEAN-SERGE CHAMPAGNE: SCULPTURE IN TWO PERIODS

By Luc Benoît

Born in Montreal, Jean-Serge Champagne studied at the École des Beaux-Arts, concentrating on sculpture, with Ulysse Comtois and Henry Saxe, from 1965 to 1969.

We note his participation in several exhibitions and group works. In 1965-1969, he collaborated in the creation of a children's park at the J.M.C. Centre, at Orford.

We find him again at the exhibition of the graduates at the Pavillon des Arts de l'UQAM, in 1970, and at the Provincial Competition, the same year. In 1971, he took part in a showing of the Bronfman Foundation, at the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal. The following year, he was in Quebec with five other artists, at Galerie Jollet. Since the beginning of 1973, we have seen his sculptures at the exhibition of the Moins de 35 Ans at Galerie Média and at La Sauvagère, in a group of artists.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

CLAude Mongrain: Weights, Tensions, Measures

By Luc Benoît

There are obvious facts in art as elsewhere. And the work of Claude Mongrain which, with that of J.S. Champagne, is witness of a new modernism. Claude Mongrain calls rather Situations lead to experimentation by the spectator. "All I wish is that the viewer be conscious of what is happening. To begin with, one perceives the fact, and it is only afterward that the phenomenon of understanding occurs."

The wood is raw and the notches are apparent. There are no deceptions, that is, the material such as it is, is not mistaken for another material. This is done by calculations of weight, angles, measures. Thus, Situation I, made up of six sections of two-foot wood, hanging and joined by rings; between these rings, a scale measuring the tension of one element upon the other. The strength of this tension is exerted above, produced by the weight of the elements below. This tension is legible, as is the angle of each piece of wood indicated by a horizontal red line: seventeen degrees for the first, seventy-two for the last, etc.

It is also possible to trace the mathematical course of the situation at hand by tangents or measurements of degrees. In Situation I, the raw material is wood; it could as well have been bag of sand, or another montagne, or yet bottles of water.

Because they are able to be manipulated and are movable, the sculptures which Claude Mongrain calls rather Situations lead to experimentation by the spectator. "All I wish is that the viewer be conscious of what is going on and that he take the time to do it."

Persons are needed to challenge this awareness and to make us pay attention to the elements and to the world which surrounds us. It will only be the more beautiful for this.

Claude Mongrain is among those people. They are rare.

When one knows Claude Mongrain, one is not astonished to see him come back from a hike of four hours on snowshoes or to meet him on a bicycle in Quebec or elsewhere. One understands his research still better, then.

I was almost going to forget to mention that he was born in Shawinigan but lives in Montreal. He studied there at the École des Beaux-Arts from 1966 to 1969 with Jean-Pierre Boivin and Ulysse Comtois. The following year, he continued in sculpture, at the University of Quebec in Montreal, with Henry Saxe.

In 1968, he participated in the creation of a children's park at Orford, at the J.M.C. Centre.

In 1970, he exhibited with the graduates at the Pavillon des Arts of the University of Quebec in Montreal. One of his sculptures (in steel) won for him a bursary from E.T. Greenfield Memorial Foundation, which gave him a trip to investigate across Europe. He returned there the next year and visited a part of France and Italy by bicycle.

Among other exhibitions, let us mention the one at the Musée de l'Art Contemporain, Jouets d'Art in 1970; another group showing at Galerie Jollet, in Quebec, in October 1972; the exhibition of the Moins de 35 Ans in Montreal in February 1973 and, recently, at the Galerie Média as well as at La Sauvagère, with a group of artists.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)
The sculpture of Jean-Serge Champagne proves that it is still possible to work in a material (which some would have believed old-fashioned, if not out of date) in a new and interesting way.

The result, as far as I am concerned, is a fortunate one. Much more, it witnesses a new and interesting way.

 Videography: Towards a New Culture

By Denise DIONNE

Vidéographe on Saint-Denis St. in Montreal is an organization which has as its aim the promoting of the use of the half-inch portable magnetoscopic system (closed-circuit television). Vidéographe lends the equipment and allocates the budgets necessary to the production of videograms.

Montage modules are available twenty-four hours a day. Vidéographe has its own sound studio, and an animation module has just been perfected.

The videograms produced are exhibited at Video-theatre, a hall which can accommodate up to one hundred fifteen spectators. The showings, on six twenty-four inch screens hung at the center of the hall and placed in a circle, are daily and free.

At the entrance of the location, a "vidéothèque", containing on cassettes the videograms already produced, is accessible at all times. A copy service assures the distribution of the videograms outside the organization.

Some time ago, Vidéographe set up Salécovision in collaboration with community television. The subscribers to a private cable system have been able to order the broadcasting of the videograms of their choice, a list of which they had received earlier. Three experiments in Salécovision were carried out at Bésoleil, Gatineau and Mont-Laurier.

Let us remember that anyone, without previous experience, can present videogram projects on any subject at all.

In a year and a half of operation, Vidéographe on Saint-Denis Street has produced about sixty videograms ready for viewing at any time at its location. The organization is now subsidized by the Ministry of Communications of Quebec and is assured of survival until spring of 1974. It is known that equipment and funds are at the disposal of whoever presents a project which is accepted by the board of selection. Once this stage is accomplished all latitude is allowed to the producers of the tape.

What has been done so far in videography? Up till the present, five hundred projects have been presented and about sixty have been accepted and produced. It is to be noticed that concerns of a social or political order are underlying or explicit in almost all the videograms. Journalism, sociology, or anthropology serve as framework for the messages transmitted. There are very few equivalents in literature to what is known as film d’auteur, and very little fiction is used in expressing ideas.

Actual events, recorded directly, are used as basic material. Situations are set up where the camera becomes a sort of confident (according to Jean Rouch’s expression), and the videotape, by an instantaneous use of group viewing, becomes an illumination of the circumstances.

This quality of the videotape (instant recording), to which the lightness of the equipment is joined, was immediately exploited. About twenty productions centre around persons who explain their place in life in front of the camera (people twenty years of age, youths, separated women, old persons, etc.), their personal relationships (loneliness, homosexuality) or else their relation with the system.

The videotape also serves as a useful instrument of reflection on broad social occurrences. An analysis has been made of the significance of the October incidence and of the role of the mass media during that period. The controversies raised by the project of the Sainte-Scholastique airport, the conflict at La Presse, the battle of wood at Cabano, also aroused some interest. But the rare pearl of this type of production is certainly the video carried out by Émond and Lavigne on the Soma affair. S.O.S. Soma was set up and produced by persons involved in this struggle.

From that, one can no longer define the camera as being a peeping and indiscrete eye, but rather a confidant and sharing ear.

The possibilities of new visual experiments have not been much used. They still make a little live film in 16mm. A few productions have played with the feasibilities of visual electronic effects in the medium. Réaction 26, Métamorphoses, Lumière, formes et sons and Libidante work with overprinting, with doubling and with the shifting of the image.

It is to be noted that a subject like eroticism is very well suited to this kind of formal treatment (for example, Libidante).

Ethnology and Quebec or Amerindian anthropology occupy a separate category. The traditions and the legends of the Quebec habitant or of the Amerindian are dealt with in it. Let us mention here the originality of the production Continuons le combat, where through the description of a modern rite, wrestling, Pierre Falardeau symbolically presents to us the forces present at the heart of our society and subtly incites us to pursue the fight.

Following the thought of McLuhan, who asserts that a new technique salvages the old ones, the videotape is also used as medium for other arts. Whether it be theatre, sculpture, marionettes, electronic graphism or music, we deal with this type of production.

The present concerns about general themes such as the system, the environment and society are approached in different manners in Système, m’aimas-tu, L’Accroc, L’Environnement, c’est toute, Zloczow and Objetal. One of the solutions generally offered to the ills of our society, the experiment of communities is presented in six different forms: a commune of forty-two persons on a farm at Rawdon, the Krishna Group of Montreal, the Maisons du possible, in Sherbrooke, where social medicine is practised, the musical group Expédition, the couples’ commune at the Château, and, finally, the fifteen staff members of the P’tit Québec Libre, share their experiences in turn.

Some other productions have as subject the Salon de l’Auto, the St. Lawrence Boulevard, the new Pierre Vallières, Edgar Morin, children and, even, the production of a videogram.

So videography is healthy in Montreal. The variety of the fields covered, as well as the pungency of the titles, gives the proof of its vitality.

Consequently, the technique of the videotape offers the possibility of new experiments in group communication. The light and relatively inexpensive material permits a greater accessibility. The chief problem remains, however, to differentiate itself from ordinary television, which excels in broadcasting information directly at the moment it occurs, and the cinema of recent tradition which has involved itself in recording the present for posterity. What is left, perhaps, for video is to be the witness of what happens after the occurrence, to be the instrument of collective thought after the event. S.O.S. Some is the best example of this.

Translation by Mildred Grand

For footnotes see French text.

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102