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. À 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 évogue 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

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1. Louise FORGET
**Suite parisienne N° 16, 1975.**
Huile sur toile; 114 cm x 146.
Coll. de l'artiste.
(Phot. Gabor Szilasi)
A PAINTER OF SPACE: MICHEL MORIN

By Marie-France O'LEARY

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 upon 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, to nature of a way 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 movement."

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 unexpectedly surprised to discover under different angles. Flashing light of an intimate and awe-inspiring character, a light that inspires at the moment of 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 this state of things. I have chosen to paint and think about returning. 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.

For 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 fabric. During this period, he also, he carried on research on suspended energies with R. Jahn 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 Paris in 1976. Radiation and Avignon painters and, finally, to this recent solo exhibition in Montreal, where the painter's expression is asserted in its full maturity.

"Facing my work, I commune with myself. A daily ritual in which I always rediscover my rhythm. I meditate until I feel ready, I concentrate on my impressions the picture comes to life."

A slow preparation during which the canvas woven in the mind 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, aligned to yin-yang figure, elements of a whole that we cannot isolate, complementary aspects of the Universe. Harmony, rhythm, Morin conveys to 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 Michelangelo; it is a source of insights ostensibly opposed to the canvas, 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 vibratos 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 exploration 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 parisienn e ushered in a new cycle, a new stage characterized by an extreme and strict structuralization of her pictorial space and the fundamental architectural element: the triangle1.

Suite parisienne

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, as well as 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 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 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, even in the construction of the "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 form remains, with the artist employing "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 cycle of grand soleils. The severity of Suite parisienne is opposed to the lyricism, the 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 back in Montreal, has hardly begun 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. In a cyclical development, she has hardly begun to notice or to display, the abundance of her production. The Mediterranean air.

Some persons believe, and I am among them, that there are Centre of the World places, locations more favourable than others to certain types of activity. The Mediterranean world is one of these privileged places. Threshold of the western world, original womb of civilization. And Louise Forget's Cycle des grands soleils, it seems to me, confirms this sensation that the elements air, earth and water make in the same body, in a feeling inexplicable, indescribable, at the side of time.

For Louise Forget, whose development is going on very slowly under present criteria, sensibility concerning the environment, permeability in the face of the atmosphere of a place form the basis of a work that, beyond painting, borrows the many passages of plastic expression. Here we have stopped at only her painting, but much could be said as well about her engraving. Her water-colours, also, which further express the fluidity, the fleeting quality of air, while her collages thrust still further forward the research into new structures, new architectures, with the ultimate aim of attaining the synthesis, the fusion of geometry and poetry.

CHRISTOPHER PRATT — A PERSONAL MEMORIAL

By Michael COOK

Ten years ago, walking down an antiseptic corridor, about to take 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...