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Résumé de l'article

Se basant sur un travail en cours à propos d'une série de jardins publics un peu négligés à Montréal, cet article explore ce à quoi pourrait ressembler une approche transhistorique et matérialiste de l'étude intermédiale des jardins publics. Il se concentre sur les relations entre un film de Bernard Beaupré, *Bonjour Floralies*, réalisé en 1980 au sujet des jardins, et l'un de ces jardins dans le présent, comme moyen de développer un point de vue nouveau sur le fonctionnement historique et phénoménologique des deux.

On What a Garden Can Remember. The Jardin du Québec and the Floralies internationales 1980 (Montreal)

Erin Despard

The Jardin du Québec is a densely treed public garden that sits on a peninsula overlooking the Lac de l'Île Notre-Dame in Montreal's Parc Jean-Drapeau. Part of the former Expo '67 site, the garden is one of a dozen known collectively as the Jardins des Floralies. It was originally created for the Floralies internationales, a horticultural exhibition hosted by the city in 1980. The peninsula, like much of the island, is manmade. However, its square corners and straight edges are thoroughly disguised (at least from within the garden) by the trees, shrubs, and other vegetation that have grown over them, naturalizing the garden's topography in the process. Travelling its curving pathways, it is easy to have the impression that this is a well-maintained garden in a naturalistic setting. However, if you were to watch *Bonjour Floralies* (Bernard Beaupré, 16 mm, 1980), a documentary film about the exhibition, you would see that, in fact, the dense vegetation conceals both the artificial nature of the garden's construction and certain changes that have occurred over the years—most notably, a substantial decline in the diversity of plants growing beneath the trees and their replacement in some areas with invasive groundcovers.

¶2 Retained as a legacy of the exhibition, the Jardins des Floralies memorialize a hopeful as well as politically charged moment in Montreal's history, for the exhibition was meant not only to bring a variety of economic benefits to the province, but also to revitalize city spaces and soothe tensions raised by the first referendum on Quebec's sovereignty (just before the exhibition opened). Municipal administrators saw gardens as "*technologies douces*" for creating positive social, cultural, and economic change in the city, and used the exhibition to launch a variety of horticultural beautification initiatives. They cast gardening as a form of environmental stewardship that would make life in the city better for everyone.

¶3 In the intervening years however, the infrastructure and natural spaces of Parc Jean-Drapeau have been inadequately maintained for extended periods. The Jardins des Floralies in particular have seen uneven levels of care: some gardens have been renovated and replanted, some have received only intermittent care, and others have been totally abandoned.[1] As a peri-urban public space—that is, as a landscape meant to embody shared values and a certain continuity of meaning between past and present[2]—the state of the floral park is suggestive of deeply conflicted dispositions towards plants and nature in the city. However, the fact that the change that has occurred in many gardens is undocumented and multiply authored (e.g., by animals and visitors as well as gardeners), makes it difficult to identify those dispositions or interpret their significance.

¶4 In this context, it is hard to know what to make of the considerable diversity of media that was produced in connection with the exhibition (e.g., a documentary film, television spots, two tourist albums, postcards and stamps, not to mention newspaper coverage and countless photographs). On the one hand, they provide evidence with respect to *what* has changed. On the other, treated as mere documents, they open a yawning gap between past and present, showing all that we do not know about what has concretely happened, and just how quickly what was once self-evident can be forgotten.

¶5 In my study of these gardens over the years, I have grappled with the opacity of their material history from a few different angles.[3] In this paper, I explore a

1. It is worth noting that the park is administered by a para-municipal body that receives partial funding from the city to maintain the park. The rest has to be made up in revenue generated by special events and pay-for-use amenities. In the last couple of decades, there have often been shortfalls and the resources allocated to horticulture have suffered. Many of the gardens bear traces of a sharp decrease in resources allocated to horticulture as of 2007, when the budget was cut by almost 40 percent. Subsequent reports confirm that this level of funding remained static until at least 2011. *Bilan et recommandations pour la mise en valeur des jardins,* Montreal, Archives of the Société du parc Jean-Drapeau, 2007; *Budget 2011*, Montreal, Société du parc Jean-Drapeau, 2010.

2. Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Public Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1982.

3. For example, drawing on an autoethnographic writing practice and archival research (often frustrated by a park administration reluctant to grant access to what records of the gardens do exist). See Erin Despard, "Writing with the Jardins des Floralies in Montreal: Towards an Expanded Garden History," *Journal of Landscape Research* vol. 36, no. 6, 2011,

materialist approach guided by key insights drawn from archaeologies of the contemporary past and media archaeologies. In short, I treat media produced at the time of the exhibition as artifacts of ongoing processes of mediation that remain active, if not entirely legible, in the garden today. In the abstract, archaeology is designed to deal with gaps in documentation, focusing on the fact that the past is always materially present in our surroundings, even when we do not recognize it as such.[4] This opens up to study a range of otherwise invisible agencies and effects. Given the development of new materialist approaches within landscape architecture, garden studies, and media studies, there is ample precedent for exploring both film and garden from an archaeological perspective. However, it is not immediately clear how best to conceive the relationship between them, particularly now that the film is no longer being shown to mass audiences and the exhibition is over. Might it help to position the garden too as a form of media?

¶6 Much of my past work has treated landscape as a form of visual media—a "way of seeing" land through historically specific technical and material means.[5] In this paper, I translate certain aspects of this perspective to gardens, treating the Jardin du Québec as a form of horticultural media whose functioning is tied up with that of other forms. On this basis, and inspired by the work of literary scholar N. Katherine Hayles, I work through some of the material connections between the garden and its treatment in the film *Bonjours Floralies*. While I will not advance a comprehensive theory of what I call "transhistorical intermediation," I will deploy it as a critical lens for exploring some of the ways in which this particular garden was implicated in a multifaceted effort by the municipal administration to shift people's perceptions of plants in the city.

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p. 669–682.

4. For example, if it is buried in the dirt, or if it has changed form (e.g., through processes of growth or decomposition).

5. See Erin Despard, "Photogenic Urban Landscapes: Toward an Intermedial Framework for Landscape Criticism in an Era of Social Media," *Architecture_MPS*, vol. 14, no. 1, December 2018, p. 1–21, full text available at: https://www.scienceopen.com/document?vid=bf4afd8a-73bb-420e-aa30-41a496678c5c (accessed 24 February 2021). This is an approach that adapts and applies definitions of landscape developed by W.J.T. Mitchell and Denis Cosgrove. See W.J.T. Mitchell, "Introduction," in W.J.T. Mitchell (ed.), *Landscape and Power*, [1994], 2nd ed., Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002; Denis Cosgrove, "Landscape and the European Sense of Sight," in Kay M. Anderson, Mona Domosh, Steve Pile, and Nigel Thrift (eds.), *Handbook of Cultural Geography*, London, Sage, 2002, p. 249–267.

¶7 Before turning to this exploration, I briefly position my perspective in relation to other materialist approaches (i.e., to both media and gardens), including the fields of media archaeology and archaeologies of the contemporary past, and fill in some of the political and sociocultural context surrounding Montreal's hosting of the Floralies internationales.

The Material Turn in Landscape Architecture and Garden Studies

¶8 In a recent anthology, Jane Hutton observes that the last couple of decades have seen a turn towards the material in numerous fields.[6] While there have been explorations by architects and designers that in some ways pre-date this development,[7] it is nonetheless notable that historians and critics of landscape architecture have begun to investigate the material dimensions of landscape construction. As Hutton notes, this work is focused on uncovering material differences with sociopolitical ramifications in several realms: the socioeconomic and political relations in which landscapes are embedded, the experiences and affects that landscapes entail for different groups of people, and the contributions of non-human agencies.[8]

¶9 Within garden and landscape studies, postcolonial, racial, and ideological critiques of garden or landscape discourse and representation provide an important historical grounding for the consideration of material differences.[9] There has also been considerable interest in specifying the materiality of gardens in general: for example, the activity of gardening as integral to the garden's significance[10] and the

6. Jane Hutton (ed.), *Landscript* 5: Material Culture, Berlin, Jovis, 2018.

7. For example, the gardens of Gilles Clément, Louis Le Roy, and Teresa Gali-Izard.

8. Hutton, 2018.

9. See Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the "Improvement" of the World*, New Haven, Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2000; Mitchell (ed.), 2002; Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, The University of Minnesota Press, 2005; Diane Harris, "Clean and Bright and Everyone White," in Dianne Harris and D. Fairchild Ruggles (eds.), *Sites Unseen: Landscapes and Vision*, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007, p. 241–262.

10. Richard Pogue Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2008; G.R.F. Ferrari, "The Meaninglessness of Gardens," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism,* vol. 68, no. 1, Winter 2010, p. 33–45; Julian Raxworthy, *Overgrown: Practices between Landscape Architecture and Gardening,* Cambridge,

underappreciated agency of the non-human beings that shape it over time.[11] Perhaps most relevant are attempts to redefine the garden in terms of its material specificity. As Monique Mosser and Hervé Brunon put it, "[…] le jardin n'est pas une image abstraite mais une construction fondée, enracinée dans le sol, qui interagit avec le temps qu'il fait et le temps qui passe, avec son milieu, pris et compris dans son épaisseur historique."[12] Taking the materiality of the garden into consideration implies the need for a holistic perspective, specifically (for Moser and Brunon), one that includes new modes of apprehension, capable of taking the garden's dynamism and its historically specific context into consideration at the same time.

¶10 One of the fields that Mosser and Brunon identify as holding promise for the study of gardens is archaeology, because it promises to make certain invisible dimensions of gardens available to study. While their discussion focuses on methods appropriate to gardens of a deeper past than I consider here (e.g., microstratigraphic analysis, dendrochronology, etc.), an archaeological perspective is also a useful starting point for making sense of the incomplete and altered traces of change that contemporary gardens often contain. However, while archaeology of the ancient past privileges relations of both depth and proximity (where in the soil, and in what relation to other remains do artifacts appear?), archaeologies of the contemporary past are more oriented towards grappling with the temporally heterogeneous constitution of present surfaces. That is, with the fact that the materials appearing at a given site in the present were also there in the past—alongside or in direct contact with other things, beings, and processes that have disappeared or left only partial remains. As Laurent Olivier puts it:

> […] the present, the here-and-now, is not what is uniquely happening at this very moment, but on the contrary what has always been happening: the ageing of materials, the wearing-down of places, the growth and movement of bodies in space; to be brief, what the present of today expresses is the effect of time as expressed by the life of beings and things, just as all other presents, both past and to come, have expressed and will express it.[13]

Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2018.

11. See Franklin Ginn, "Sticky Lives: Slugs, Detachment and More-Than-Human Ethics in the Garden," *Transactions of the British Institute for Geographers*, vol. 39, no. 4, p. 532–544.

12. Monique Mosser and Hervé Brunon, "L'enclos comme parcelle et totalité du monde : Pour une approche holistique de l'art des jardins," *Ligeia, dossiers sur l'art*, vol. 1, no. 73–76, 2007, p. 64, full text available at: https://doi.org/10.3917/lige.073.0059 (accessed 24 February 2021).

13. Laurent Olivier, "The Past of the Present. Archaeological Memory and Time,"

The processes of growth, reproduction, and decay that constitute a garden as a living entity are, from this perspective, a way in which past events and circumstances do not just remain in, but help to constitute the present. An investigation of material remains may not comprehensively explain the transit from past to present in the garden, but it will yield an interpretation founded in the continuously unfolding effects of past events and circumstances.

Materialist Media Studies

¶11 While the field of media studies is often narrowly associated with research on the production and consumption of cultural content across a relatively delimited range of communication technologies and contexts, there is a growing body of work focusing on questions about what media *do* as opposed to what they mean, and how they practically work.[14] This research demonstrates the historical and political rather than teleological nature of technological change and has also drawn attention to the direct environmental interventions that media make and require, leading to suggestions that mediation can no longer be viewed as limited to the realm of human[15].

¶12 The material turn within media studies has enabled more expansive and abstract definitions of media, in terms of the relations they enable not only among people, but between people and their environments. For example, echoing feminist philosopher of technology Zoë Sofia, John Durham Peters defines media as containers of storage and transmission, but argues that it is not only collective processes of meaning-making they enable, but also sustenance, shelter, and ways of being in the world. They are elemental or infrastructural as opposed to merely communicative in their functioning. For example, on Peters' account, plants constitute one of the first and most important

Archaeological Dialogues, vol. 10, no. 2, December 2004, p. 204–213.

14. Under this heading, I include work on media ecologies, ecomedia, and media archaeology, among others—all of which are informed by a rich tradition of material thinking by authors such as Sigfried Gideon, Freidrich Kittler, Marshall McLuhan, Harold Innis, and others. For a review, see Nathalie Casemajor, "Digital Materialisms: Frameworks for Digital Media Studies," *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, vol. 10, no. 1, 2015, p. 4–17, https://www.westminsterpapers.org/article/id/206/ (accessed 25 February 2021).

15. John Durham Peters, *The Marvelous Clouds: Towards a Philosophy of Elemental Media*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2015; Jussi Parikka, *A Geology of Media*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

media: as "processors of sunlight, carbon dioxide, oxygen, and water, [they are] the basic media of energy. They make it possible for us to benefit from the bounties of earth and sun."[16] Of course, as I explore below, the fact that plants mediate sunlight does not preclude them from also mediating other things, like social relations and the way people perceive meaning in their surroundings. This, I contend, is when they become not vegetal but *horticultural* media; then everything depends on the way they are arranged and the context in which they appear.

¶13 In seeking an *operative* understanding of what old media do and how they work in the present,[17] media archaeologists have been particularly important in developing a more expansive materialist perspective, in part because the introduction of a longer time frame enables/requires a rethinking of what counts as media. At the same time, they have also expanded thinking about what media can do, as well as when and where. Substituting a practical and physical contact with media for the spatial relations of proximity that archaeologists normally analyze, they mobilize effects that are transhistorical and/or transversal—by using media in different ways than those for which they were designed and by introducing a disruption into teleological historical narratives (about the progress or evolution of media technologies over time). As Vivian Sobchak observes, media archaeologies seek to turn the past into a palpable presence—either directly, through literal relay (i.e., contact with a media object created and used in the past) or indirectly, by creating a reverberation of absence (the loss of past perceptions and ways of being).[18]

¶14 When considered in relation to archaeologies of the contemporary past, a media-archaeological perspective promises to add new traces to a given site (or garden). We can read not only what is materially present in the garden, but also what can be reconnected to it through the activation of old, otherwise absent, media forms. As Sobchak writes,

16. Peters, 2015, p. 154; See also Jussi Parikka, *Insect Media: An Archaeology of Animals and Technology,* Minneapolis, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

17. That is, by prioritizing physical investigations and/or experiments with media artifacts. Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka, "Introduction: An Archaeology of Media Archaeology," in Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka (eds.), *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications*, Berkeley, California, University of California Press, 2011, p. 1–24.

18. Vivian Sobchak, "Afterword: Media Archaeology and Re-presencing the Past," in Huhtamo and Parikka (eds.), 2011, p. 323–334.

> the previously overlooked and unthought metonymic fragment or trace provokes intense awareness not only of irrecoverable absence (conceived of as "the past") but also of an existentially present "otherness" (recognized as a difference located in, yet indistinguishable and distant from, the order of things that constitutes the everyday world we live intimately as "the present").[19]

I wonder if an old film of a garden can instigate, as it were, a new mode of apprehension in relation to the garden it depicts—related to but different from what Mosser and Brunon had in mind—that is, the ability to perceive not only what is missing, but something of what nonetheless remains, in absence.

¶15 In my explorations below, I bring the opening segment from *Bonjour Floralies* into contact with the present-day Jardin du Québec, describing forms of presence and absence that arise between them and which, while they cannot account for what is missing, help to show its continuing effects.

Horticultural Media and the Floralies internationales 1980

¶16 The Floralies internationales unfolded in two stages. The Floralies intérieures, which featured tropical plants, was hosted at the Vélodrome de Montréal from 17 May to 29 May 1980. The Floralies extérieures was held on Île Notre-Dame from 31 May to 1 September 1980. Comprising some forty hectares, it included garden contributed by twelve countries, four provinces, ten municipalities, and numerous institutions and businesses. Among the national participants in particular, the gardens tended to be either exemplars of the country's garden culture or to reproduce natural forms classically associated with it. Prizes were awarded in numerous categories (for the best installations overall, particular collections, and individual specimens). A comprehensive schedule of scholarly and professional symposiums was also held over the course of the exhibition.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 326.

¶17 As the first city outside Europe to host the Floralies internationales, Montreal was awarded the right to do so at a time when gardening was growing in popularity as a leisure activity across North America, and a newly widespread environmental awareness was taking hold in Quebec.[20] This cultural coincidence, combined with deteriorating physical and environmental conditions in the city as well as a global economic recession, led municipal politicians and administrators to portray the exhibition as a celebration of natural beauty that would inspire a revitalization of the city as a whole. Provincially, the exhibition was also envisioned as a means of increasing tourism and providing a boost to Quebec's nascent horticultural industry.

¶18 Leading up to the exhibition, the popularity of Jean Drapeau, Montreal's mayor at the time, was waning. Promising to transform the struggling city, his administration launched a suite of horticultural initiatives designed in part to encourage residents to take up gardening.[21] While this campaign built on a longer history in Montreal (and elsewhere) of planting trees and flowers to achieve social, economic, and political ends, they were deployed at this time in a more comprehensive and explicitly communicative manner.[22] Promoted under the banner of "*la ville fleurie*" and advertised via stickers, pamphlets, and photo contests as well as coverage in the news media, these initiatives were designed to change the image of the city—as much if not more than its material composition. They did not so much turn the city into a garden as deploy a variety of horticultural media to change how people saw and experienced it. While many of these deployments represented modifications of existing forms—e.g., the creation of "gardens" in small spaces such as window boxes or tree pits—or used other media (such as pamphlets, photographs, and stickers) to convey horticultural content, some undertook representations of basic horticultural elements such as trees and flowers in such a manner as to produce a new form.

20. The popular environmental movement came a bit later to Montreal than other North American cities. Jane E. Barr, *The Origins and Emergence of Quebec's Environmental Movement: 1970–1985,* Master's thesis, McGill University, 1995.

21. "Les Floralies au cœur de chez nous: Des quartiers fleuris pour les Floralies," *Nouvelles de l'Est,* 22 January 1980.

22. This history, which was informed by the City Beautiful movement and included several decades of flower-themed annual beautification campaigns, is described in Erin Despard, *The Dream of la ville fleurie: A Non-linear History and Pragmatic Criticism of Public Gardens in Montreal*, PhD thesis, Concordia University, 2013.

¶19 The opening segment of *Bonjour Floralies* was one of these (even if the film repeatedly reverted back to more conventional modes thereafter).[23] A production of Quebec's Service de la production audiovisuelle, and intended primarily for screening in educational and community settings, the film frequently seems caught between documentary and pedagogic modes, and features a heavy-handed narration of botanical and garden-historical details.[24] The opening segment however devotes a full six minutes to an un-narrated, distinctly cinematic study of the Jardin du Québec, focusing on aesthetic and kinesthetic effects of different plant species and enacting a remarkable degree of attentiveness towards them. As I describe below, it makes the garden reverberate with a transformative potential that is both compelling and difficult to interpret from the perspective of the present.

¶20 One aspect of the film's (and the garden's) context that is difficult to recover, is the way public life in Quebec was affected by political activities and discourse leading up to and following the referendum. Many Montreal politicians avoided taking a side in the debate on sovereignty, and the exhibition was viewed in part as a means of communicating to the world that Montreal was a cosmopolitan city, open for business, and not threatened by nationalist tensions. Even though it had economic ambitions and was informed by political interests on multiple levels—from the national themes evoked in various gardens to the vaguely ecological values rhetorically associated with it—the exhibition was promoted in an apolitical fashion, as a cultural and educational event.

¶21 Perhaps unsurprisingly, this is the narrative that has been retained in official histories of the exhibition, which tend to make no mention of the referendum, global recession, physical deterioration of the city, or Drapeau's declining popularity. They cast it as an organizational success story that gave a boost to the horticultural industry, solidified a love of gardens among Montrealers, and created

23. Another example was the flower markets which the city opened in public squares around the city. See Erin Despard, "Diagram of a Love for Plants Gone Bad," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* vol. 34, no. 2, 24 November 2015, p. 337–354.

24. In collaboration with Communication-Québec, the division of the Ministère des Communications specifically concerned with public relations.

a lasting legacy in the form of new public gardens.[25] Meanwhile, within the floral park, not only have many of the remaining gardens been drastically altered, but the manner in which they have been cared for is often quite visibly at odds with the historical context of their creation, often exhibiting a lack of attention to detail and seeming to prioritize efficiency over historical or horticultural precision.[26]

¶22 For many years, the Jardin du Québec appeared to receive more care than other gardens, seeming to preserve something of the spirit of the exhibition. However, more recently, a degree of neglect has begun to show its effects, making a juxtaposition with the artful and botanically comprehensive opening segment of *Bonjour Floralies* particularly compelling.

The Garden and the Film

¶23 At a full hectare in size, the Jardin du Québec was the largest of the installations at the Floralies. It was also the most topographically varied, containing a mountain built of large, angular rocks at its centre as well as numerous berms densely planted with shrubs and trees. Navigating between the berms and around the mountain, a curving pathway traverses the garden in a manner that conceals what is around each corner, creating a sense of intimacy and suspense (see Fig. 1). Although viewpoints onto the lake and a series of relatively quiet, enclosed spaces may lead some visitors to linger, it is a garden that, in the first place, encourages movement.

25. For example, see Monique Laforge, "Une première en Amérique : les Floralies internationales de Montréal," *Mémoires des Montréalais*, 5 April 2017, https://ville.montreal.qc.ca/memoiresdesmontrealais/une-premiere-en-amerique-les-floralies-internationales-de-montreal (accessed 24 February 2021).

26. For example, the didactic panels placed in numerous gardens described garden features and planting themes that are no longer accurate. It is also not uncommon to find labels left in place after plants have disappeared, resulting in their (incorrect) association with new plants.

Figure 1. Aerial view of the Jardin du Québec during the exhibition Floralies extérieures, 31 May–1 September 1980. Photo by Romeo Meloche. Courtesy of the Médiathèque du Jardin Botanique de Montréal.

¶24 To a visitor traversing its paths, the garden unfolds as a series of scenes and vistas that position flower beds in relation to culturally significant elements of the Québécois landscape: forest, mountains, water, and a log cabin or *maison d'autre fois*. As a press release prior to the exhibition's opening explained, Jean Landry, the landscape architect who designed the garden, wanted to "réunir en un seul endroit les divers types d'environnement qu'on trouve au Québec."[27] However, like other gardens at the exhibition, but perhaps more obviously than in gardens generally, it did not reproduce a natural landscape so much as translate elements of it into forms appropriate to a new medium (the garden). The mountain at its centre, for example, was constructed out of upturned slabs of rock—an approach modelled on a (much smaller) greenhouse display for begonias at the Jardin Botanique (see Fig. 2)[28]. It produced effects (of rockiness) that evoked a mountain image (what

27. "Le Jardin du Québec aux Floralies internationales de Montréal," 1980, p. 1, press release. *Bonjour Floralies*, Bernard Beaupré, 16 mm film, 1980. FC88.048, no. 4.14, Fonds Ministère des Communications, Cote E10 (Vidéothèque—Service de la diffusion audiovisuelle : Dossiers des productions, 1976–1992).

28. Personal communication, Jean-Jacques Lincourt.

we might picture in our minds when we hear the term "mountain"), but differed from the mountains actually found in Quebec (which are older, more rounded, and covered more completely in vegetation).

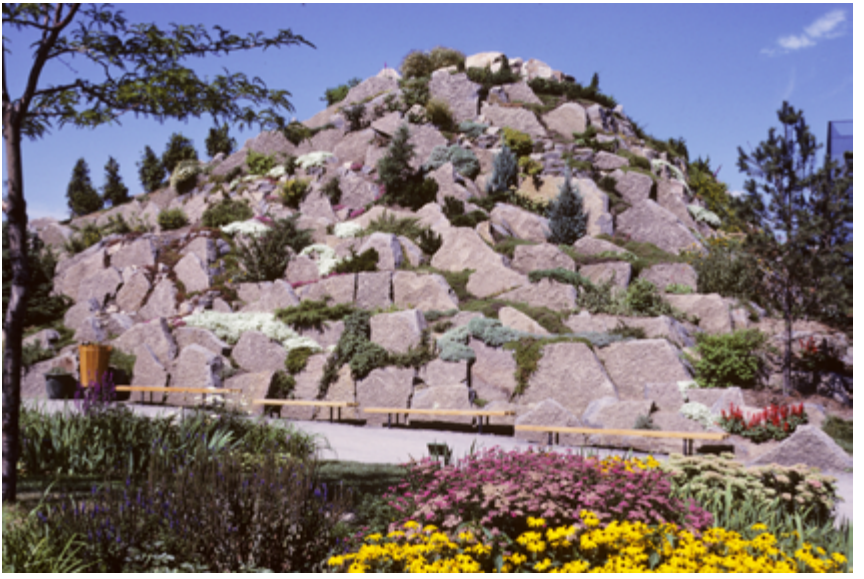

Figure 2. The mountain of the Jardin du Québec, during the exhibition Floralies extérieures, 31 May–1 September 1980. Photo by Romeo Meloche. Courtesy of the Médiathèque du Jardin Botanique de Montréal.

¶25 Thinking about gardens in this way, as media that use horticultural practices to reproduce forms found elsewhere, follows the thinking of N. Katherine Hayles, whose work on computational literatures positions books as just one node in a network of continuously evolving forms. She proposes we think about literature (or, I suggest, horticulture) less as a stable set of relationships between a limited number of forms and more in terms of "dynamic heterarchies" in which ongoing processes of intermediation generate new forms that in turn modify how existing forms function.[29] Within this framework, intermediation is what happens when "a first-level emergent pattern is captured in another medium, and re-presented with the primitives of the new medium."[30]

29. N. Katherine Hayles, "Intermediation: The Pursuit of a Vision," *New literary History*, vol. 38, no. 1, Winter 2007, p. 99–125.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¶26 In some ways, we already know this about the relationship between gardens and other media: it is well-accepted for example that, along with landscape painting and tourism, landscape gardens of the eighteenth century helped to change how people viewed actual landscapes.[31] But Hayles asserts that even seemingly incompatible forms—such as those of (biologically based) human intelligence and (digitally based) artificial intelligence, or gardens and films—can, via intermediation, "continuously in-form and mutually determine each other" in substantive ways over time.[32] Thus, if plants are media that transform the energy of the sun into carbohydrates via processes of photosynthesis and vegetative growth, the patterns that growth takes in different species, under different conditions, and in different sociocultural settings, will have different physical, ecological, and aesthetic effects. Those differences, and the way they are valued and put to use in different mediums, generate effects whose materiality and meaning are thoroughly intertwined. The nature of this intertwinement becomes apparent through consideration of how the effects of different mediums are made and experienced.

¶27 In the case of the Jardin du Québec and *Bonjour Floralies*, an intermedial lens can clarify not only how the two forms work, perceptually and phenomenologically, but also how certain opaque dimensions of their content should be interpreted forty years later. In particular, I have wondered what to make of the apparent political significance of the garden's contents, given a lack of explicitly political discourse around its creation. For example, a press release prior to the exhibition's opening claimed that the garden's location had been chosen in part for its proximity to Quebec's Expo pavilion (located across the water on its northern side): "On a voulu en faire une extension naturelle du spectaculaire pavillon de verre du Québec."[33] However, while the pavilion had been designed to embody the spirit of a modern, technologically advanced Quebec, it was clearly more Quebec's rural heritage that the garden celebrated.[34] Particularly in its inclusion of a *maison*

31. Simon Pugh, *Garden-Nature-Language*, Manchester, UK, Manchester University Press, 1988; Casid, 2005.

32. Hayles, 2007, p. 101.

33. "Le Jardin du Québec aux Floralies internationales de Montréal," 1980, p. 1.

34. A choice in keeping with an increased interest in rural landscapes in Quebec generally, beginning in the 1980s. As Montpetit, Poullaouec-Gonidec, and Saumier note, the Quiet Revolution was a movement preoccupied not only with modernizing the Quebec economy, but also with "une appropriation nouvelle du passé." Christiane Montpetit, Philippe Poullaouec-Gonidec, and Geneviève Saumier, "Paysage et cadre de vie au Québec : réflexion sur une demande sociale émergente et plurielle," *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*,

d'autre fois at its centre, the garden functioned less as an extension of the pavilion and more as its counterpoint—the mythic ground upon which the new Quebec was founded.

¶28 Further, in media produced at the time of the exhibition, the Jardin du Québec clearly functioned as an object of national pride: it was the most comprehensively documented, and its evaluations by journalists and the public bordered on the euphoric.[35] In *Bonjour Floralies* the garden receives a full six minutes—much more than any other garden (see Fig. 3).[36] In it, a cinematic treatment of the garden's plants, combined with a dramatic soundtrack devoid of narration, celebrates rather than documents the garden.

Figure 3. Excerpt from *Bonjour Floralies*, Bernard Beaupré, 16 mm film, 1980. FC88.048, no. 4.14, Fonds Ministère des Communications, Cote E10. Courtesy of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec. Vidéo

vol. 46, no. 128, 2002, p. 169, full text available at: https://doi.org/10.7202/023039ar (accessed 24 February 2021).

35. For example, as horticulturalist Paul Pouliot wrote, "Oui, vraiment, le jardin du Québec est une splendeur, une création merveilleusement bien réussie de notre jeune architecture du paysage, une réalisation horticole de première grandeur." Paul Pouliot, "Tout le Québec de verdure dans un seul jardin," *La Presse*, 1 August 1980.

36. A full 50 percent longer than the next longest segments (the Jardin du Grand Bretagne and the Jardin de la France, each of which ran just under four minutes).

The Garden in/of the Film

¶29 The film opens on a view of one of the corners of the *maison d'autre fois*, the flower beds to its north-east, some young birch trees, and the lake beyond. It is early morning and sunlight is just beginning to show on the horizon as piano and birdsong interweave. The camera focuses in turn on a small bird atop a spruce tree, birch leaves shimmering in the breeze, the reflection of the rising sun off the lake.

¶30 The garden is not revealed as such until a minute and thirty seconds has passed and the sun has risen, providing a sidelong view of the cabin, which appears at first as a lakeside chalet. The piano is joined by a synthesized organ and then by strings, which become audible gradually, over the course of several static shots: a bee crawling across a thistle, another view of the cabin, the moon high in the sky above the outline of a single tree, a water lily seen first from a distance and then, abruptly, thanks to a rapid zoom-in, up close. This sequence sets the tone for the rest of the segment. While there are a handful of overhead or panning shots, the segment is constituted largely of shots that focus—either closely or at mid-range—on individual plants or groupings of plants. For each of these, the camera retains the same position—making frequent use of zoom-ins (or zoom-outs) as well as "rack focusing,"[37] but otherwise maintaining its focus for at least five, but often seven or eight, seconds.

¶31 For example, in one shot, the frame is filled with the magenta flowers of the diminutive pink campion, a traditional cottage garden perennial. The focus is initially on the blossoms in the foreground, then after a few seconds changes to show us the blossoms in the background. It is as if the camera is trying to pull our wandering attention back, to make us redouble our efforts; as if there is something important there we might otherwise overlook.

¶32 The extent and intensity of attention that the film demonstrates towards plants is remarkable in the present context—for contemporary viewers, seven or eight seconds is a very long time.[38] Enough to look at both the globe thistle and the

37. A shot wherein focus is changed part-way through, such that the distribution of foreground and background is changed without altering perspective.

38. For comparison, I watched a souvenir video from the Floralies internationales 2014

bee that crawls over it—to verify the flower's characteristic blueness. Enough, most importantly, to notice the movements of the plants themselves—the nodding of heavy blossoms visited by bees, shimmering birch leaves, quivering blades of iris.

¶33 It is in these extended, closely focused shots that the film is most clearly doing something other than simply documenting the garden (in which case we might expect a kind of garden "tour," or at least more shots depicting large swaths of the garden and key viewpoints). Similar to the garden's relationship to the landscape elements of which it is composed, the film represents the plants found in the garden, but in perceptual and spatial relationships specific to cinematic forms.[39] In other words, it makes itself into a kind of garden, but given the constraints specific to it, the result is a quite different experience than that afforded by walking through a garden. The filmmaker's attempt to create an immersive experience of plants without recourse to the spatial elements a garden deploys and, in particular, without the benefit of bodily movement, produces a different kind of immersion, one in which close visual appreciation of things we do not normally see (e.g., the movement of plants) produces a transformative perceptual experience, investing plants with a new affective potential.

¶34 It is this difference that ties the film to the garden in a relation of intermediation rather than documentation. This allows us in turn to see things about how the garden works, what it does and does not do. As a starting point, it shows us how the garden's topographical prioritization of movement, foregrounds a visual appreciation of scenes and vistas over the close and sustained consideration of individual plants. A consideration of how the film's effects are made and what they practically and perceptually imply, may show us even more.

(held in Nantes, France). The vast majority of shots were only one or two seconds long, three at most. Though this was perhaps in part due to the shorter length of video (six minutes in total), what was also remarkable was the way the camera was in constant motion, panning, zooming, or swooping, on a kind of carnival ride through the exhibition.

39. Here I am looking for something similar to what Hayles observes about the intermediation of literary forms: "When literature leaps from one medium to another [...] it does not leave behind the accumulated knowledge embedded in genres, poetic conventions, narrative structures, figurative tropes, and so forth. Rather this knowledge is carried forward into the new medium, typically by trying to replicate the earlier medium's effects within the new medium's specificities." N. Katherine Hayles, *Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary*, Notre Dame, Indiana, Notre Dame Press, 2008, p. 58.

¶35 The same year *Bonjour Floralies* was made, film historian John Belton observed that the use of a zoom lens in moviemaking has a psychological effect distinct from that of the tracking shot. That is, by enabling a rapid change in depth of field without changing focus—i.e., by bringing the viewer closer to an object without physically moving the camera—the zoom produces effects that are "spatially distorting and inherently self-conscious."[40] It disrupts the immersion that the more common tracking shot enables, and in its body-less, unidirectional traversal of space simultaneously brings an object closer and produces a sense of separation from it. As Sobchak observed ten years later, in a more comprehensive analysis, the rack focus produces a similar effect. In both cases, it is not the viewer's position in space, but the object of attention that changes. This optical as opposed to physical movement makes us aware of its intentionality. It constitutes a "visible performance of attention"[41] in which we are (implicitly) reminded that the filmmaker is there with us. It dramatizes a change in attention that, due to the embodied nature of perception, is experienced as a change of the filmmaker's mind.[42]

¶36 That said, as much as the reliance on zoom and rack-focusing implied a human presence, the segment is practically devoid of people.[43] Even the cabin fades into the background of most shots in which it appears, and despite the fact that a draft scenario for the film specified it would include gardeners at work, these do not appear and there are no explicit signs of their intervention.[44] Everything suggests an appreciation of the garden's *natural* beauty over the artfulness of its design or the expertise invested in its care. The garden's significance belongs primarily to the plants themselves, not to the work of the people who planted and care for them.

40. John Belton, "The Bionic Eye: Zoom Esthetics," *Cinéaste*, vol. 11, no. 1, Winter 1980, p. 21.

41. Vivian Sobchak, "The Active Eye: A Phenomenology of Cinematic Vision," *A Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1990, p. 28.

42. Of course, particularly when the object of attention is a plant, this change of mind is understood to be provoked by the world with which it engages.

43. Aside from a woman who exits the log cabin and a fuzzy reflection briefly glimpsed in the surface of the pond.

44. "Devis de production," p. 4, *Bonjour Floralies*, Bernard Beaupré, 16 mm film, 1980, FC88.048, no. 2.4, Fonds Ministère des Communications, Cote E10 (Vidéothèque—Service de la diffusion audiovisuelle: Dossiers des productions, 1976–1992).

¶37 This makes the opening segment of *Bonjour Floralies* a kind of fantasy about the ready availability of natural beauty: the world can be *this* beautiful if only we (viewers, visitors, urban citizens) would slow down and take the time to appreciate it. To follow the camera in its optical movements through the garden is to experience an aesthetic pleasure that is at once involuntary and shared, technologically mediated and more-than-human. The event of this pleasure—which appears both serendipitous and made *for us*—reveals a common socio-perceptual premise between film and garden. That is, the concealed but palpable presence of other human beings who have in some way prepared the viewer/visitor's experience. Though visiting the garden is a dramatically different experience than that provided by the film, on some level, one is similarly aware that the plants appear as they do because they have been cultivated and cared for in specific ways; on another, it is part of the garden's pleasure to forget this fact, to experience the garden as if, like the film, it was its own self-contained, self-sustaining entity.[45] In fact, perhaps it is in part the pleasure of this forgetfulness that permits the submerged political significance of a garden such as the Jardin du Québec to continue resonating across the decades, without needing to be spoken.

¶38 Of course, it is also true that gardens are rarely so seamless in their effects as a film, particularly in a public setting, where it is not uncommon for the gardener's influence (or lack of it) to be imperfectly concealed. Consequently, another thing the film does is produce a profound sense of disjunction in relation to the garden in the present, for, not only are many of the featured plants long gone, there are numerous signs of neglect; both are hard to square with the reverent depiction of plants in the film. From the boarded-up cabin, with its original explanatory plaque still intact but only barely legible, to the sign at the entrance announcing that the garden was originally planted with "quelque 5 000 plantes vivaces et rosiers, [et] 10 000 plantes annuelles," and the complete disappearance of the mountain's alpine garden (now overgrown with vines and mature trees), the garden is permeated with absence or, as Sobchak puts it, "presence in absence."[46] Reminding us of what we are no longer able to experience, such absence produces a sense of loss within the garden, but it can also be generative of new perspective.

45. Pugh, 1988.
46. Sobchak, 2008, p. 235.

¶39 Having shown us the gap between past and present gardens, the film is at the same time a hinge between them, making it possible to trace the outlines of previously undetected material remains and disrupting the rather simplistic historical narrative otherwise available for their interpretation.

What the Garden Remembers

¶40 Unlike the film, artifacts within the garden are materially entangled with present processes of growth. Most of the changes that have occurred since the exhibition have been smoothed over by adjacent or self-seeding plants, which are continually turning absence into a new kind of presence (see Fig. 4). Here it is clear, as Olivier asserts, that there is not only one past, but many, and they continue, at different speeds and with differing degrees of impact, to unfold their significance in the present. This makes it important to consider, alongside historical documents capable of contextualizing the garden's contents, "the physical memory of the present" constituted in patterns of repetition and decay.[47]

Figure 4. The Jardin du Québec in the summer of 2017. Looking uphill at the Ruisseau fleurie, part of the mountain is visible in the upper right-hand corner of the photograph. Courtesy of the author.

47. Olivier, 2004, p. 207.

¶41 In the Jardin du Québec, an unevenness in care permits certain plants to remember the exhibition and changes that have occurred since. For example, the garden used to include a substantial rosarium. Originally containing 1300 roses, it had been reduced by 2017 to a single bed of some thirty or forty specimens struggling in the shade of shrubs and trees that had greatly expanded since the exhibition. Though some were still producing flowers, they were very small, with spindly stems.

¶42 Rather than consider the decline of these roses as mere horticultural error (because they were no longer suited to the location), the material fact of their presence was a means of glimpsing the continuing impact of past events and conditions. For example, given that roses require a great deal of specialized care,[48] their survival attested to the fact that they had received considerable attention from gardeners. At the same time, their faltering over the years registered the changes that had occurred in the garden since their planting (as the corner in which they grew went from a sunny exposure to shade), and to their importance within it—such that they warranted time and attention, even in poor health, while many less demanding or better situated species were lost to neglect in other areas of the floral park.[49] They reverberated, in their fragility, with implied, unspecified value, raising the question of why were they preserved and not other plants, not even other roses?

¶43 The rosarium does not feature in any photographs I have seen from the Floralies, nor (aside from one close-up) in *Bonjours Floralies*, which makes it hard to picture the roses in their original glory. However, there is a record of their planting, because the man who selected them and oversaw their care during the Floralies, left behind a series of annual reports detailing the work completed in the gardens under his care.[50] His name was Jacques Zafrany, and he was the head gardener in the rose garden at the Jardin Botanique.

48. Particularly in Quebec, where the winters are cold. In addition to fertilizers and treatment for pests and diseases, roses need to be cut back each fall, mulched for the winter, and then pruned again each spring.

49. Including the award-winning British rose garden.

50. The reports, which cover the years 1979–1989, are held informally by the horticulturalist currently in charge of the Roseraie at the Jardin Botanique, Jonathan David.

¶44 Perhaps not surprisingly, one of the roses he planted in great quantity for the Floralies was a Hybrid Tea called "Québec." It was first grown by Jean Gaujard, a French grower who named it to honour his hope, in 1943, that France would eventually be liberated from Nazi occupation by Québécois soldiers. "La rose *Québec*," writes Maud Sirois-Belle, "fleur d'espérance pour la France, fleur de mémoire pour les hommes venus du Québec en 1942 et 1944."[51] Except that, its investment with this memory happened after the rose had been sent, nameless, in 1942, to American growers who gave it the name "Madame Marie Curie." Which is how it was known, even in Quebec, until the spring of 1979 when a diplomat discovered by chance that it had been in cultivation under a different name in France. A secret connection with the past, hidden in plain sight.

¶45 How to characterize this situation, where the giving of a name calls out a people to whom the name is subsequently not transmitted? There was, as Sirois-Belle put it, a certain audacity in this "geste de résistance," but what is its meaning, once its failed transmission is taken into account? The story makes it seem as if the true name had been forgotten. But in fact, its naming came too late, was literally an afterthought, at least in relation to the international rose trade. The subsequent, very belated discovery of the rose's original name, though just in time for Quebec's first referendum on sovereignty, seems somewhat anti-climactic in relation to the original gesture. How late is too late, I wonder, for a shared memory to bring people together? What are the limits of hope, invested in a flower?

¶46 In Montreal at the time of the exhibition, flowers carried substantial positive affect; they were going to save the city by making it more beautiful. While the city's beautification initiatives were intended to encourage activities of gardening, the focus in promotional materials and newspaper coverage was often more on the appreciation of flowers, which were portrayed as restorative and uplifting. For example, as the caption for a series of photographs of window box gardens put it, flowers were "une réserve de soleil pour les jours gris. Elles réchauffent l'été de leurs couleurs vibrantes et leurs parfums embaument l'air. La campagne est toute

51. Maud Sirois-Belle, "Rosa Québec: Rose de mémoire," *Website of the Commission Franco-Québécoise sur les lieux de mémoire commun*, Bulletin no. 33, December 2011, https://www.cfqlmc.org/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&layout=item&id=420&Itemid=801 (accessed 24 February 2021).

proche, au bord de la fenêtre, accrochée au balcon, réfugiée dans les pots, des boîtes, des jardinières."[52] Journalists, politicians, and citizens alike were quoted speaking of their "love" for nature and the "joy" that flowers brought them.[53]

¶47 While this enthusiasm for flowers had a long history, it also corresponded at the time with a desire on behalf of politicians and administrators to soothe the political tensions raised in the lead-up to the first referendum on Quebec sovereignty. The love of flowers was seen to provide common ground on which social harmony among Montreal residents could be reestablished. As one city councilor proclaimed : "[L]'extraordinaire beauté des plantes ne pouvait que mettre de la gaîté dans nos cœurs."[54] In this context, it is not hard to imagine that *R. Quebec* bore multiple layers of political and emotional significance—providing a hidden "natural" connection with a cultural homeland, memories of service, sacrifice, and so on—while also, through its apparently self-evident beauty, seeming to require no interpretation, to carry its full significance in itself.

¶48 After I completed my archival research about the rosarium, but before I was able to verify the varieties of the roses that remained in the Jardin du Québec, the last of them were removed. It is possible those roses were not survivors from the exhibition, but varieties planted as replacements in the intervening years. Now that they are gone, I will never know if *R. Québec* was one of the survivors. The nature of its absence in the garden (recent or longstanding, planned or incidental) is as obscure to me as its name once was outside France.

¶49 The last time I visited the garden, over a year after they had been removed, the roses had not been replaced; in their place was a black weed-suppression barrier. Even if I did not know what used to grow there, I cannot imagine a more

52. "Floralies maison," *Perspectives*, 10 May 1980, n.p.

53. For example, the commissioner of the exhibition was quoted characterizing the Floralies as "un lieu de rencontre entre l'homme et la nature, un lieu où le visiteur se promènera entre les fleurs et la verdure, la lumière et le spectacle, l'air et l'eau fraîche… En fait, les Floralies veulent non seulement protéger, mais aussi exalter la nature!" "Les Floralies internationales de Montréal : Un bouquet de fraîcheur qui réconcilie l'homme et la nature," *L'Artilleur*, vol. 33, 1980, n.p.

54. Yves Lachance, "Un heureux mélange de beauté et de fraternité," *La Voix Populaire,* 27 May 1980, n.p.

perfect signification of absence. A black tarpaulin stretched taut and pinned down over a flower bed not only negates the possibility of plant growth, it looks like a hole. Its comparative visibility in relation to the roses that preceded it, makes the preservation of the rosarium up until 2017 all the more remarkable. Reading Zafrany's journals, I had started to think of the faltering persistence of those roses as a kind of gap, made visible: between what the planting of 1300 roses wanted and what that part of the garden became, between the complexity of what a rose can signify and the bare fact of their signification. In their absence, all of this is somehow amplified. The black tarp forms a crude imprint of loss, the outlines of an idea whose significance we no longer have the means of experiencing.

¶50 This, I think, is how the intermediation of film and garden becomes transhistorical: not only through the persistent effects of artifacts, but also through the more ephemeral *imprints* to which they provide access. These imprints remember past events and arrangements but also, even more elusive, the specific ways in which plants, and/or the place of their planting, were valued. Of course, they can't be documented, only registered—a sense of loss, or equally, of possibility; a question that cannot finally be answered. Or, as Sobchak would have it, a present absence that "pierces an *uncanny* hole in quotidian temporality (and comprehension) [...]"[55] They can never be fully revealed, but they can still generate effects, connecting moments in time otherwise distant from one another, in ways that are surprising.

¶51 During the period when the roses were declining, they remembered certain things about the exhibition and the way conditions in the garden had changed, but it was easy to walk past them without looking closely. The Ruisseau fleurie, a colourful series of perennial beds that constitute the garden's horticultural focal point, was just around the corner, drawing the eye across them to a view of the lake. It was only the removal of the roses and their replacement with a black tarp that interrupted the easy movement so integral to the garden's enjoyment, that clarified the way in which visits to the garden were not only activities of horticultural appreciation or garden criticism, but also of forgetting.

55. Sobchak, 2008, p. 324.

¶52 A film made using outdated tools and techniques, for use in a social setting that no longer exists, also forms an imprint, tracing the distance between past and present sensibilities and unsettling what we think we know about the garden and its history—all the things that it did not, apparently, have anything to do with.

¶53 The opening segment on *Bonjour Floralies* ends with three slightly different but equally static head-on views of an iris. Over thirty long seconds, boredom finally sets in. *Iris versicolore* is a plant that grows in most parts of Quebec, thriving especially in wetlands, but enduring even in drought. Today it is the floral emblem of Quebec and we know that the *Fleur de lys* was most likely modeled after an iris, not a lily as was once thought. But at the time of the Floralies, the provincial flower was *Lilium candidum*—a species that, in addition to being non-native, is not even hardy in Quebec.

¶54 The final moments of the film's opening segment pass like an uncomfortable silence in a conversation that began enthusiastically but has encountered a dead end; in their almost absurd duration, and in their mediocrity, these static shots of a common yet underappreciated wildflower insist on something that, even after the dream of sovereignty had entered the official political process, could not quite be said. At least, not in a garden.

Conclusion

¶55 In her study of the intermediation that occurs between traditional and computational literary forms, Hayles is not only interested in how to interpret new works, but also in what their composition and consumption tells us about changes in what we take literature to be, and how it is made: "[…] the deconstruction of the sound and the mark […] the rupture of narrative and the consequent reimagining and re-presentation of consciousness […] the deconstruction of temporality […]," and so on.[56] In concluding, I do not wish to speak of the transhistorical intermediation between gardens and other horticultural media in such general terms, but rather of the manner in which that critical lens has made it possible to see how the mediating effects of this particular film intervene in my perception of the garden and its past, and how that might in turn serve to trouble received historical narratives about its importance.

56. Hayles, 2007, p. 121.

¶56 By prioritizing optical over physical movements in its depiction of the plants in the Jardin du Québec and taking into consideration the images and associations in circulation at the time via other forms of horticultural media, the film can be seen to explore the perceptual and experiential dimensions of what was understood as a social and cultural common ground. As Sobchak and Belton argue,[57] human beings were conspicuously or, rather, performatively absent from this space. On the one hand, this could be taken as an affirmation: the capacity for a reverent attention towards plants was at once common (to viewer and filmmaker alike), and worth celebrating. On the other, the performative quality of the segment draws attention not just to the implied presence of a filmmaker, but also to a process of technical fabrication. This garden is markedly different from the garden as visited and it is in part the camera that has made it so.

¶57 This is, of course, something else that people shared at the time of the Floralies—the fact of living through a time in which media technologies were continually opening up new perceptual and expressive possibilities and, in the process, diversifying available perspectives on a given setting or situation.[58] The film's beauty is not just in what it shows us about plants, but also in its amplification of the camera's specific affordances for creating a novel experience—not of suspenseful human drama or even exotic plant species, but of relatively ordinary garden plants and their interactions with insects, the wind, sunlight. It shows us a beauty that resides, not in the world itself, but in the numerous and never-ending processes of its fabrication.

¶58 As for official narratives about the garden's significance—and specifically, what does not appear there—while there are several ways in which the politics of Quebec sovereignty are woven into the fabric of the Jardin du Québec, it seems a mistake to reduce even its political significance to questions of national identity. For me, it is less that the garden served political ends and more that it was a site where embodied perceptions and experiences of plants were composed equally of aesthetic and political influences. Forty years later, sensibilities and perceptual dispositions that

57. Sobchack, 1990; Belton, 1980.

58. The Floralies corresponded, for example, with the proliferation of small, affordable, and increasingly automated cameras. Where people appear in *Bonjours Floralies*, they are often pictured taking photographs of the gardens.

were once seamlessly intertwined, appear as disconnected fragments, and we can start to see some of the contradictions and complexity in what was otherwise taken for granted at the time of the exhibition. The way flowers could carry political and cultural meaning, for example, but also emotions associated with direct experiences of nature. Or how a love of flowers did not necessarily imply an appreciation of the people or the work that would keep them alive.

¶59 Perhaps all this hints at a hidden source of the garden's popularity at the time, as well as the glimpses of transformative potential it is still possible to sense between it and the film, even as the garden declines. Whatever was envisioned for it (or is now said about it) the garden does not memorialize the love of flowers as a simple shared pleasure, it remembers the messiness and the complexity of sharing anything and the openendedness inherent to making a place and/or an aesthetic experience out of living things. Its reproduction of "natural" landscape elements embodies a perspective not on nature, but the future—one that, even though it is now past, still promises something about how we might revise our ideas of what is possible in the city.

On What a Garden Can Remember. The Jardin du Québec and the Floralies internationales 1980 (Montreal)

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Abstract

Drawing from work in progress at a series of somewhat neglected public gardens in Montreal, this article explores what a transhistorical, materialist approach to the intermedial study of public gardens might look like. It focuses on the relationship between a documentary film about the gardens made in 1980 (Bonjours Floralies, Bernard Beaupré), and one of the gardens in the present, as a means to develop a novel point of view on the historical and phenomenological functioning of both.

Résumé

Se basant sur un travail en cours à propos d'une série de jardins publics un peu négligés à Montréal, cet article explore ce à quoi pourrait ressembler une approche transhistorique et matérialiste de l'étude intermédiale des jardins publics. Il se concentre sur les relations entre un film de Bernard Beaupré, Bonjour Floralies, réalisé en 1980 au sujet des jardins, et l'un de ces jardins dans le présent, comme moyen de développer un point de vue nouveau sur le fonctionnement historique et phénoménologique des deux.

Note bibliographique

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