

ETC



Moments choisis

***Moments choisis*, Galerie de l'UQAM, January 15 to February 21, 1993. Curated by collection curator Francine Paul, La Banque Nationale du Canada**

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Numéro 22, mai-août 1993

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/36074ac>

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Éditeur(s)

Revue d'art contemporain ETC inc.

ISSN

0835-7641 (imprimé)

1923-3205 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

Molter, M. (1993). *Moments choisis / Moments choisis*, Galerie de l'UQAM, January 15 to February 21, 1993. Curated by collection curator Francine Paul, La Banque Nationale du Canada. *ETC*, (22), 62-63.

COLLECTIONS

MOMENTS CHOISIS

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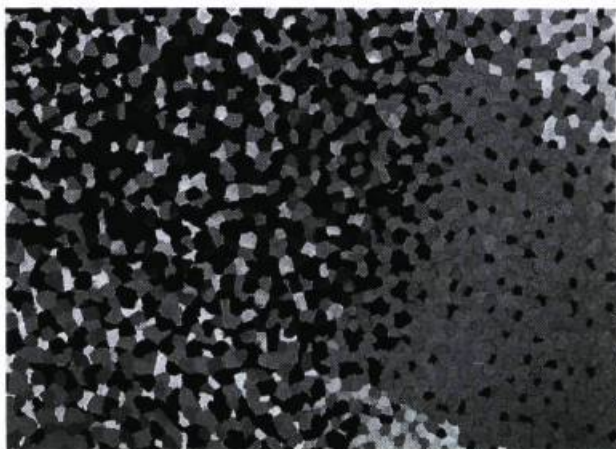
Moments choisis is a profile of the present collection of La Banque Nationale du Canada with some 68 works by 64 artists presented in the context of the Galerie de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. The bank has a tradition of public presentation of its collection and, in fact, it was the single most important source of work for Galerie de l'UQAM's 1992 summer exhibition curated by Gilles Daigneault, *L'Anarchie Resplendissante de la Peinture, Montréal 1942-1992*. Moments choisis marks the largest presentation of the collection outside the institution to date and the first time Galerie de l'UQAM has presented the collection of a large corporation.

The effect of this selection, beginning with the earliest work in the exhibition, *Murray Bay*, by Joseph Franchère, dated 1895, and extending to work as recent as Brigitte Radecki's *Dessin Rupestre* from 1990, is one of curatorial sensibility combined with state-of-the-art installation that brings into dialogue various periods in history through the works of some of Québec's and Canada's visual artists.

Francine Paul's Moments choisis were made from a collection of approximately 4 000 works including photography, sculpture, work on paper and painting. The exhibition is an outstanding representation from the resource of a single collection, which in the university setting provides both students and the public free access to some work that might not otherwise have been seen and studied together in such a context. While this sort of corporate and academic association may, as a precedent, be a sign of the times, it is also apparent that the Banque Nationale has established a tradition in its manifest interest in the visual arts.

One of the more significant recent acquisitions presented here is the 1983 *Nyctales boréales* by Jean-Paul Riopelle, a collage of mixed media and paper on canvas that was included in the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts November 1991 retrospective of Riopelle on the occasion of the opening of the new wing galleries. The work, purchased through Dominion Gallery in 1986, displays the direct treatment, including an aerosol stencil motif with collage border and french gaulois imagery at centre, prominent in more recent production by the artist.

Nid I by Jacques Payette, mixed media on paper purchased in 1991, is an example of a work, the first major work by this artist included in the collection, that has been part of a thematic itinerant exhibition curated by Francine Paul, titled *La nature vue à travers la collection de la Banque Nationale du Canada*. This work, with its classic



Ulysse Comtois, *Alter Ego*, 1978. Acrylique sur toile; 91 x 122 cm. Collection de la Banque Nationale. Editions L'Image de l'art

PHOTO : DANIEL ROUSSEL

treatment of the contemporary iconography of the bird in the industrial milieu, is also in dialogue with work by Betty Goodwin, *Untitled (Black screen series)*, and by Paul Béliveau, *Objets et dérivés, I et II*, the former a tar, pastel, graphite and wash on Geofilm paper, the latter a lithographic series from 1990.

Paul Émile Borduas' 1942 *Gouache numéro 31*, is the only work included from the *L'Anarchie resplendissante de la peinture* exhibition. It is displayed in complementary proximity to the 1945 Alfred Pellán *Chaleur*, a meeting of two polarities of the *automatiste* period that rarely shared the same position in that time frame. This juxtaposed against the 1921 *Six esquisses pour tableaux religieux* by Ozias Leduc, all in harmonious format and in a unity proclaiming these major works' intimacy within this important historical collection. A bronze bust from 1897 by Louis Philippe Hébert, portraying Francois-Xavier Saint-Charles, is an important period sculptural representation by this artist of one of the present-day institution's earliest collectors and one of the founders of the, at that time, Banque Provinciale.

Edmund Alleyn, a painter rarely seen in current exhibitions, is represented in the 1964 oil on canvas *Bat-à-klan*, giving evidence of one of

the more anthropomorphic aspects of the collection. This work is hung in proximity to the 1985 *Petite nature morte rouge* by Monique Régimbald-Zeiber, a large acrylic on canvas that is usually found in a bank dining room. One of the more confrontational works in terms of a bank setting is the copper *Réflexion ou Spéculation, numéro 2*, pennies on masonite, 1990, by Jacky Lafargue. Here the artist formally questions the connection between art and investment as it relates to the institution and takes a stark look at the corporate share of the transaction. Is the reception of the Banque Nationale collection under scrutiny by the academic community? If so, who gains from this precedent? According to the sponsors, many alumnae of the Université du Québec à Montréal, the university, its public and the institution will all benefit.

Perhaps, in terms of the Banque Nationale du Canada collection, one aspect that could receive attention is the part of the collection representing Canadian artists outside the province of Québec. Presently, in *Moments choisis*, one finds little in the way of major moments outside Québec, although it is notable that homage is provided to Greg Curnoe with the 1980 *Dr. Morton Front Wheel* lithograph on plexiglass, an example of both the excellence and interest of this Canadian artist. Also included is a work by Gershon Iskowitz, *Variation on Green number 2*, oil on canvas, 1978. One of the brighter moments chosen is a lithograph on paper from a sensitive period preceding the plastician direction by Guido Molinari, *Sans titre* dated 1958-80. Kittie Bruneau's *Le crabe volant*, 1981 oil on canvas, is positioned in relation to the 1974 ink on paper *XXVIII B* by Lucio de Heusch and the 1970 lithograph on paper, *Le carreau bleu* by Claude Tousignant, in a formal representation that provides a three-panel curtain of colour in separated panels, through which we observe at the far end of the gallery Luc Béland's 1988 acrylic on canvas *Commentatio Mortis : Tout corps à genoux...*, placed to strengthen this colour-bond relationship.

Exhibited in relative isolation is the 1989 mixed media on canvas work *In memoriam VII* by Marc Garneau, which usually finds its place in the company of the president of the Banque Nationale. This mixed media collage painted with palette knife and hard edge qualities is closely associated here with works by Marcelle Ferron and Albert Dumouchel, in the grand period of abstraction, and in relation to works by Rita Letendre and Pierre Gauvreau, the latter a 1980

Andrew Durtkewych, *Sans titre*, Bronze. Collection de la Banque Nationale.



PHOTO : DANIEL ROUSSEL, ÉDITIONS L'IMAGE DE L'ART

acrylic on canvas titled *Un arbre n'attend pas le train*.

The concluding moments, on this choice itinerary that

began with a 1907 watercolour by William Brymer *Maison à Saint-Eustache*, lead back full circle to a selection of my own chosen moments from among the many in this curatorial selection by Francine Paul. I note the 1978 acrylic on canvas *Alter Ego* by Ulysse Comtois and the 1978-79 lithograph *Géométrisation triangulaire solaire II* by Serge Tousignant. More recent acquisitions, in new directions, include *La Sirène* from 1986, a wood polychrome sculpture by David Moore; and the wood polychrome relief by René Derouin *Equinoxe II* from 1988. Both complement the excellence of such earlier work in the collection as Jean-Philippe Dallaire's *Tête de femme* from 1953. These treasures out of the vaults continue to breathe in harmony with work by artist Francine Larivée *Terre V*, 1986-92, moss and acrylic, in witness to contemporary concerns and to growth and continuity in the collection.

MIKE MOLTER

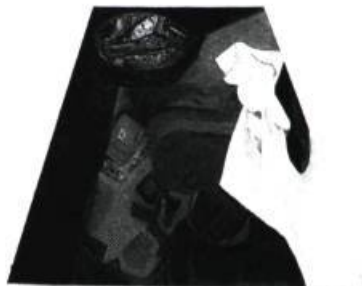


PHOTO : DAVID BAITS

Monique Régimbald-Zeiber, *Petite nature morte rouge*, 1985. Acrylique sur toile; 130 x 90 cm.