La Peinture secrète de Louise Forget
On the Secret Painting of Louise Forget

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Quand, la première fois, j’ai rencontré Louise Forget dans son atelier parisien, elle était engagée dans la production d’une série de tableaux qui se différenciaient de tout ce qu’elle avait réalisé jusqu’alors. La Suite parisienne inaugurait un nouveau cycle, une étape nouvelle caractérisée par une structuration extrême et rigoureuse de son espace pictural et de l’élément architectonique fondamental: le triangle.

La Suite parisienne

En effet, l’observation d’une de ses toiles nous révèle, au plan de la composition, une répartition de la surface en triangles clairement indiqués à la fois par les masses chromatiques mais aussi par des lignes, segments de droites qui parcourent le champ comme des indices. Le numéro 16 de la Suite nous en fournit un bon exemple. A gauche, se dresse, comme une colonne, une masse étirée, composée de l’opposition de deux triangles reliés par des vecteurs à des points focaux apparentement fictifs, ce qui crée un ensemble de triangles et évoque nettement une forme architecturale. «J’ai choisi le triangle comme symbole, dira-t-elle, parce que je le retrouvais constamment dans mon champ de vision. Lorsque je marchais et que je pensais à mon tableau, je retrouvais toujours ce triangle, soit vertical, soit oblique, qui était l’apport premier.»

Le centre stratégique de cette masse étirée, losange modifié, repose sur une tension introduite par deux éléments horizontaux: un court trait, à gauche, et une masse blanche comme une zone de démarcation, à droite. Le rectangle inférieur droit, séparé par une oblique qui rejoint la structure pour la soutenir, crée à son tour deux masses triangulaires.

Pourtant, le regard ne se dirigera pas spontanément à gauche sur le cœur de l’obélisque mais s’arrêtera au beau milieu de la surface à la jonction des deux

1. Louise FORGET
Huile sur toile: 114 cm x 146.
Coll. de l’artiste. 
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi)
Michel Morin’s work is the reflection of a daily research beginning with a fundamental, original tone. This tone is in harmony with the cosmos and in each of his canvases there is inscribed a landscape of different and subtle nuances. Morin translates an interior vision, deliberately prepared and pondered. “I feel myself rather close to Zen philosophy. Just as the archer projects himself in the arrow, I pass through everything physical to project myself on the canvas.”

Through innumerable colours the canvas develops under the headful eye of its creator to become his own creation. Uninterrupted continuations in which the artist makes his choice. The dominating picture is the outcome of a series of canvases that have been the pretexts to the final movement.

“Truth is in the interior, Form at the exterior”, Confucius wrote several thousand years ago, applying this thought to the domain of numbers. Now, we can perceive the language of painting only through our history; and so it is of Morin’s pictures. A gaze fixed on the picture teaches us something about ourselves in so far as we enter into it. “It is by work that our language is formed. It is essential that I find my colours and that I explore it and not a language that might have been imposed on me.”

For this artist, it is essential to place himself at the interior of the object and of surrounding nature. Because no one perceives his environment in the same fashion as another. Each colour corresponds to a personal vibration. To perceive and express it is to enter into intimate contact with the universe and to open oneself to nature, a contact that corresponds to my interior state. This will be the point of departure of my picture, which then develops progressively. I feel that I am guided by an interior force where I control each move-
and the elongated diamond are marked by a
graphism, a writing that allows the soaring
gestural quality of Cycle des grands soleils, which comprises, besides Suite mexicaine produced in 1966, a Suite espagnole, an Italian one and, finally, Suite provençale.

Les Grands soleils

It is fitting now to go back in time and to follow, along the thread of the years and the cycles of production, the artist's trajectory that spreads over twenty-five years of work but also of silence and discretion. Louise Forget, now in her seventies, has hardly begun to be noticed or to display the abundance of her production.

At first, her painting was figurative; a pretext for understanding, for assimilating the relationships of shadow and light in foliage. The change to abstraction took place, however, only gradually. The artist, having retained the same formal preoccupation at the interior of a sort of Cycle of Foliage which would end only the artist's sojourn in Mexico in 1966 and the beginning of Cycle des grands soleils.

This sudden approach is characterized by a genuine explosion of light in an earthly chromatics applied in wide areas that allow limitless spaces to show through in their interstices, perspectives released from the figurative limits. Here, graphism, has, as it were, disappeared. This new, more atmospheric dimension of her work would be continued in Europe in a Suite espagnole that would assert unusual relationships with contemporary Catalan painting. The surface of the picture is organized according to a tense, emotional, violent graphism that shatters and breaks the rhythm of the warm Mediterranean air.

From a stay in Tuscany she drew Suite italienne or Arno, in tribute to the river that crosses the city of Florence. Here the atmosphere is more autumnal, heavier, more fleeting, too, and perhaps more hermetic. A light graphism insists less this time on infinite space and distances, but rather on the atmosphere that retained the same formal preoccupation at the interior of a sort of Cycle of Foliage which would end only the artist's sojourn in Mexico in 1966 and the beginning of Cycle des grands soleils.

CHRISTOPHER PRATT — A PERSONAL MEMOIR

By Michael COOK

Ten years ago, walking down an antiseptic corridor, about to take up an appointment with the Extension Service of Memorial University, I met somebody about to leave it.

Prematurely balding, intense, a little insecure, it was Christopher Pratt. He had confronted early in his career the problem facing many 20th century artists. To survive, he had to teach. But Pratt, though a natural artist is not a natural teacher. There are some whose creative energies are motivated and sustained by the teaching process but for him, at that time, it was an impossible situation. To teach well, one has to be secure in one's art and, out of that security be able to impart, without loss of the essential creative energies, elements of craft and style which do not drain the self of the power to create.

But in 1966, he had met the challenge neither of himself nor of his art, and to teach was to deny the fulfilment of either. He chose early to commit himself to a private vision, and in this decision was aided and abetted by his family.

Significantly, his work then, apart from a superb sense of draughtmanship, had no articulated core. He was an artist of whom people said: "Ah, yes, he has potential", but then, taking refuge behind cocktail glasses, were unable to determine exactly what that potential was. I have an early pencil drawing from that period. It is, simply, of trees. They are unimpassioned trees, but they are trees. They are trees that his draughtsmanship could depict, and the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said: "Let there be light", and there was light.

The creation myth from Genesis is at once moving and yet terrifying in its abstraction, but the artist is drawn, as in dream or nightmare, to respond to it, either to will the creation of a new and private universe or to despair at that which has been created.