Vie des arts

Texts in English

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Volume 29, numéro 118, mars-printemps 1985

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/54188ac

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Éditeur(s)
La Société La Vie des Arts

ISSN
0042-5435 (imprimé)
1923-3183 (numérique)

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THE NEW MUSEUM OF MODERN ART OF NEW YORK
by Myra Nan ROSENFIELD

On May 7, 1984, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, which possesses the greatest collection of twentieth century art in the world, dedicated a new wing, as well as the complete renovation of its original building. The new west wing was surmounted by an apartment tower, while the Garden Hall, overlooking the sculpture garden, contains escalators and entry vestibules to the galleries. Thus, one hundred and seventy thousand square feet of floor space was added to the total floor surface of the museum, creating twice as much space as before for the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions. The new west wing and renovation of the original building are the work of the American architect Pei. The new west wing of the Canadian art world: the found- tion of 1961 of the famous "Regina Five" painters in Saskatchewan.

Kenneth Lochhead is frank in admitting the influence of the famous "Regina Five" painters in Saskatchewan.

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Kenneth Lochhead is frank in admitting the influence of the New York school. The critic Clement Greenberg admired the "big attack" and colour painting. Lochhead began turning out very large works, often using a stain technique with thinned paint to get a luminous effect and a spray gun for control. Limpid, air-brushed forms appear in "Soar Colour", "Price Colour", "Tinge Colour", "Winter Note" and "Blue Reach". They are evanescent, pastel and lovely, like a bank of sweet peas blowing in the wind. The fresh colour and joyous palette are distinctly Loch-
Lochhead is working on a large scale, in a building in Regina, where he is connected with the appointment of Yamasaki, the first architect for the Wascana Centre. In Winnipeg he had good results working with the Winnipeg architect Guy de Roza. He has a genius at avoiding confrontation and seeking instead a consensus, even among temperamental artists. In Ottawa he has become involved with the National Capital Commission, where the Art Advisory Committee is suggesting new concepts in the development of parks through close artist/architect collaboration. It is consistent with Lochhead's own ability to change a medium, or direction, as circumstances change. And also with his public-spirited involvement. He was involved with the first meeting of CAR (Canadian Artists' Representation) at the National Convention in Winnipeg, with the founder of this organization, the late Jack Chambers. He is satisfied it helped pull artists together, but got out when it became too political.

By the time Lochhead left Regina in 1964 he was well-known in art circles and had been shown by the National Gallery all over Canada as well as at Warsaw in 1961-2 and Tunis, 1962.

Institutions like the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Sam Zaiken Collection, F.S. Mendel Gallery in Saskatchewan, the Gatineau, Ottawa and Rideau Club: Georges-M.-Pompidou in Paris. It was not a retrospective, although three sculptures were included in the selection. Now a retrospective of an earlier section of Snow's work, his image of the walking woman which he used from 1961 to 1967, has been organized by the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston. (In January 1985 the exhibition closes at the Art Gallery of Canada in Ottawa.)

Snow's Walking Woman (W.W. he called her), is a weather-vane to a certain period of his art. The generalized side view of the plump, striding figure in a tight skirt was the way Snow discovered to spell the weather of his heart. In essence the image was serial, like Bush's curtains of colour which he developed into his classic theme in the same period. But the Walking Woman was figurative. She therefore conveyed the sexual reference of the younger generation of painters like Dennis Burton with his "bellman" or Joyce Wieland, who was then Snow's wife. Painters of the 1960s used serial images like scorecards: we are able to recognize instantly the team/artist who was playing.
Like many artists from the time of Mallarmé, Snow has always felt that art was a game. "I make up the rules of a game," he has said, "and then I attempt to play it." In choosing the Walking Woman he reacted against abstract expressionism and the works he had painted in his immediate past, which, no matter how austere and plain, were painterly. In Theory of Love (1961), for instance, Snow showed the rudiments of sex, a red bar and a red circle sans the space for the bar. In Narcissus Theme the same year, he used similar simple geometric shapes. The Walking Woman was a way of clarifying his material and a way of developing variety, though he used the same subject. Discovering her in many different media he discovered himself. There was something hokey about her image, something raffish and casual. She wasn't intended to be more than a wry comment, especially at the beginning. But over the years, she developed. By the time he was finished with her, Snow had become a sculptor, and knew which way to go.

Snow wrote that "my subject is not women or a woman but the first cardboard cutout I made." At first she wasn't a stereotype. In drawings of 1961 he shows her raising a leg, or in pants. Early on, he painted her more loosely. We discover, for instance, that Snow was a pretty comedian. In Blue Leaving (1961), for instance, he applied green, brown and blueish red. There's something charming to the walking woman, even wispily; she leaves the room in Exit (1961), or appears in the subway in 1962 (he planted an image of her there). She can recall works by Paul Klee, Snow's early fascination before he fell in love with Marcel Duchamp. Sometimes he uses her in a more complex way as in Venus Simultaneous (1962), where she appears in blue, black, and Indian red. Works like this painting are much the best in the show.

By 1963, she's more sexy as in Beach-Head where Snow plays with the application of paint, Olympia where she appears nude along with five dressed images, or in Une nuit d'amour (1963) where he has folded up pictures of her. (This mood would climax in 1970 when Snow shows himself having sex with the image in Projection). 1963 is still a year in which he's having fun. The Walking Woman walks into one side of a painting called Etrus. At the other end is her cut-out. In Switch he plays on drawing first one side, then the other of her outline. Or she may appear on her side in Half-Slip.

By 1964 he was back to sex. She appears naked as a print in Register. Then she almost disappears. In The Window, we see only her face, and in 1965, he used her, seen through plexiglass, in installation pieces, sometimes with twelve different parts. She'd become an artist. He showed her walking in front of a Mark Rothko painting in Gallery. Now begins his clowning acts. She becomes a college, a sort of merzbild, rolled up and weathered. He's begun to have mixed feelings about her, like the painting of the same name. She may appear with different hair, skin, dresses. At last, at Expo, she became a stainless steel sculpture, criss-crossing the room.

The Walking Woman was more than an amusing joke that took off; she became an index to a certain period of Canadian art. Her image invokes a time frame to us, years when art was exciting. "There isn't a single content to the Walking Woman," Snow said recently. "Every work was of a different kind, generated a different content." In a way, using her in his art was like his attempt as a jazz musician to enlarge the scope of his improvisation (he still plays weekly stints at Toronto's Music Gallery). "Swing" is generated by the relationships between the shifting accents of "foreground" instruments and the relatively steady beat of the "background" rhythm section. "Snow once wrote about his music. From 1961 to 1967, the Walking Woman provided the background section to his improvisations as a painter. "Swing" is what her graceful image gave his work.
Chaque génération, chaque expert, en fait, chacun de nous s’est fait une certaine image de Watteau. La grandeur de l’artiste réside sans doute dans la multiplicité des interprétations que suscite son œuvre et qui ne l’épuise jamais. L’Enseigne de Gersaint, son testament et peut-être son œuvre la plus achevée, n’est pas que la simple description de la boutique d’un marchand de tableaux du Pont-Notre-Dame. Dans cette toile où le regard du peintre, absent de la scène, se pose sur des personnages qui examinent attentivement de la peinture, l’artiste nous donne l’emblème du bonheur de peindre, constitutif pour lui du bonheur de vivre. Ce bonheur malgré les avatars qu’ont subis ses toiles, Watteau peut encore nous le faire partager pour peu qu’à son exemple il nous soit possible de faire coexister en nous le recueillement face au réel et l’opposition à une mystérieuse absence.

**LE MARBRE ET LE BOIS**

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africaines présents et passés puisque Les Demoiselles d’Avignon doivent probablement plus aux fresques catalanes romanes, donc à l’Euphrate, qu’aux masques nègres. À la suite de ce grand artiste, une très petite minorité du monde occidental a bien voulu tourner les yeux, au prix de combien d’équivoques, vers ces bois et ces fougères arborescentes taillées à grands coups. Porteurs de mythes, débordants de forces, chargés de rumeurs, contenant autant de signes que d’interprétations. Les moustachis des peintres africains présents et passés, ainsi que l’étude de la pensée de Watteau, montreraient que l’art n’est pas le sapeur de l’histoire moderne, mais aussi une forme d’amour sur laquelle on peut compter pour le diviser par chacun de ses constituants.

Selon certains, les idoles et les masques nègres sont responsables de la désagrégation de la représentation des mythes. Il serait plus juste d’accepter que l’esprit oriental, dans son ensemble, a mal répondu à la question essentielle posée par ces yeux exorbités. Pourtant, c’est en intégrant un matériau nouveau qu’une société prouve, encore une fois, non seulement ses facultés créatrices, mais encore sa vitalité. Bien qu’à un haut niveau de tout niveau. Le Canada, et Ottawa plus particulièrement, ont l’avantage de posséder un artiste comme Lochhead, qui fait profiter sa ville et les gens de son entourage de l’amour passionné qu’il voue à la beauté. Kenneth Lochhead a tout du gentilhomme de la Renaissance, et ses étudiants savent peut-être mieux que personne que «bella figura» signifie en vérité «courage».

*(Traduction de Laure Muszynski)*

**KENNETH LOCHHEAD**

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