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

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Volume 22, numéro 87, été 1977
URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/54904ac

Citer cet article
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 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. »

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1. Louise Forget

Huile sur toile; 114 cm x 146.
Coll. de l’artiste.
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi)
Vast spaces in which blacks, grays and whites communicate with each other, melt one with the other and take on their meaning, the manifestation of a universal harmony where we feel the balance of a work. Landscapes blossoming out in half-lights that the eye is unceasingly surprised to discover under different blossings. Flashing light of an intimate and awe-striking moment to open oneself to the inspiration. At present man is destroying it. And in the end the land will turn against the one who imposes an ill-fated development on a balanced evolution. It is imperative that persons sensitive to this situation find a solution to improve the state of things. I have chosen to paint. And, doubtless for this reason, I am more at ease in big forms where my interior perception of nature expresses itself more freely.

Painting is a difficult adventure, and Morin must daily take up his choice: "Every day, I go on. But I also have the right to live according to this choice. Now, we are incessantly confronted with the play of a system in which the artist becomes a commercial value. How to reconcile these contradictions? I do not believe in undertaking two crafts at the same time; for me, this is unthinkable. What to do? Are we continually called upon to be divided between our livelihood and our creating?"

These are questions that have been for so long without answers. One day, perhaps, this community — hoped for by so many — will be formed, where art will be integrated into the daily life of everyone.

During his career Morin has touched lightly on all artistic disciplines, and his research originates from several stages. From 1965 to 1970 he worked at the Ciba laboratory on different techniques of impression on fabrics. During this period, also, he carried on research on ceramics in the North Hatley Studios and worked with American potter Kent Benson. Solo as well as group exhibitions are evidence of this research where little by little the painter discovered his reality. From 1970 to 1976 he produced serigraphs, acrylics, inks and gouaches, which led to a private exhibition in 1977, where art will be integrated into the daily life of everyone.

A slow preparation during which the canvas woven is executed spontaneously. A language that is formed and always newly created because it is open to spatial dimensions. A direct and moving means of communication. A projection of waves on magnetic fields that stretch to infinity, since everything that lives is movement of a little-explored field of awareness.

In a series of drawings, Morin, playing with colours, calls upon the symbol of the circle that we rediscover, structured, allied to yin-yang figuration, elements of a whole that we cannot isolate, complementary aspects of the Universe. Harmony, rhythm, Morin conveys us an exact dimension of space-time, and no part of the drawing can be dissociated from another. This involves a form of expression different from pictures, which allows us to be confronted with an idea of expression that was, but perhaps created as a prelude to vast spaces, the origin of the artist's reflection. Drawings are of prime importance in the evolution of Morin's work, and, if he tends to produce architecture of larger size, we must first enter into contact with them and live the luminous emotion that is released by them; intense vibrations of the four seasons of man, agony and joy, the search for the Holy Grail always present in each of us.

Morin’s canvases are related to the currents of the history of mankind's painting when the painter remains a pioneer in areas whose exploitation is constantly renewed. From this perception he draws the substance of his canvas, which he produces beyond external appearances. In this way he instigates associations that enrich each element of his picture while bringing forth a new meaning conveyed by a concentration of each moment.

(Translation by Mildred GRAND)

ON THE SECRET PAINTING OF LOUISE FORGET

By Jean-Claude LEBLOND

The first time I met Louise Forget in her Paris studio, she was engaged in the production of a series of pictures different from anything she had created up to that time. Suite parisiennes ushered in a new cycle, a new stage characterized by an extreme and strict structuralization of her pictorial space and the fundamental architectonic element: the triangle.

Suite parisiennes

In fact, the observation of one of her canvases reveals to us, at the level of composition, a distribution of the surface in triangles clearly indicated at one time by chromatic masses, but also by lines, segments of straight lines that cross the field like signs. Number 16 of this Suite gives us a good example. On the left rises, like a column, a drawn-out mass composed of the opposition of two triangles linked by vectors with obviously imaginary focal points, which creates an ensemble of triangles and freely calls to mind an architectural form. "I chose the triangle as a symbol", she would say, "because I constantly found it in my field of vision. When I was walking and thinking of my picture, I always encountered this triangle, whether vertical or oblique, which was the initial step."

The strategic centre of this lengthened mass, a modified lozenge, rests on a tension introduced by two horizontal elements: a short line on the left and a white mass like a zone of demarcation on the right. The lower right rectangle, separated by an oblique line that joins the structure to support it, creates two triangular masses in its turn.

However, one's gaze will not spontaneously be directed to the left onto the heart of the obelisk, but will be arrested right in the middle of the surface at the junction of the two white zones: horizontal and vertical. Afterwards, it will travel to the periphery, along lines placed there to direct the reading, to simplify it, one might say. A curious vision placing lower down a sphere that establishes the farthest ultimate point in this perspective by opposing to it, on the extreme right, another sphere which marks the closest point, and the whole composition is organized between these two focal points.

Another detail. When the picture has been executed in flat tint, the two focalization points
and the elongated diamond are marked by a graphism, a writing that allows the soaring existence, beyond formalism, of lyricism. But what one could call a "constructivist, this "interior landscape", as the artist defines it, remains the reflection of an environment. Because it is actually a matter of urban landscape, of a personal interpretation of an "essentialized" place, reduced to a particularly minimal form in which, in relation to graphism, only the framework would exist, but where colour intervenes as essential emotional adjunct.

"I would like", she says, "to succeed in achieving a balance between an architectural conception of a composition and the gestural spontaneity of the paint-brush." One can understand this statement if one glances at Louise Forget's earlier production. She 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. Her work, in a new vein, has hardly begun to be noticed or to display, the abundance of her production.

This sudden approach is characterized by a genuine explosion of light in an earthy 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 provençale 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 perspectives released from the figurative limits. Here we have stopped at only her painting, her collages thrust still further forward. As a painter, she is creating visual images out of an oral mythological, his inheritance. The Newfoundland experience is essentially oral and dramatic, and Pratt, artist and inheritor of the island's past, has always re-created his private mythology in an essentially dramatic form. That is why it is nonsense to equate Pratt with schools Realistic and Magic for, as he is sensitive to the possibility of being stereotyped as a Newfoundland artist, he is equally limiting to place him with a school or style that negates the impression and influence of place. It is true that the craft origins of Pratt's style can be linked with Alex Colville, his one-time teacher and mentor and there are obvious similarities in terms of discipline and technique. But there the comparison must end, for ultimately it is the subject matter and the approach to it that determines the individuality of the artist.

As a member of the global village, Pratt does not limit himself to subjects taken from his immediate environment — two recent pictures, Lake Ontario and Station illustrate this but, nonetheless, he brings to bear upon such subjects the same dramatic intensity that informs his vision. And it is this intensity. His is a rare example of consummate craft allied to a singular vision which can only be realized by attention to, and knowledge of (even if unconsciously at times) a particular place at a particular time in its history. Such intensity allied to the mastery of the technology of the time constitutes the process of genius.

What are the lineaments of his vision? Isolation. Dignity. Perfection. Detachment. Fury. Examine any of his exteriors... Cottage, Coley's Point, Shop on an Island. Pristine, isolated, vested with immense dignity, it is easy at first to see them casually as objects. But they are, in fact, a monumental creation of the spirit that was brought to a state of grace. But that is to ignore the exterior environment, the sea and, in Coley's Point, the sky also, reflected in the door.

"In the beginning God created the Heavens and Earth. The Earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep. 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.