

## Texts in English

### Mildred Grand

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# TEXTS IN ENGLISH

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## THE STRUCTURAL HYPOTHESIS AND THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL POSTULATE

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Jennifer OILLE

As places the London Film Makers Co-operative and the Lisson Gallery are unique. I know of no other film co-operative providing printing, processing, editing, filming, display and distribution facilities. Jonas Mekas' New York Film Makers' Co-op and Bruce Baille's Canyon City only distribute. Dissatisfaction with conventional projection space and cinema circuits, the economic expedient of sharing facilities brought Malcolm La Grice, Annabel Nicholson, Peter Gidal, Gill Eatherley, David Crosswaite, Paul Hammond and Mike Dunford together in 1967 with subsequent creative, but not economic, prosperity. Until last year the British Film Institute granted funds only to individuals, the Arts Council only to artists to make films about their work (excluding film). Every year Dan Flavin, Sol Lewitt, Richard Long, Don Judd, Dorothea Rockburn, Carl Andre produce a profound and definitive statement, a moment in history, specifically for Nicholas Logsdail's clinical Lisson Gallery. He offered them their first and only forum and so it is to Logsdail that one can owe the generation of a generation of British minimal, conceptual and process art (and much of the Tate's contemporary collection).

But what is made is more important than the place it is made in. And what is being made purports an aesthetic analogy between film and object built on an aim asserting the integrity of each. Object as object, film as film. They share three premises — the abstract expressionist, that the act of creating remain visible and implicit in the finished work; the minimal, that the parts, pared to essential and essence, remain distinct and analysable within the whole; the reflexive, that the work be self referential, alluding and illuding to nothing but itself, that the act of immediate perception be the basic context of one's confrontation with the work. Both demand a structural definition on a phenomenological postulate.

The film makers are inherently political but theirs must be the first political statement without political content. Because there is no content. Because narrative is illusion it is authoritarian and manipulative and so cannot be used to break down its own devices. It imposes, through the process of identification, a set of alien aesthetic and social values on a passive viewer. Structural film asserts active, conscious and immediate analysis. Secondly narrative film is epistemological borrowing concepts and models from other sources. So get on with film as film. Phenomenologically. The reinvention of cinema from scratch, from celluloid, projector, light, screen, duration, shadow, emulsion, positive/negative reversals, optical duping/refilming, a non-illusionistic, non-model oriented experience. The only real-

ity is looking at the film. The in/film and film/viewer relations and the shape of the film are primary to any specific content. Content is only something on which the maker works to produce an event. The process of making the film is the film. Structural film is action-on (making) and the process of active experience in relationship-to (viewing).

The results. Gill Eatherley's «Light Occupations». The activators (projector and film maker) and their activity are filmed and screened simultaneously, the right screen being the result of what is actually occurring on the left screen. David Crosswaite's «The Man with a Movie Camera». In the centre of the screen we see a mirror. The camera slowly focuses on the mirror and we begin to see in it the film maker and the camera that is shooting the image we are seeing. Mike Dunford's «Deep Space». A long shot of a city street. Then a shot with hand held camera. The same with camera shaking sideways. Blur. Freeze. Each of his films is an hypothesis rather than an assertion. They are not about aesthetics, or ideas, or systems, but about film, film making, film viewing and the interaction and intervention of self conscious reasoning activity in that context. Paul Hammond's «Eiffel Trifle» brings fluidity to a fixed image of the Eiffel Tower. A number of projectors create an interaction between different pieces of film, and by using a variety of screens he erects an architectural structure echoing the shapes within the film. He touches sensibility not through concept but by rhythm, colour, structure. Annabel Nicholson asserts the relationships between physical action and filmed image in an analogy between a sewing machine and a film projector. An extended loop of film is passed around the room with Annabel puncturing it on the sewing machine and the projector demonstrating the results.

From film to object. An inert symmetry, the absence of titles, the lack of climatic incident and hierarchy of part, an analytic integration of structure, surface, shape and colour into a synthetic whole purges Don Judd's work of iconic reference. In January he made three pieces for the Lisson Gallery which recombined his vocabulary of forms into a statement as important as those of 1962 and 1963. In each of two rooms walls hemmed in the back and sides of a rectangular box, of naked plywood. They denied the sensual implication or contradiction that used to result from his play of surface and texture. They negated the earlier openness and three dimensionality which had always asserted an afrontal ambiguity and independence from wall or floor. Completely frontal, totally wall and floor bound, these spartan geometric presences subsumed the entire room into the sculptural whole. Nothing mediated between perception of object. A very human, one to one relationship.

The month before Dan Flavin did not imitate light, but used light as light. Configurations of industrial fluorescent tubing by shadow and articulation absorbed space and place into an intense and immediately visible statement. Horizontal or vertical alternations of warm and cool white. A square, red verticals facing inward, blue horizontal facing outward, creating solid line and diffuse shadow. There was Robert Ryman whose industrial, premanufactured substances and supports talked about light reflection and absorption, opaque and translucent, matte and shiny, thick and thin, smooth and rough. Such material facture implies direct phenomenological encounter and denies the validity of any other sense exploration.

It is fitting that the only movement which witnessed a similar analogy between film and object, the Russian experiment of the 1920's, should have a similar premise, tectonica, factura, fabrica. It is equally fitting that Sol Lewitt should be making a series for Lisson entitled «The Location of the Line» for in 1921 Alexander Rodcenko wrote his manifesto entitled The Line. «At its beginnings figurative painting set for itself the exclusive goal of depicting objects and man in nature, as if happened in reality, to the point of forgery — total illusion — so that the spectator could think that he was presented with a slice of life and not with a painting... Now freed from the object and the subject, painting has devoted itself exclusively to its specific tasks.

I have introduced in the plane surface the line as a new element of construction... The line is a beginning and an end in painting as, more generally in any construction. The line is a means for passing, motion, collision, border, reinforcement, conjunction, etc.»

But a substantive difference remains. For Rodcenko the line was investigated only as a means to an end.

«The line has revealed a new vision of reality: to construct, literally, and not to represent, to be in the objective or the non-objective, to build constructivist, functional equipment in life and not from outside of life.

Construction is a system of object making based on a functional utilization of matter in order to reach a predetermined goal.»

The members of the London Film Makers Co-operative show their work to the public every Wednesday night at their studio/cinema — 13a Prince of Wales Cresc., NW1.

Sol Lewitt's the Location of the Line will be at the Lisson Gallery in May and June, 68 Bell Street, NW1.

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## THE MUSEUM IN FLUX

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By Andrée PARADIS

The idea of the open, multidimensional and certainly complex function of the museum is beginning. What is dying to-day is the notion of the closed systematized entity, of the museum conceived as an exclusive place of conservation cut off from its primary obligation: to place works of art on view. This major transformation is not brought about without difficulty. By confusing the ideas of dimension and of function, through exaggerated showings which resemble the fair, we have endangered the real greatness, the *raison d'être* of the museum, which is to create the place of meeting with works, a place of friendship and discovery. At the time when Art, in search of freedom, descends into the street, the museum ought, on the contrary, to emphasize its distinctive character. Being responsible for the works it chooses and preserves, it must seek the presence of the public and do everything possible so that the latter will *choose to come* and live with the works an experience which appeals as much to intelligence as to feeling.

Can the museum really stimulate an environment? If it does not do this, it is unworthy of its rôle, and it would be a mistake to believe that stimulation is reserved for some museums rather than for others. Here again we must not confuse stimulation with promotion. Every

museum has its own stimulating vocation. In Quebec there are too few museums for the privilege of stimulation to be the preserve of a few institutions. What we must ensure for our museums, for those which depend on the state as for those which depend partially on private enterprise, are realistic conditions of development that take needs into account and allow for the use of collective equipment.

It is necessary to understand museums, all museums, their order of importance matters little, in terms of a network indispensable to cultural life and to ensure them acceptable conditions of existence. Beyond regular and progressive financial support, we must work to make them autonomous, to give them the opportunity of developing initiatives that encourage the presence of the public, to give them the possibility of re-inventing the means of direct information and, particularly, of fostering research by creating many positions in conservation and in the educational area.

Finally, it would be helpful to exchange a certain conforming security for risk, creation and invention, to tear ourselves away from what claims to solve everything, to dare, to consider life, the world and the museum as *open systems*. A policy of museums passes logically through a policy of man, who is the principal user of them.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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## PREAMBLE TO ALLEYN'S SUITE QUÉBÉCOISE

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By Guy ROBERT

Born in Quebec in 1931, Edmund Alleyn studied at the school of Fine Arts there. His remarkable talent as a draughtsman inspired him from 1954 to produce brilliant works of great skill in the wake of painters such as Picasso, De Kooning or Pellán. A revelation of Nicholas de Staël. In Paris from 1955 to 1970, returning a few times to Quebec. In 1957 he deepened his plastic experience by sculpting strange little sarcophagi<sup>1</sup> from which soon arose an abundant series of non-figurative pictures made up of stenographic symbols on backgrounds of a rich chromatic material. In 1964 these abstract Expressionist paintings borrowed their new appearance from the mythology of the American Indian, and the background of the picture became landscape. The pictorial dance therefore became figurative once more. Already sunsets appeared. And also, more conspicuously, fantasy, humour, the taste for play. In Paris, between 1966 and 1969, a few series of schematized paintings, permeated with science-fiction, with cybernetic obsession, with terrifying surgery: the suites of the **Zooms, Conditionnements, Agresions**. From 1968 to 1970 the adventure of the **Introscape**<sup>2</sup> entered upon a sort of synthesis of the sensory perceptions and plastic proposals tested until that time by Alleyn. And it is electronics, already incorporated into some works

from 1965 on, that appeared to attract the artist to a greater degree, the artist becoming a conceptor, a film producer, an engineer of the senses, a missionary of communication. On the threshold of the televisual images of the era, he produced a strange picture titled **Marine**, in 1968: in front of a sunset perfumed with psychedelic flavour, we see the profile of a prehuman still weighted down by his simian skeleton.

### The Twilights of La Suite québécoise

The two sunsets (of 1964 and 1968) mentioned above thus serve as prelude to *Suite québécoise* on which Edmund Alleyn concentrated his energies in 1973 and 1974, since his suite comprises six large pictures representing sunsets, and accompanied by about thirty figures painted life-size on panels of transparent acrylic, the whole intended to form one and the same place, to rise in one same space, a same room, an enigmatic formation.

Let us stop first at the pictures, while emphasizing that the artist sees them as inseparable from their figures. But since, when all is said and done, we cannot say everything at the same time, nor can we ever say everything . . .

The crepuscular perspective of the two preceding sunsets suggested, beyond the nostalgic atmosphere that always permeates the end of the day, the expression of a disturbing ambiguity: in 1964, that of the Amerind cultures of Canada, cast in detached pieces into the sky of the landscape, floating like stuffed relics on the absurd surface of a distracted memory; in 1968, that of the Peking man about whom we do not know whether he precedes or follows our present civilization on the dark strand of history.

In each case, fixed time, suspended, stopped, that has been a faithful theme in Alleyn's work for twenty years. Let us recall some segments of it: throbbing life captured in the lasso of the skilful pencil at the time of the School of Fine Arts, then the obsession hidden in the secret of ancient sarcophagi, the shadow of Nicolas de Staël behind his scribbled secrets, the abstract Expressionist stenographic stroke, in a different direction, condensing his urgent energy in the moment of the rough outline, the dizzy moment of truth of dissection or of *zoom*, and at last the egg of *Introscape* that plunges its passenger into a slotted parenthesis on the very flank of exterior time and rocks him in the giddiness of his own immediate sensations.

In the six pictures of the *Suite québécoise*, the course of time stops at the same strategic moment, that of twilight. None the less, the place varies, in an intriguing way. At one end of the series, an orthogonal composition, in the manner of Mondrian in the nineteen twenties, but where one of the rectangles becomes a sunset, according to an astonishing *view* in this geometric language. At the other end of the series, a new surprise, that of palm trees which stand out in profile in front of a sunset directly inspired by a coloured postcard<sup>3</sup>; at first we think of Miami, which is a part, as we know, of contemporary secular Quebec poetry (whence the logical insertion of this exotic landscape in Alleyn's *Suite* nevertheless québécois); then, on looking at it more closely, we prolong the exotic influence from the islands of the Pacific, even if the profile of the palm trees would call to mind the Mediterranean coasts just as well.

We no longer know much what is involved, in front of this picture inspired by a post card inspired by an exotic landscape inspired by an incurable dream about other places, which still

remains a painful fashion of here confessing what obsesses. *Fuge te ipsum*, Seneca previously remarked, (if I am not mistaken) twenty centuries ago, in one of the most terrible anti-tourist slogans ever uttered. In the foreground of Alleyn's picture, the profile of the palm trees and the beach stands out in silhouette and stands out on the background of the sea and the sky, of the island and of the sun whose reflected light spreads obligingly on the wrinkled surface of the water. The work of the painter, detailed and scrupulous in his fidelity to *models*, reveals a pleasure in painting not very consistent with the tone of parody or satire; in other respects, the only show of virtuosity remains insufficient to justify such patience applied to so large a surface. And to confuse the trails further, the artist attaches to this palm-grove a musical band giving forth the chant of a saxophone band as can be heard in some bars set up so that we feel comfortable, in the complicity of the semi-darkness.

A similar complicity seems necessary in front of the *Suite québécoise*. Indispensable connivance, or at least abandon, availability, acceptance.

The four other landscapes of the *Suite* show their setting sun on a lake<sup>4</sup>, or behind a detail of the thick foliage of a young tree which invades the whole pictorial rectangle and offers to the patient viewer a haunting list of micro-scenes and symbols; either on a large diptych half of which extends on the floor; or finally on an ethereal seascape, from nowhere.

At the centre of these six landscapes we find the same obsession, that of time which passes and which the artist sets, pathetically and romantically, at twilight, as in a dizzy respite at the very threshold of night, and therefore of death. This remission removes the agonizing burden, or at least relieves it somewhat, and turns the scene thus created into a sort of timeless parenthesis. And, by extension, beyond space. Expressed otherwise, a non-place, in the legal sense.

### The inhabitants of this non-place

There would be a great deal to be said about Alleyn's palette in the six landscapes of his *Suite québécoise*, and in particular that it is all painted with the spray-gun, with the air-brush, with the help of masks and with certain ranges of colours that this tool allows (without mentioning lilac, orange tones, etc.); about the different stylistic orientations, which multiply the divergent approaches precisely to control the mannered condensing in one single closed choice. One after another, or all at once, romantic, sentimental, cerebral, humorous, ironic, impressionist, the painter combines kitch, the psychedelic, *quétainerie* (a kitch "made in Quebec"), painting by numbers, *Hard-edge*, etc., and asserts that each picture exists only in relationship to the figures that accompany it.

And yet these figures seem at first to be in no way related to the landscapes. The painter photographed them on the sly during the summer of 1972 and 1973, in the midst of the motley crowd moving about in the La Ronde amusement park in Montreal, and transposed them faithfully, with the appropriate plastic simplifications, each preserving in a strange and striking manner its original lighting, incorporated in some way into the clothing and the attitude of each, which further accentuates the primary independence between landscapes and persons.

The first plan of the *Suite* intended retaining about a hundred of these figures from the collection of these numerous photographs, in

keeping with about twenty landscapes. Under the pressure of circumstances this first scheme shrank, like the monument of Julius II by Michelangelo, first with fifty, then with thirty figures, which forced the artist to abandon elements of a striking appearance, previously designed life-size in the studio. The gallery of a hundred figures (which will perhaps be produced later?) could have provided a sufficiently wide range to make it possible to enter upon a typological and even archetypal reading of this micro-society; its reduction to about thirty figures inevitably narrows the horizon of reading.

Among others, we find there a fat woman, almost directly out of the *Belles-sœurs* by Michel Tremblay; an active sportsman, in a training outfit; a descendant of the Hurons or of *coureurs de bois*, with elastic step; a mother with her two boys; a couple of Montreal suburbanites disguised as American tourists; a little girl with a balloon; some young girls with variously attractive curves; a man with a baby-carriage loaded with two children, etc. Our attention is attracted by the care applied by the artist to the treatment of the details of clothing and accessories, such as handbags, sun-glasses (or glasses of the blind?). Approximately a third of the figures are painted in back view, as many in profile and as many full face. In a young woman, we are surprised to see how the locks of hair resemble those that Botticelli painted in the *Birth of Venus* or in the *Primavera*. Besides, a large part of the history of painting could be deciphered behind the details of the *Suite québécoise*, however strictly faithful it may be to the photographs that inspired it.

The figures are painted on panels of transparent acrylic, with such meticulousness that they seem real in space, seen from a little distance. The side facing toward the landscapes is painted in black and carries the following sign, inscribed in a circle: "Made in Quebec — La belle province". And it is in such a perspective that an important ambiguity of Alleyn's *Suite* opens; is it a question of an exaggeration, a caricature or a kind of criticism against the popular taste in Quebec? Is it a matter only of an established fact, a clinical or sociological sampling? or of a speech for the defence, perhaps, in aid of the spontaneous feelings of the man in the street (and at La Ronde) in so far as it is opposed to the conditioned sensitivity of the elite, the upstarts in culture, the nouveaux riches of the mind?

#### An ambiguous ceremonial

It involves quite another thing too, and similar questions would risk removing us from the centre of gravity of the work, from its concrete and plastic reality. This reality is presented somewhat like a puzzle: nothing is served by insisting on examining one single piece of it, in order to infer from it ambitious rules and invalid principles. It is a game. And as in any game, at the centre there are enigma, desire and entertainment.

Here, therefore, arises the location of the *Suite québécoise*, a place opened on six twilight paintings and haunted by about thirty figures. And especially the site of a strange ritual, of an ambiguous ceremonial, on account of the bond prescribed by the artist between two sets of apparently parallel plastic facts, and whose only connection seems to lie in the same intense impression of suspended, arrested, frozen time, as much in the sunsets as in the figures. Everywhere, a throbbing desire, indefinite, unfinished in its very momentum and its profile.

And yet, the whole is bursting with reality.

Hyperrealism then? And immediately there come to mind certain figures by Alfred Leslie, Audrey Flack, Douglas Bond, Thiébaud, certain landscapes by John Clem Clarke or Paul Staiger, Richard McLean's compositions and, more particularly, the figures painted on mirrors by Pistoletto and the figures which stand out in Martial Raysse's pictures. And yet Alleyn's *Suite québécoise* allows itself to be reduced to nothing of that sort.

Chiefly, because it is a matter of a suite, a chain (linguistic), a speech, an ensemble, a link and a site, a binding to multiple and reciprocal consequences, in short, of a global situation where something must happen. A ceremonial, in this way that it is a question of a festival, mysterious, of a ritual in six pictures, of a *last supper* under the twilight appearance of time suspended in its inexorable course, and of thirty officiating priests secretly torn from their trite daily life and parachuted into a sacred enclosure. We are reminded of Stonehenge, of the tower of Babel, of the large statues of Easter Island, of the mysteries of Eleusis. Of the Sphinx.

The enigma of the six sunsets, simultaneous and yet so different from each other, and that of the thirty effigies scrupulously depicted on the view side in the details of the outfits and accessories, but which turn their reverse side (we might as well say their sombre double) toward the impenetrable last ray of the day.

Therefore it is in this way that plural ambiguity spreads and grows through Alleyn's *Suite québécoise*, in a setting of a disturbing complicity. Simultaneously sacred and profane, holy and trivial, serious and facetious, the *Suite* rejects the system of fashions and their inevitable trap, that of the academism of the avant-garde, to become immersed again in the biting acid of genesis.

It is no longer a question of images but of icons. Nor of re-presenting, but of presenting well, causing to be present. And meaningful. What does the signified matter, since it must be as numerous and contradictory like the real of which it too often becomes an opaque make-up, verbose and superfluous. Between rhetoric and painting, painting wins.

Alleyn, during the course of a brilliant career lasting twenty years had become a professional artist. With all that this implies of system, preparation, *trade-mark*. With his *Suite québécoise*, he discovered again the original flavour of the art, of manner, of *poïen*, of the poem. The suite is open.

1. See the article by Pierre Courthion which appeared in *Vie des Arts*, Vol. IV, No. 18 (Spring 1960), pp. 25-29.
2. On *Introscape*, see the magazine *Opus International*, No. 21 (December 1970), pp. 34-39; and my book *L'Art au Québec depuis 1940*, 1973, pp. 405-407.
3. The artist gathered together besides his *Suite québécoise* an impressive collection of post cards, photographs, different objects (fetishes?), sketches, etc.
4. The trees and bushes in silhouette in the foreground of this picture were carefully transposed from a photograph taken by Alleyn at Brome Lake in the Eastern Townships.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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## THE CENTENARY OF MOUNT ROYAL PARK

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By Jean-Claude MARSAN

One hundred years ago, in 1874, the City of Montreal entrusted to Frederick Law Olmsted

the development of Mount Royal Park. The land destined for this purpose, namely some four hundred thirty acres, had been expropriated in and after 1869 at a total cost of more than a million dollars. This involved a considerable sum for the era, all the more since Montreal then had only 110,000 inhabitants. But the little city, already engaged for some time in the process of industrialization, was beginning to benefit from the results of an expanding economy, which was reflected in its pride and its ambitions. Had Montreal not created, in 1854-1859, Victoria Bridge, considered at that time the work of science and the most gigantic undertaking in the world, the eighth wonder of the world, so to speak? Thus it owed it to itself to share in the movement for the creation of urban parks, following the lead of the principal cities of Europe, of New York with its famous Central Park and of several other big American cities. The choice of Olmsted, famous then as the most eminent landscape architect of the continent, was imperative to assure Montreal of a park worthy of its rank. But the American developer was to bring more than simple prestige to our city: he was also to leave here the evidence of a social ideal and of a special vision of the rôle of nature in the urban fabric.

Without possessing the span of the scheme of Central Park, executed a decade earlier, the development Olmsted suggested for Mount Royal nevertheless reveals the broad outlines of his conceptions of landscape architecture, as well as his objectives of social democracy. Because one of the characteristics of Olmsted's genius was precisely his ability to translate the philosophy and the ideal of the social reformers of his era into physical developments.

It was also in response to the aspirations of the social reformers, be they disciples of Jeremy Bentham in England, Charles Fourier in France, the William Channings, Henry Bellows, or Horace Bushnell in the United States, desirous of mitigating the moral and social ills of the working classes of large industrial cities, that there dawned, in the 19th century, the movement for urban parks. These reformers, poor judges of a techno-economic system then in full gestation, sincerely believed that by democratizing education and culture, by facilitating access to recreation, by bettering the qualities of the urban environment, these social ills and disorders would disappear by themselves. The introduction of nature into the city, with its potential of cleaning the urban fabric and of regenerating the soul, appeared eminently desirable to them<sup>1</sup>.

Olmsted shared these ideas and this ideal. Thus he would write in his report on Mount Royal Park: "It is a great mistake to suppose that the value of charming natural scenery lies wholly in the inducement which the enjoyment of it presents to change of mental occupation, exercise and air-taking. Beside and above this, it acts in a more directly remedial way to enable men to better resist the harmful influences of ordinary town life, and recover what they lose from them"<sup>2</sup>. For him, nature possessed real therapeutic properties, as much in a physical way as in a moral one. Indeed, in this same report, he insisted upon this fact, that nature not only possessed "a sanitary influence" but also formed "an educative and civilizing agency, standing in winning competition against the sordid and corrupting temptations of town"<sup>3</sup>. Thus, in Olmsted's mind, nature constitutes the element indispensable to the health of the body and the soul of the city-dweller. Its rôle is fundamental: it is to re-establish the balance lost with the launching of the process of urbanization by the Industrial

## Revolution.

From this point of view, Mount Royal, a territory very little affected by previous residential dwellings and of an unequalled natural splendor, as he himself recognized<sup>4</sup>, offered Olmsted an exceptional opportunity of putting his ideas into practice. And as he mentioned in his report, the development program of this area was already all outlined by the potential of the site and the charm of its landscapes . . . "all that you have seen and admired of the old work of nature must be considered as simply suggestive of what is practicable, suitable, and harmonious with your purposes of large popular use . . ."<sup>5</sup>.

In order to respect this nature, to seize its potential and to exploit it thoroughly, Olmsted divided his area of study into eight distinct parts corresponding to the principal characteristics of the natural topography of the site. For example, he identified those areas in a gentle slope situated on the side of Pine Avenue *Piedmont* and *Côte Placide*. He also defined the base of the sides of the mountain (*underfell*), those steep flanks themselves (*craggs*), forming the most dramatic element of the site, their crown (*upperfell*), which corresponds to the summit and which descends in a gentle slope toward the clearing (*glades*), a shallow depression at the foot of which Beaver Lake is located to-day.

For each of the sectors thus identified, Olmsted suggested landscape developments suited to intensifying the natural characteristics and the qualities of the already existing landscapes. For instance, he recommended that the upperfells of the park be planted with species of trees capable of reaching in that place their best and highest stature. He also suggested that the crags of the mountain be planted in such a way as to appear as high as possible and that, by contrast, the calm, serene character of *Piedmont* and *Côte Placide* be respected. He further insisted that the glades retain their character of gentle depression, a sector rendered more attractive by the presence of a reservoir (unfortunately, too geometric in form for the setting). In short, as A. L. Murray has well noted, one of the objectives pursued by Olmsted in these types of developments consisted of accentuating the characteristics of the natural topography of the site, and of causing the mountain to appear higher than it is in reality<sup>6</sup>.

Finally, the social goal aspired to by Olmsted, to be able to make the city-dweller benefit by a regenerative contact with nature, is clearly reflected in his development of the network of the park's roads of access and promenade. With a site of such topography, there was a strong temptation to polarize all the interest on a few view-points. Olmsted was able to avoid this trap: and he put the commissioners responsible for the creation of the park on their guard against the temptation to lift the people up on the upperfells to have them enjoy the views and to bring them back afterwards to the city by the shortest roads<sup>7</sup>. He proposed rather an access road for vehicles (horse-drawn) joining the lines of least resistance to the natural topography and leading the city-dweller toward the summits by a slow progression punctuated by stops and by windows on the city, allowing in this way a great variety of perceptual experiences. And, another sign of his genius, he completed this primary network with a secondary system of paths reserved for pedestrians, so as to assure a segregation between these two means of movement.

We can therefore assume that we would not be able to appreciate fully the develop-

ment of Mount Royal without reference to the ideals of the era and the special conception which Olmsted had of the rôle of nature in the urban environment. There is no doubt — without intending to give an opinion on this point — that these ideals have been changed since then and that the strong demographic growth which took place in the Metropolis has caused Mount Royal Park to lose its original purpose as a natural reservation suitable to the assurance of a privileged city-dweller-nature contact. Olmsted had foreseen this danger and had put the commissioners on guard against a wrong use of the park: "If it is to be cut up with roads and walks, spotted with shelters and streaked with staircases . . . and if thousands of people are to seek their recreation upon it unrestrainedly, each according to his special tastes, it is likely to lose whatever of natural charm you first saw in it"<sup>8</sup>. In the light of the objectives pursued by Olmsted, we can appreciate better today the justice of this warning.

For footnotes see French text.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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## GOOD LUCK IN HUNTING: JAMES BAY INDIAN ART

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By Ted J. BRASSER

Porcupine quills, deerskin, feathers, and glass beads, silk ribbons, woollen cloth; the meeting of Indian and colonial White Canada, visually documented in an outstanding collection of early Indian arts and crafts, recently acquired by the National Museum of Man in Ottawa. Two hundred and fifty-nine objects in total, representing the major native Canadian art traditions east of the Rocky Mountains during the 18th and early 19th centuries. Given this age, the importance of the Speyer Collection is immediately obvious: traditional arts and crafts were still fully alive at that time, but all too few examples have been preserved in museums.

In addition to the documentation of native creativity, the collection provides us with a colourful picture of the complex and fertile impact of European trade goods and prototypes upon the Indian art traditions.

A substantial discussion of the total collection is impossible within the context of this article. The restriction to a small selection, however, enables me to offer this contribution as a posthumous homage to an ancient but doomed way of life around the James Bay. As such, I will focus upon those artifacts in the Speyer Collection which convey the story of the Indian humanization of the boreal forest by means of a spiritual interpretation of reality and its symbolic expression in art.

Unwieldy terminology as used here hints already to the fact that a simple description of "primitive" art, neatly presented with some ethnographic odds and ends on ecology and other -ologies, hardly adds anything relevant to our understanding of native creativity. Ideally, we should start by discarding the framework in which we are used to discuss and appreciate art, starting with the very concept of art itself. This concept is as foreign to the traditional Indian mind as it was in our own society before our ancestors deprived their reality of its spiritual dimension, enabling them to conquer the world, in a fashion.

To the Indian hunters around James Bay, their world was sacred, and so were all interrelationships between man, the animals, the rivers, the forest and the sky. The sacred nature of these interrelationships was expressed in numerous ritual practices, none of them spectacular, but performed every day. It was strongly believed that it was this consecration of everyday work which in effect produced the desired results and the well-being of the people. This was considered particularly true in hunting, trapping, and fishing, that is, in man's dependence upon the goodwill if not the love of the animal spirits. The sacred quality of wild game meat was emphasized in the *Makoshan*, a highly ritualized communal meal of caribou or bear meat, held in honour of the spirits governing these animals. Supreme among all game spirits was that of the caribou, reflecting the great importance of that animal in the traditional economy of the people. The caribou provided the major part of the diet and the raw materials for clothing. However, both directly as well as through the subsistence of the game animals, man depended upon the plants of the forest for his food and medicine.

The ritual techniques to manipulate the forces of nature originated from certain philosophical concepts which were understood throughout the eastern boreal forest. Basic among these concepts was the belief that a soul-spirit resided in each natural phenomenon. Through the study and interpretation of his dreams, man cultivated an intense communication with and knowledge of his soul-spirit. In exchange, this spirit assisted the hunter in establishing a love-relationship with the spirits of animals and other natural phenomena. Some of these spirits might give a dream-song to the hunter, others might instruct him in the art of curing, divination, or weather control. Seeking to strengthen his relationship with the spirits, a man would frequently concentrate his thoughts and will-power by means of his dream-songs, the sound of a drum, or by smoking his pipe.

Part of the instructions given by the soul-spirit consisted of symbolic designs, executed on clothing, pouches, weapons, and other tools. It is in this context that we can explain the widespread belief that the animals preferred to be killed by hunters dressed in colorfully decorated clothing. Likewise, the decoration warned evil Cannibal Giants that these hunters were under the protection of powerful spirits. After his death, the hunter's soul-spirit joined those of the deceased in the sky, where they manifested themselves as stars and danced in the northern lights.

This strong emphasis upon the cultivation of an individual relationship with spirits explains the great variety both in magico-religious practice as well as in artistic expression. Yet, even a rapid survey of both aspects reveals the framework of the underlying cultural traditions. It is obvious that the individual dreamer, in his imagination, was limited to the potentials within these traditions. Moreover, most of the decoration being executed by women, the dreamer would describe his revelations to his wife, who would adjust them to fit the regional art-style. Thus, the elements of the design conformed to widespread symbolic interpretations, while at the same time having specific and secret connotations known only to the dreamer and the artist.

From antique specimens preserved in museums it appears that the aboriginal art tradition throughout the northeast was based upon the use of parallel straight, zigzag, and curved lines, triangles and rows of dots, combined into geometric and frequently bilaterally symmetric

compositions. Jacques Rousseau pointed out that the spread of this art tradition largely coincided with that of the paper birch. Directed by their soul-spirit, the native women in this area used to fold sheets of paper-thin birchbark and bite patterns in them, producing prototypes of the designs which they executed in their art. Materially, this art was expressed in paintings on skin, wood, and bark, porcupine quillwork on skin, engravings on wood and bone, and etching on birchbark. Three-dimensional sculpture was extremely rare.

After the coming of the White fur traders in the late 17th century, and the subsequent introduction of European materials, several of these art forms were gradually replaced by embroidery with beads and silk thread on woollen cloth. At the same time, the native artists were increasingly exposed to examples of European tailoring of clothing and European decorative art. In view of the agents of White contact and the effects upon the native art, it is safe to conclude that the major part of these introductions were representative of French Canadian folk art, the ritual paraphernalia of Roman Catholic missionaries, and the trade goods of the Hudson's Bay Company.

It is reasonable to assume that the Indians originally assigned magical qualities to these strange European art forms. However, even these Whites themselves were hardly aware of the roots of their decorative art in an ancient but lost sacred world conception. During the 18th and 19th centuries, semi-realistic floral decorations of European origin were adjusted to fit the aboriginal patterns, ultimately overshadowing the latter in many regions. Museum collections, however, show that in the development of this art tradition an *interpretation* of nature through abstract and conventional designs preceded an *imitation* of nature in the recent floral style. And although there is evidence that the Indians recognized the original symbolism in the floral execution of old patterns, it is as evident that the on-going process from magico-religious symbolism to mere decorative art ran parallel with similar impoverishing developments in other aspects of social life.

Against this background, the great value of the early ethnographic specimens in the Speyer Collection becomes obvious. I will try to illustrate this with some examples, originating from the Cree, Montagnais-Naskapi, and northern Ojibway Indians.

Plate I shows a rectangular sheet of caribou skin, size 105 x 118 cm. It was made somewhere northeast of James Bay about 1740. Notwithstanding this great age, the skin has maintained its suppleness to a surprising degree, bearing witness to the high quality of native tanning techniques. The borders of the skin are trimmed with short, quill-wrapped fringe, and hair tassels in conical brass jingles are attached to the four corners. Tassels and fringes, decorating most objects made of skin, were believed to bring good luck in hunting.

The emphatic decoration of four corners of skins, amulets, pouches, and other containers is usually overlooked. Yet, they frequently appear on objects intended for ritual use. It appears that such decorations represented the four legs of an animal, implying an animal symbolism for the total object. This ancient symbolism extended far beyond the boreal forest.

The near-white surface of this skin is covered by a complex design painted in red, yellow, and greyish blue. Basically, the surface is divided into three rectangular sections, linked together by a cross extending across the whole skin. This cross is clearly the most important design-unit, representing in a very elaborate

form a well-known pattern, associated with a series of ideas of central importance in the native philosophy. The cross represented a location of game animals, illuminated by the sun, as revealed by the soul-spirit in a dream. As such, the cross-design was painted in honor of both one's own soul-spirit and those of the animals. The association with the soul-spirit is reinforced by the circular design-unit in the centre, and by the designs surrounding and embellishing the cross.

These designs are grouped together in, and clearly associated with, the three sections underlying the cross. The two outer sections are filled with highly conventionalized interpretations of trees and plants, symbolizing the forest and the summer. The central section is filled with pictures of caribou antlers, symbolizing the caribou herd and the winter. Parallel lines and rows of dots, representing the trails and tracks of animals, surround the pictures.

If this analysis is correct, then we have here a most impressive picture of the world, in time and space, as known and appreciated by the Montagnais-Naskapi Indian. Caribou herd and forest, the winter hunting period emphasized in the annual cycle of seasons. Man standing central in his world creation, through his soul-spirit extending his powerful contacts with the spirits of nature far and wide. The latter may well include the spirits of the four wind directions.

It will be clear that a skin like this was intended for ritual use, but the identification of its precise function is more problematical than the symbolism of its decoration. We know very little about the native rituals, confined as they were largely to the sacred life deep in the winter forest. In view of its size, the skin cannot have been a ceremonial robe, as used in hunting magic. A survey of the literature indicates that decorated sheets of skin were also used to lay a patient upon during curing rituals, to place one's dish upon during "all-eat" feasts in honour of the animal spirits, and to hang as flags outside the lodge during various celebrations. The last two functions could well have been served by the same skins, and I am inclined to associate the subject of this discussion with these two functions.

Closely related symbolism is apparent in the painted decorations of the skin coats, leggings, moccasins, mittens, pipe-bag and toboggan model in the Speyer Collection.

However distinct the native art style north and east of James Bay may have been, abundant evidence connects its forms, techniques, and symbolism with a basic tradition, extending south and westward through the Cree and Ojibway countries to the Great Lakes and the Plains. A magnificent example, of Cree or Northern Ojibway origin, is Plate 4: a white tanned skin coat, decorated with paintings and woven quill-work in a truly aboriginal style. Made in the 18th century, it does not show the European tailoring of the Naskapi summer coats, the only possible indication of White contact being the change from long shirt to regular coat by cutting open the front, and a few beads around the quill-work.

Finely woven porcupine quill-work, as seen on this coat, appears to have been a distinct feature of the Cree Indian art style. Shown here are a belt, a pouch, and an elaborate knife-sheath. Notice the basic similarity between the quill-woven designs and those painted on skin, particularly in the decoration of the belt. Knives and pouches were worn on the breast, and the decorations appear to relate to the soul-spirit of the owner. Beads strung

on the fringes reveal the presence of the White man, but the decorated fringes still expressed the central and all-pervading desire of the native people around James Bay: good luck in hunting . . .

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## MONTAIGNE'S CANNIBALS

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By François GAGNON

"Now, to return to my subject, I think there is nothing barbarous and savage in that nation, from what I have been told, except that each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice; for indeed it seems we have no other test of truth and reason than the example and pattern of the opinions and customs of the country we live in."

Montaigne, who wrote these lines at the head of Chapter XXXI of the first book of *Essays*<sup>1</sup> was a very modern thinker! He was about to speak of those "Cannibals" visited by Vilegaignon at the time of the first attempts at French colonization in America since the failure of Jacques Cartier, and it was for him the place to preach tolerance! Did he already take the opposite view of medieval *ethnocentrism*, which put Jerusalem and Christianity at the centre of the world and, in concentric circles more and more enlarged, peoples further and further away from the human condition, more and more monstrous? Did he already have the feeling of cultural relativity so much developed among our anthropologists? Not entirely. Look rather at the following:

"Those people are wild, just as we call wild the fruits that Nature has produced by herself and in her normal course: whereas really it is those that we have changed artificially and led astray from the common order, that we should rather call wild."

Comparing the Brazilian savages to wild berries with too strong a taste for our "bastardized" palates, it is therefore the contrast between nature and culture that Montaigne has in mind. Like us, he sees to a lesser degree the cannibals conditioned by their culture and us by ours, and refusing to decide which has the greater value, so much do they seem to gain where we lose and lose where we gain, that, closer to origins, they are less conditioned by culture. Would Montaigne, then, be closer to Rousseau than to contemporary anthropologists? Still not entirely, because he does not form for himself the same image of nature as does Jean-Jacques. As a man of the Renaissance, Montaigne imagines the state of nature as the "golden age" of the ancients and regrets that Plato or Lycurgus, "men who could have judged better than us", did not know them, because they would have seen the "republic" "by experience" which they were forced, for want of something better, only to "imagine"<sup>2</sup>.

We cannot better understand how the men of the end of the sixteenth century — the first two books of the *Essays* were published for the first time in 1580 — imagined the state of nature that they lent so freely to the Americans only by looking at the engravings illustrating the accounts of voyages that they read or their illuminated maps representing distant countries. Montaigne, writing of cannibals, spoke of the Brazilian Tupinambas, without naming

them. They had been the subject of several narratives, of which the most important were those of soldier Hans Staden (1557), of Franciscan friar André Thévet (1558), of preacher de Léry (1578), all illustrated with engravings. Ancient maps always showed them as, for instance, to mention only one, the map of Brazil, in Vallard's magnificent *Atlas* (1547), preserved at the Huntington Library (Los Angeles). But the collection of images that would have the greatest influence was that of the Flemish engraver and goldsmith, Théodore de Bry, in his great work in eleven volumes entitled *America*. The third tome, which appeared in 1592, had particularly to do with Montaigne's cannibals. Plate 12, which we reproduce here, disconcerting though it may be on account of its subject — a cannibalistic meal where women and children are licking their fingers over a feast of human flesh — places us immediately in the historical context. De Bry's engraving was not of his invention. It was inspired directly by figure 48 of the *Warhaftige Historia und Beschreibung einer Landschaft der Wilden, Nacketen, Grimmigen Menschtredder Lenthen in der Newen Welt America*, . . . by Hans Staden, published in Marburg in 1557. From engraved wood to engraving on copper, account being taken of some inversions and displacements, we find the same figures in the same postures, occupied in the same actions. But how style has changed! For Staden's Gothic models for the engraver, De Bry substituted those of the Renaissance, and it was in the antique manner that he treated those women and children who, for him, lived in a state of nature. Living closer to the origins, "viri a dijs recentes", to take from Montaigne a quotation from Seneca<sup>3</sup>, the Amerinds were represented with all the features of those who, for De Bry, were the nearest to original perfection: the ancients. Instead of characterizing primitive mankind by racial traits, as we have learned to do since the nineteenth century, he adorned them with the glamour of classical beauty and represented them as the Greeks and the Romans used to represent their gods. De Bry's information came totally from Staden, but he gave a modern and definite form to the representations of the travellers, for the imaginings of the next century. No one will doubt that in this way he coincided better than anyone else with the image that the great Montaigne had of them.

Adorning the Tupinambas with the forms of gods of antiquity, having them live in the golden age, giving them as an example to our warped cultures, appearing to place them so high, did not truly help their cause. An image which had nothing to do with reality was substituted for the real Tupinambas. When an image, even a flattering one, is substituted for reality, communication is not advanced by it. The recognition of the cannibal virtues did not, in the mind of Montaigne, exclude the enterprise of civilization. He regretted only that the new world was not conquered by Alexander or by those ancient Greeks and Romans . . . "who would have gently polished and cleared away whatever was barbarous in them, and would have strengthened and fostered the good seeds that nature had produced in them, not only adding to the cultivation of the earth and the adornment of cities the arts of our side of the ocean, in so far as they would have been necessary, but also adding the Greek and Roman virtues to those originally in that region."<sup>4</sup> The Catholic mission, convinced that it was the true trustee of Greek and Roman virtues, would not otherwise justify its undertaking the civilizing of primitive societies.

Therefore we could quite easily sneer at these Romans of America imagined by the men of the end of the sixteenth century, but this would be to forget that in our times of great knowledge and fine objectivity, the fascination of the golden age has not ended. It is true that it is expressed in another way. But how shall we not think that the world-wide tourist industry does not feed our imaginations in another manner while calling to mind sunny beaches where we are free to go nude and to put aside the restraints of our civilized world? What was it that Montaigne said of the Tupinambas:

"This is a nation, I should say to Plato, in which there is no sort of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name for a magistrate or for political superiority, no custom of servitude, no riches or poverty, no contracts, no successions, no partitions, no occupations but leisure ones, no care for any but common kinship, no clothes, no agriculture, no metal, no use of wine or wheat."<sup>5</sup>

Is it not paradise that the tourist agencies promise to our businessmen, to our unwinding executives, tired of "trade", of "figures", of "politics, wealth or poverty", of "contracts, estates and shares" which fill the ordinary course of their days? It is not only the unbearable necktie that they will get rid of here, allowing them to go without "vestments". Also, the golden age is a region of the civilized mind, a nostalgia that it represses but which it needs in order not to lose its equilibrium. All America exudes its Hawaii (paradise is an island) and expresses in it, in a Hollywood décor of cardboard and artificial flowers, the form of its inhibitions.

The unfortunate part of this is that what he represses in himself, modern man oppresses outside of himself. Touristic dreaming is concomitant to colonialism.

1. P. 254, in the Garnier-Flammarion, 1969 edition. "Mire" for "miroir" rather than "point de mire", as claimed by Alexandre Micha, author of the explanatory notes of this edition.
2. *Id.*, p. 255.
3. *Letters to Lucilius*, 90, 44. "Men fresh sprung from the gods".
4. *Essais*, III, p. 125.
5. *Op. cit.*, p. 255.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## RICHARD DADD IN LONDON

By Jean-Loup BOURGET

Richard Dadd, born in 1817, studied painting, showing signs of a talent in conformity with the spirit of the times: before the pre-Raphaelite revolution of 1848. Nevertheless, with William Power Frith, Augustus Egg and others he created a group called The Clique, which intended to break the monopoly of the Royal Academy, and which evidenced, by its concern for contemporary subjects, certain aspects of pre-Raphaelism. However, the work of these painters, very gifted technically, contains nothing profoundly innovating. Dadd especially painted fairy-like subjects, which were legal currency in the Victorian era (Jeremy Maas devoted a chapter to them in his *Victorian Painters*). He took a trip to the Orient (1842-1843), during which he began to show signs

of being unbalanced; the first confessions that he felt he was going crazy from having too many details to solve, that he did not know where to begin his sketches, although these were many. On his return, he savagely killed his father (in English papa = "dad"; we see an important linguistic key to Richard's madness here), and escaped to France; he was arrested and confined in Bethlem Hospital, near London. After a hiatus of a few years, his artistic activity was revived, encouraged by the superintendent of the hospital (for therapeutic or simply humanitarian reasons?). There he continued at the hospital in Broadmoor where he died in 1886. During his lifetime he had not fallen into complete oblivion, since several times he was visited by amateurs interested in his work. After his death, a few of these continued to seek his works, Sacheverell Sitwell in particular. But the rediscovery of Dadd is essentially a recent event, inspired by an article in *Time* magazine (April 25, 1969), with a full-page reproduction in colour (mediocre) of his most famous and most enigmatic picture, *The Fairy Feller's Master Stroke*; the inclusion of Dadd in the Parisian exhibition, *La Peinture romantique anglaise et les préraphaélites* (1972); the publication of David Greysmith's book *Richard Dadd: The Rock and Castle of Seclusion* (London, Studio Vista, 1973); finally, the exhibition at the Tate Gallery'. On the other hand, Dadd's name was not even mentioned in John Piper's *Painting in England, 1500-1880* (1965).

David Greysmith says somewhere in his book that the subtitle *The Rock and Castle of Seclusion* (borrowed from the title of a water-colour by David) should not be understood in a symbolic manner; it is very difficult to understand it otherwise. The truth is that we know almost nothing of the contacts which Dadd was able to maintain with his century; objectively, he was entirely separated from it. Further, as Greysmith notes, he was, a noteworthy phenomenon, outside of the commercial sphere and the necessity in which most painters find themselves, of feeding a family, of finding a public, buyers, favourable critics . . . On account of his *madness* (which today would be diagnosed, it seems, as paranoid schizophrenia), Dadd was isolated from his contemporaries, and he carried scarcely any relationships other than with the other male inmates of Bethlem or Broadmoor. Through his *gratuitousness*, his painting escapes commercial chance and its social function. A double liberation, therefore, psychological and sociological, which makes all the conclusion striking the statement that at the conclusion of this process, Dadd appears as the typical painter of the Victorian vision, close to his pre-Raphaelite contemporaries, especially Holman Hunt, Sir Noel Paton, . . .

Indeed, Dadd's most inspired works — *The Masterstroke of the Magician Woodcutter*, on which he spent nine years of his life (1855-1864; Tate Gallery), and *Contradiction: Oberon and Titania* (1854-1858; private collection) — are marked by a maniacal taste for detail, by a microscopic vision of perfect clarity; these are fairy worlds, minute, as if seen through the lens of a drop of water, a swarm, but perfectly ordered, a microcosm of persons, plants, flowers, insects painted with the accuracy of a naturalist. According to the words of a contemporary visitor, "Each detail is rendered with a care for minuteness and a wonderful finish, which could have been accomplished only with the help of the magnifying-glass he offers the viewer to allow him to examine this work of art." Dadd's highly individual and asocial paint-

ing therefore carries to their height many of the favorite trends of the Victorian era, whether it involves *horror vacui*, a taste for meticulous fairylands, or *naturalism* properly so called (the methodical and, as it were, scientific observation of the forms of nature). We think, we were saying, of Holman Hunt or of Tenyson's poetry. In one sense, nothing is left to the imagination; in another sense, naturally, it certainly is a matter of a romanticism — analytic, nay, even schizophrenic in its essence — which breaks absolutely with the synthetic, confused, agitated vision of a Turner. We have only to compare, with Dadd, the landscapes before his madness, Constable's pastiches (*Landscape*, 1837, York; *The Bridge*, 1837; private collection), with their tumultuous trees and their stormy skies brushed with large strokes, and the pointillist delicacy before its time of the *View of the Isle of Rhodes* (1842, Victoria and Albert Museum), of the *Pilot Boats* (1858-1859, Tate Gallery) or of the *View of Port Stragglin* (1861, British Museum), which, bathed in golden light, can precisely justify a comparison with Turner (or with Claude). The infinite delicacy of these water-colours brings to mind the etchings of a Hercule Seghers and makes us regret that Dadd did not have the leisure to devote himself to engraving. But, let us repeat, in spite of all the idiosyncrasy to be found in Dadd's genius, his microcosmic vision seems in harmony with a certain *Zeitgeist*. A dangerous notion, difficult to define, but which gave to France, during the same era, an engraver like Bressin. In his *Mnemosyne*, Mario Praz sketched a parallel between these maniac visions of detail in the pre-Raphaelites and in Flaubert. The *View of the Isle of Rhodes* in any case is worthy of these studies of rocks to which Ruskin applied himself and whose lesson Millais was to retain; cf. also the landscape in the background of *The Flight From Egypt* (1849-1850, Tate Gallery). Let us remember that, while passing through Venice, David was struck there, at St. Mark's, by «the variety of the marbles and the mosaics», by this Venetian, polychromatic and analytic Gothic which, under the influence of Ruskin, the architect Butterfield would acclimatize to England (*All Saints*, in London).

But Dadd's schizophrenic flaw even affects the arrangement of his work. The series of the *Sketches to Illustrate the Passions* is actually of a totally different character; in these we do not perceive this maniac and detailed vision, without exception (the *Patriotism* for instance, and the exception is very important!). We are dealing, as the name indicates, with sketches, whose draughtmanship is sometimes rough, the colour delicate but making up simplified diagrams (cf. *Christ Walking on the Water*, 1852, Victoria and Albert Museum), the subjects at least apparently of an easier, more direct approach. Some of them are contemporary and belong to a social satire that the pre-Raphaelites did not ignore (Holman Hunt, Rossetti, Ford Madox Brown), but which is particularly marked in the tradition of Hogarth and caricaturists Rowlandson or Gillray. Cf. on this point *Idleness* (1853, Victoria and Albert Museum), *Drunkenness* (1854), *Brutality* (1854, Bethlem Hospital), *Insignificance* (id.), etc. This catalogue of the passions of the soul is, besides, an example of the positivist fury, classifying and exhaustive, of the nineteenth century; during the same era, let us think of the divisions *rationaly* set up at Broadmoor concerning the causes of the madness of the sick: anxiety, epilepsy, intemperance, vice, poverty, religion, excitation, terror and exposure to warm climates. Yet other sketches

have mythological, medieval or picturesque subjects and, in the bizarre simplicity of their composition, evoke rather Neoclassicism or the troubadour style, which is purposely a neoclassic variety of medievalism that is usually associated with romanticism. *The Death of Richard III* (1852, private collection) or *Hate* (1853, Bethlem) are in pure troubadour style; *Pride* (1854, private collection), *Vanity* (1854, Bethlem) are in the same manner, to a ridiculous degree. *Polyphemus* (1852, New York) has something of Blake in it; *Melancholy* (1854, private collection) shows a noble profile and neoclassic draperies. In the same way, *Deceit* (1854, Bethlem) comprises a neoclassic profile, a mask, draperies, antique sandals, a low relief.

It is established, therefore, and the conclusion is, in our sense, quite unexpected, that Richard Dadd, contrarily to other mad painters, was a great *eclectic* artist. David Greysmith repeatedly evokes the name of Fuseli; in passig and without effort we have mentioned several other names. Is not eclecticism, itself a sign of the times, one more link between Dadd and the Victorian era? The sketches which seem the least successful to us are marked by the encompassing historical atmosphere, the archaeological or exotic reference and are, besides, redeemed by a certain coarseness of treatment, which is very paradoxical if we think of the refinements Dadd lavished in the works which strike us as more personal. Let us come back, for example, to *Magician Woodcutter*, whose title was misunderstood for a long time, reading «Fairly Teller» instead of «Fairy Feller»: a mistake which is fairly well explained, this picture being a fine example of narrative figuration, totally incomprehensible (but no less exerting its fascination) if we do not refer to a poem with which Dadd accompanied it (*The Elimination of a Poem and its Subject*). Still another Victorian trait is the *anecdotal* and *literary* character of this painting about which we wonder none the less if the text which is supposed to explain it is not a false trail the poem of *Fairy Feller*, the inscription that invades the sketch of *Patriotism*, but as well decorative calligraphy, not linguistically significant, which is superimposed on *Dream of Fantasy* (1864, Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge); this is a matter of a water-colour created from memory in the fashion of the *Magician Woodcutter*, and which, coming to life in the tendrils of the grasses of the surface, obliterates the underlying image, renders its deciphering still more difficult, makes a palimpsest of it. The painting of Dadd, like that of the pre-Raphaelites, poses iconological problems as arduous as the painting of the Renaissance; but it has not yet found its Panofsky. Behind the network made by the stalks of the grasses, we find no fewer than thirty-seven principal figures, to which are added about fifteen tiny fairies on the Patriarch's hat. A composition in depth, therefore: with the plants put aside, we uncover a microcosm, but this world allows access to another world, on a still smaller scale. The personages are as much fantastic and legendary as animals (spider, dragonfly that plays the trumpet) or representatives of British society of the time. From whence comes the appearance of three orders; natural, fantastic, social, the latter divided into historical and contemporary. The Woodcutter makes ready, according to Dadd, to split the hazel-nut out of which he will take a new carriage for Queen Mab (on the Patriarch's hat): each of the nuts in the picture is therefore rich in a microcosm; so, we count tens of them in this very small picture, without

mentioning other pods or husks, all seminal. Formally, the *Fairy Feller* has the look of a moire, of an old embroidery, with its faint, golden tones. It is like the reverse of the industrial revolution which is there under our eyes, the part of ideology, of fiction, complementary to political, economic and social reality, in which we very wrongly believed, that Dadd escaped.

To recapture Pevsner's categories in the *Englishness of English Art*, Dadd is British by virtue of reason (the sketches) as he is by virtue of unreason (the enchantment of madness).

1. June 19 to August 18, 1974.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

## NOTES ON THE RECENT SCULPTURES OF DAUDELIN

By Alain PARENT

Whether it appears at the level of the multiple or at that of the city, Charles Daudelin's sculpture is always essentially monumental.

The retrospective exhibition of his work, presented last spring at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, then at the Quebec Museum, and two of his recent creations, one in front of the Court House in Montreal, the other at Complex G of the government in Quebec, put the theme of the cube in the foremost rank. This theme is one of the constants of his work, whose recent developments assert a full blossoming.

In 1964, liturgical articles created for the church in Point Saint Charles; in 1965, small bronzes exhibited at the Fine Arts Museum in Montreal present three principles, to some extent the germ of future sculptures: the affirmation of masses, almost always reducible to the cube or the rectangular parallelepiped; the relation of these masses in couples; and the treatment of the material, arising from the soil or clay at that period, and which subtends dark zones. Empty space, through relationship with the mass, appears through these interior, much worked zones, whose aim is to lighten, and, in some way, to reduce the coarseness of the mass, at the same time as catching light, negating it also by those voids of shadow. In 1969 Gilles Hénault wrote, moreover, that "Charles Daudelin's bronzes are real machines for capturing light".

The evolution of pieces such as *Espace, Silence et Nuit*, of 1966, exhibited at the Panorama of Sculpture at the Museum of Contemporary Art from June to September 1970, or *Couple*, of 1969, reduced the importance of reliefs, to the benefit of a surface that was smoother and of a less massive volume. The mass is becoming more refined and gains in lateral expansion. The earlier reliefs kept all their dynamic expressionist quality while transforming themselves into *slits* whose interior limits complemented each other in the relationship between two masses. Finally, the empty space opened totally between them.

It was on this theme that all the sculptures would play, having reference to the cube or the parallelepiped, whether they were monuments or multiples. This is testified by the plastic success of *Allegro-cube*, produced simultaneously as a multiple of a few inches and



as a sculpture eight feet in height, in Old Montreal. In other respects, the latter gives the impression of being about twenty feet high.

The evolution of the work reveals, in recent years, the diversity of the forms that can be assumed by reliefs of the separation on the diagonal of cubic volume, or of the median separation of the mass of the rectangular parallelepiped. Still close to the slit or the telluric digging of former magmas, the separation into dents or zigzags allows no more than a broken line to appear, once the two components of the mass are joined. Once open, the *drama* of the separation appears with a dark violence. In this regard it would be interesting to analyse the psychological bases of the work, in which the theme of the couple appears very early as a basic function.

The harshness and the force of the relation are diminished only when the masses are quite far from each other, or when they are completely joined: by its dynamism, the break introduces a kinetic quality, which, besides, attains its end in the real kinetics of *Allegro-cube*, equipped with an electronic mechanism which makes the two parts of the cube slowly meet and part. Once separated, the masses become self-sufficient objects, thanks to the strict proportional function of each smooth volume, with geometric contours of static function, with its broken surface of dynamic function. Doubtless Michel Seuphor would see in this the happy marriage of *style* and *noisy affirmation*.

According to the materials, bronze, alloys, corten or plastic substances (dull or transparent), the implicit relation (this, by the way, is the title of one of the key sculptures) is shown by a joint in a broken line, by the steps of a helicoid staircase, and it is there that it reveals its most perfect accomplishment, in a curve that is technically the development of a very complex mathematical formula. The aesthetic result of this formula is to unite with the massiveness and the coldness of the cube the supple lightness and the sensuality of the curved surface, in other respects always in implicit movement.

Finally, in most of these sculptures, the masses are not carved in perfect symmetry, but often by broken lines, therefore as a breaking of balance, as is the case in masses of the monumental ensemble at Complex G in Quebec.

This relation of equilibrium was developed in another way, at the time of the creation of one of the models for the monumental bronze of the National Arts Centre in Ottawa. The developments on this theme of the lateral relation of two masses joined at the base, which plays the rôle of pivot, follow the same road explained above in connection with the cube: surface is liberated from reliefs, line and profile become pre-eminent in the mass. There also, the aesthetic comes close to minimalism, the transparency or the qualities of polished surface of the new materials add to the qualities of the profile, to the detriment of the mass. However, the basic functioning, the relation between coupled volumes, remains. *Equilibre latéral*, *La Règle du jeu*, *Transparence ailée*, *Point de congélation* and *Forces symétriques* are developments of this theme, which is, in a way, the projection in profile of the theme previously analysed; in this the volume has, indeed, less importance than the lateral surface.

The necessity of multiple developments on a same theme, which can be perceived as one of the creative constants of the artist, certainly shows to what point severity and the will to

develop the subject to the end give its unity and its originality to the work.

These qualities of tremendous size, balance and harmony, whose components are, according to the sculptures, the relation between two masses, virtually a single mass, and the treatment of the material, formerly lyrical then more minimalizing and finally the kinetic quality, are combined in an aesthetic which offers to the contemporary world, and in its language, the sumptuous majesty of a work that derives the force of a great classic from ancestral sources of the ritual of the couple.

To-day we see the outcome of a creativity which began to express itself thirty years ago, in solitude, by a synthesis between the language of Fernand Léger and a graphic interpretation of surrealism.

Is it possible to believe that the characteristics of the profound personality of Charles Daudelin will find there a special resonance? Almost all of the work, from the gouaches and the oils at the beginning, the terra-cotta, bears witness to a successful synthesis between an interior world, often expressed in half-hidden reliefs, half revealed, and the sensual force of the mass.

Those are some of the dominant characteristics of a generous and powerful work, which is to-day in the very first rank.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

#### MONIQUE CHARBONNEAU IN THE LAND OF WOOD-ENGRAVING

By Ginette DESLAURIERS

Last August Monique Charbonneau came back to Quebec after a sojourn of a few months in Japan. On looking at her and on listening to her, we soon appreciate the enthusiasm that inflames her. Our curiosity is pricked to the quick: what did she go to seek in Japan? What did she bring back from there?

From Quebec to Japan, that is an unusual trip for Quebec artists. It is necessary, in fact, to have not only aspirations and determination, which are not lacking in Monique Charbonneau, but also to possess besides a substantial craft to dare to compare her work with that of Japanese artists in a domain where they excel, that of wood-engraving.

If Monique Charbonneau has been a recognized engraver for several years, here as well as abroad — we know that she previously exhibited in Toronto, New York, Santiago, Ljubljana and elsewhere —, it was first as a painter that she compelled recognition in the Montreal milieu as early as 1960. Associated with the Agnès Lefort Gallery from 1960 to 1965, she regularly presented to art lovers and collectors solo exhibitions which have afforded us the opportunity of following her development.

We can trace three major periods in her painting: first, that of abstract lyricism recalling the wide luminous tracings of Zao Wou-ki; following this a semi-figurative, semi-abstract period, an interval where we can already discern certain clearly defined forms in an abstract landscape; finally, her latest works are clearly related to figuration (for example, the series of medallions).

It was neither through lassitude nor through a lack of inspiration that Monique Charbonneau orientated herself toward engraving. These two

professions of painter and engraver would share her time and her energy for several years. Previously, at the time of her sojourn in Paris (from 1957 to 1959), she was attracted by graphic art. On her return, an exhibition at the School of Fine Arts of the works produced by the pupils of Albert Dumouchel inspired in her an interest which prompted her to enter into this new path. On the presentation of works in painting and drawing, she was accepted into the engraving class and began the long apprenticeship in this craft under the instruction of Albert Dumouchel, the master engraver.

What does engraving signify for this painter already highly esteemed and for whom painting is very successful? To this question Monique Charbonneau answers: "At the exhibition of engravings by the pupils of Dumouchel, I was struck by the quality of the works shown. One felt in them a mastery of the technique allied to an uncommon concern for originality. Further, the discipline that such a craft requires was able to counterbalance the spontaneity of the gesture I practised in painting". Monique Charbonneau demands first of engraving a technical support for her art. But, little by little, contact — I would almost say hand-to-hand — with the different materials to be engraved revealed to her an interest in engraving for its own sake. This was an important step. Without abandoning painting, she applied herself to the graphic arts with tenacity, fervour and meticulousness. "What one can obtain by engraving is something unique," she tells us. "Whence comes its importance for a painter. What I express through engraving I cannot say by painting. Graphic art is an art of writing of drawing, of line. Each material and each technique of impression involves its requirements and furnishes specific results." For eleven years Monique Charbonneau has carried on in turn etching, lithography, silk-screening and engraving on wood which she taught for five years at the School of Fine Arts, then at UQAM. "Wood engraving is the technique that interests me most, undoubtedly on account of the material which is more responsive than the copper or zinc plate. Wood answers better the gesture of the engraver who must sculpt the material to be printed. It is also more easily handled than heavy lithography stone. I like wood as a material", she tells us. "I take pleasure in looking at it, in manipulating it, in bringing out the beauty of its grain, in grooving it, in giving it a new depth and relief by means of the original form which is born of the gouge or of the chisel."

Nevertheless her studies, her teaching, her studio work were not enough to satisfy her fully. Monique Charbonneau requires the support of a tradition. Quebec has several engravers of great talent, of whom the leaders are of the generation instructed by Albert Dumouchel. But this country, too young to have a history, cannot supply the support of a tradition to artists. This lack is felt by Monique Charbonneau, who does not aspire only to a perfect technical mastery, but who seeks a spirit which the gesture does not exhaust. "Art and life are one," she tells us. So she naturally turned to Japan, this land dedicated to engraving for thousands of years.

Last winter, through the intervention of René Derouin, of Éditions Formart, she met the Japanese engraver Rei Yuki, passing through Montreal after exhibiting in New York and Toronto. Keenly interested in Monique Charbonneau's works, he suggested to her a sojourn in his country. Our engraver needed nothing more to cause her to pack her bags and take flight to Japan as soon as spring came. All barriers fell

before the firmness of her enterprising spirit. Upon her arrival, a thrilling experience was offered to her: to work with Yoshida, one of the present masters of wood engraving. He never accepts more than three or four engravers at one time in his studio in Tokyo. During the few months of this stay, she accomplished an intensive work, learning the Japanese technique, of which she appreciated above everything the strictness and the concern for perfection. These qualities are, undoubtedly, the fruit of this famous tradition which weighs heavily on Japanese artists. One cannot permit oneself to improvise in this craft when one has before his eyes the works of great masters such as Utamaro, Hiroshige, Hokusai. This direct contact with Japanese engravers revealed to her, besides, the love and even the worship they devote to papers. These, of a quality superior to ours by reason of their longer fibres, are at the same time smoother, more supple and stronger. Japanese imprinting is better served by them. The paper drinks the ink of the wooden block without requiring excessive pressure. It thus renders the most misty shades with fidelity. For inking, the engraver prefers the paint-brush to the roller. He uses water-colours, liquid and transparent, following in this the tradition of water-colour painting. This process allows the superposition of colours of a great subtlety and a remarkable refinement. But it demands, on the other hand, a great sureness of performance and a rather exact prevision of the final result. The print is then pulled with the *baren*, a stump which makes possible great modulations of pressure and therefore of colour.

Monique Charbonneau told us: "I wish to assimilate the Japanese technique and not to substitute it for my own technique." Engraving is a whole: the process does not create a work of art. The artist must have something to say. Monique Charbonneau recognizes very well that one cannot simply import a tradition. But her experience at Yoshida's studio enlarged her means of expression. "Engraving in a gentle slope, in a gradual range of colours, characteristic of Japanese imprinting, is of value in the representation of scenery", she explained. "The flat tints of our graphic processes render with difficulty the tones which certain images call for: skies, snows, waters, etc. The subtlety of the passages is often badly ensured by our technique. Nevertheless, my images, those which are the source of the pictures I engrave in wood, are and will always be from here. I am a Quebec artist, not a Japanese one. What I have brought back from Japan is not limited to the acquisition of a new process. I consider that sojourn as a total interior enrichment. Is it because of the spirit which animates the tradition of printing among Japanese engravers? Perhaps so. They do not engrave only with their hands, but with their souls. It is impossible not to be sensitive to their love and respect for the craft. They command admiration. I have, besides, found these same qualities in a great number of artists whom I met thanks to Rei Yuki."

Monique Charbonneau also has left something of herself in Japan: a series of engravings exhibited at the Gin Gallery in Tokyo, from the tenth to the sixteenth of September, 1973. This solo exhibition is a notable achievement for one of our artists. Therefore, we shall follow with interest the future accomplishments of Monique Charbonneau in the field of engraving.

exhibited at the 5th and the 7th Biennial of Engraving, at Ljubljana (Yugoslavia), in 1963 and 1967; at the Canadian Painting Biennial in London and in the Cardiff Commonwealth Arts Festival (Great Britain), in 1964 and 1965; at the Second American Engraving Biennial, Santiago (Chile), in 1965; at the Tokyo International Trade Fair (Japan), 1965; at the First International Engraving Biennial, Cracow (Poland), in 1966; at the Galerie Fousats, New York, in 1966; at the International Engraving Exhibition, Buenos Aires (Argentina), in 1968; at the International Drawing Exhibition, Rijeka (Yugoslavia), in 1970. She participated in the travelling exhibition *Poèmes-affiches du Québec* which travelled in France in 1972 and 1973. Moreover, she appears in the collections of the Museum of Quebec, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, the National Gallery of Canada, the Museums of Edmonton and Vancouver, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, as well as in numerous private collections in this country and abroad. Her works are presented at the Galerie de l'Apogée in Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts, as well as at the Galerie Les 2B at Saint-Antoine-sur-le-Richelieu.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

### THE ACTIVE PRESENCE OF THE COZIC-OBJECTS

by Jacques de ROUSSAN

In following one by one the steps in the route that Yvon Cozic has followed since 1965, we are witnessing the awareness of the *life* of the object, not only the life that springs from spatial occupation so called, but also that revealed by the influence of the milieu and the whole of sensorial perceptions. Let us add to that a temporal conception founded on the ephemeral and we arrive at what art presents in the most concrete: the active presence.

Because, for Cozic, it is not so much the material that counts as the value it acquires in spatial or social context, and which it develops through its integration with a natural dynamism submitted to all the variations and pressures that man, as much as nature, imposes.

There was therefore no question for him to sink into a static art. As soon as he began to explore painting, he developed a figuration which arose from a symbol of an almost mathematical character in order that the viewer might be able to form an extrapolation based on space in two dimensions. But this little play of the mind fell far short of satisfying the artist, and, from 1966 on, he entered upon the third dimension through a personal need to add the possibility of a space to the perception of an object of art. He found this complementary dimension with the sculpture-object, which then became his most important means of expression. He went beyond the picture in the quality of a static form of support to where it became a point of origin from which forms would emerge — chiefly tubular — that began to create a special environment. Therefore an organization of objects inscribed in and around the traditional framework followed the image of two dimensions.

If, until that time, Cozic was altogether satisfied with a relatively stable environment, he would soon approach the problem of time. As opposed to the work of an unalterable character, he proposed the work of a change-

able character. He plunged into the adventure while rejecting the conservatism inherent in stability in order that the object that he conceived might share the temporary character of existence: the latter is fated to perish, or, more exactly, to undergo the transformations which correspond to those we suffer: birth, action, death.

But before arriving at that point, Cozic would first give a playful character to his creations. After a certain number of objects that occupied space as sculptures, and produced with materials new to him, such as plexiglass, arborite and vinyl which allowed him to diversify his forms and make interesting comparisons at the same time, he realized that the articles exhibited in galleries, museums and collections of all kinds are much too permanent. He hesitated — but not for long — between this conception and the one he wished to bring out by a sculpture of environment built right out of the inherent qualities of life and action.

His sculpture-objects, since the end of 1969, are closely linked to the idea of the temporary, especially due to his discovery of textiles. The latter offer him forms that contrast with those resulting from the use of hard materials: lighter, more pliable, less severe, less aggressive: cotton, plush, velvet, vinyl. The objects begin to transform themselves through their own life in space because they are now definitely linked to the temporal unfolding that exerts on them an ageing action perceptible in the brevity of their existence. He discovered this life peculiar to the object in his family circle through the intervention of his wife, Monic, who shared from that time in his creating with the contribution of the materials involved in her own interests: chiefly sewing. From a spectator she became a participant and, through her knowledge of these fragile materials, she gave Cozic the opportunity of setting up a bold demonstration — while it remained aesthetically visual — of the importance of external influences on the static nature of fabrics. That was a time of great creation when every object took on an essentially pliable characteristic and when tactile perception acquired an importance little exploited before.

On the way toward these objects of consumption, Cozic created softer and softer forms which tended to occupy larger and larger space and which were notably less conventional. This was the time of *Complexe mammaire* (1970), which took possession of the walls and the floor of the National Gallery of Canada, and of the *Chenilles* that come from the corners and the ceiling. The whole was directed by the obsession of inviting the viewer to enter the play by modifying the spatial aspect with his own initiative. Cozic was in a period, at the same time of sensuality and non-aggressiveness, when, through the sense of touch, he wished to permit the perception of «the rigidity of the physical place in which these objects move»: the play then takes on a new meaning where «the two awarenesses of forms and space are made by Tactile and Visual perceptions».

With this almost pedagogic concern for making the public participate, to educate it by the perception of objects, Cozic caused sensory understanding by gesture and touch to occur more and more, from 1969 on, to such a point that he presented, in the same year, at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Montreal, an exhibition entitled *Jongle Nouilles* where the viewer is plunged into a tactile world which gives him the opportunity of rediscovering perceptions that modern city life forbids him, as if he were in a forest whose branches

Born in Montreal, Monique Charbonneau studied at the School of Fine Arts in Montreal with Pellian from 1950 to 1952, and with Dumouchel from 1961 to 1964. Abroad, she

would whip his body and whose leaves would caress him in a clearly sensual play of nature, the whole increased by a feeling of insecurity added by the mystery of the environment. This proposal of a sensory discovery in itself empowers each of us to enter into this universe of perceptions, according to his own personality, and at the same time to reveal himself while developing anxieties as well as pleasures.

In Cozic's development, there are henceforth three inseparable factors: the viewer, the object, the creator, linked in movement and in time. And the object exists in so far as the spectator takes upon himself the task of animating it, that is to say, of giving it a soul.

With his *Cordes à linge*, Cozic explored much before, in 1971, the idea of the ephemeral that he had previously begun to dissect. But there, the viewer — by exception — does not become involved and only undergoes the unfolding of these moments. Endowed with gay colours and modified by bad weather, Cozic's clothes-line permits the eye to follow a whole range of movements that depend on the time function and whose visual perception offers as many snapshots of the real nature of environment as of the possibilities of transformation of everyday materials.

It was perhaps with *Les 19 premiers jours de la vie d'Eustache* that Cozic wished, in May 1972, at the Galerie Média in Montreal, to present the synthesis of the whole series of tactile objects that he produced in collaboration with his wife. His plan was to make an object develop and to cause it to invade a space, in this case the one at the gallery. Underlying this was his invitation to the public to come not only once to see a work which it should lose from sight, but to witness, by regular visits, the growth of a work called upon from that time never to disappear. Even if he considered Eustache a gag, he nevertheless structured the act of its creation in three parts: «1) the visual part, with its tactile concern due to the use of plush; 2) the intellectual part of the process of growth arising from a contrast between a lapse of time and the quality of the temporary; 3) the essential part, which is what the viewer can feel upon contact with the object»<sup>2</sup>. To this experience we must connect *Packsack*, in whose production he participated with the seven other artists of Groupe Média. The idea being to assemble in one big sack about thirty articles: engravings, beach things, inflatable banners, slashed canvases, easily transported at one time and which one unwraps himself to make his choice — therefore occupation of a space.

Cozic has two other important productions to his credit: these are *Vêtir ceux qui sont nus* (1973), in which he intended to point in derision at our consumer society in another gratuitous gesture, without commercial forethought. Using a whole carnival of different materials, he clothed trees in the dead of winter in order that the viewer might witness the irreparable deterioration of this cheap finery, in the image of all that we produce. In 1973, too, he held an exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in company with Jean Noël, entitled *Oeil pour œil — Doigt pour doigt*, in which he presented chiefly surfaces for touching. Strongly encouraged to participate, the viewer did not deny himself this and was able in this way to do what the artist expected of him.

Such creations, in which the care for the aesthetic disappears progressively to the benefit of the total sensory comprehension of the instantaneous, encouraged Cozic to increase his vision of perceptions; he invites us more than ever to make use of our senses, to see

better, to touch better. Who knows? One day he will perhaps invite us to hear better, to feel better, and to make better use of the sense of taste by going so far as to taste the sculpture-object. Certainly Cozic is reserving other discoveries for us in the domain of sensory perceptions.

1. *Introduction pour Objets*, Yvon Cozic (1969).
2. *Règles du jeu des chenilles*, Yvon Cozic (Feb. 21, 1973).
3. *Qui est Eustache?*, Yvon Cozic (May 8, 1972).

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

Born in France in 1942, Yvon Cozic took the classical course at Stanislas College in Montreal. A graduate of the School of Fine Arts in 1963, he held a bursary from the Canada Arts Council from 1969 to 1972; he also received a grant from the Quebec Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1969. Several of his works are to be found in the National Gallery of Canada and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Aside from his many exhibitions, solo and group, he is one of the administrators of the Groupe Média Gravures et Multiples in Montreal. He is presently producing an exterior sculpture that Quebec is giving to the city of Kingston, on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of that city: a much discussed work whose theme is pollution.

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## RICHARD CICCIMARRA

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By Bradford R. COLLINS

In the summer of last year Richard Ciccimarra, a Victoria artist, died in Greece. It was not an event noted by many; this, in fact, is one of the few places you will find reference to the fact. To me, this seems somewhat tragic since he was an artist of considerable humanity and talent, more, I would venture, than many of those with considerable reputations. What I want to do here is discuss not only the nature of his work but the broader issue of how and why such an artist was and will continue to be neglected.

Ciccimarra was born in Vienna in 1924. Aside from occasional studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in that city, he was essentially self-taught. After World War II he spent more than three years sailing the West Indies in a ketch. He then lived successively in London and Vancouver before settling in Victoria in 1955.

For the last few years of his life Ciccimarra suffered from alcoholism and was frequently hospitalized. During one of his last visits to hospital he telephoned Paul Wong, the director of the Bau-Xi Gallery in Vancouver, to come and receive his last will and testament: all his remaining works. It is from this group that the recent exhibition at the Bau-Xi was drawn. Aside from an occasional painting done before 1960, the exhibit consisted of washed conte drawings of figures done over the last ten years of his life.

These drawings are very deceptive. At first they appear somewhat clumsy and tentative; detail is lacking and Ciccimarra seems to have had trouble finding just the right contour. An

occasional precisely detailed element, like the crumpled paper in the corner of one drawing, however, makes it apparent that ineptitude cannot account for the particular style adopted in these works. Slowly one becomes conscious of the expressive strength carried by the line. Ciccimarra has wilfully rejected a flashy, impressive style which would call attention to itself and through that to himself for a style appropriate to the subject matter. The subjects are exclusively human; alone or in groups of two to four, each person is anonymous, each incapable of vital action or desire. They sit or stand with heads bowed, shoulders drooping and hands hanging slackly at their sides in attitudes of sad resignation. Occasionally a compassionate hand is laid on a desolate shoulder, but the act does not soothe or settle, does not bridge the distance between the figures; each remains isolated, alone in his own sorrow. The line contributes much to the general impact. It too is ordinary, tentative, slow and lifeless. It too is without beauty or excitement. It seems, in fact, to have been the work of the weary hands it defines.

The use of a consummately expressive line and the ability to capture mood through essential pose is reminiscent of Daumier's work. So, too, is the spectator's sympathetic involvement with the characters. Despite, or perhaps because of the lack of individualization and the unspecified nature of their complaints, the viewer is profoundly moved by their plight. In a depressingly existential age Ciccimarra's work strikes a fundamental chord.

The theme of loneliness and resignation is one dealt with often in the literature of this century (the poetry of T.S. Eliot comes most quickly to mind) and it is in this context that Ciccimarra's work is modern. It surely has little to do with modern painting. Except for a few notable exceptions like Edward Hopper, modern painting has avoided such themes, all truly human themes, in fact. Instead, it has contented itself all too often in recent years with formal issues, issues of painting. Rather than face the world, artists like Reg Holmes, whose works followed Ciccimarra's at the Bau-Xi Gallery, seem to prefer to crawl within the tight, cosy confines of a system of their own invention. When artists have addressed themselves to the world beyond their own studios and art books they have tended to do so with a coldly impersonal eye. The Pop artist treats people as commodities and the Photo Realist prefers machines and scenes devoid of a human presence. The work of William Featherston, another Victoria artist recently shown at the Galerie Allen, falls into this general category. The human element is essential to Featherstone's work, but the characters are hard and impenetrable, strangers to each other and to us. I am by no means faulting Featherston or the impersonal modern tradition in which he stands. It is clear such work reflects honestly and well a certain fact of modern existence. Nor do I criticize Holmes or his ilk. In an age of flux and uncertainty, geometry and closed systems are probably a necessary antidote. What is nice, on the other hand, is to be reminded that our capacity for personal involvement is not completely atrophied. What is nice is to see an artist dealing warmly and richly with our finer human instincts, enlarging our capacity for feeling.

Despite the ability of Ciccimarra to deal with his subject-matter in such a consummate fashion he has received scant attention from the professional critic or art historian. Considering the fact that for the last few years of his life Ciccimarra was a virtual recluse and the

best work in the exhibit was being shown for the first time, it is not surprising he has not been noted. What is sad is that the show will not alter the situation; he will remain ignored, unrecognized. For one thing, humanism is unfortunately passé in art. It is dismissed as anecdotal and sentimental, as if man were not a lover of stories and feeling. Then, too, Ciccimarra is not part of any "school". The harsh reality is that quantity counts for more than quality. Recognition goes to the movement, the group. Artists with an entirely individual style are less apt to gain recognition than those whose work is part of a larger current. Edward Hopper's work received little art historical attention until the recent revival of representational painting, until a historically important niche was discovered for him. Unfortunately, I doubt whether the same happy fate will befall Ciccimarra's art. This seems ironically appropriate to an artist who dealt with ultimate misfortune.

## ERNEST GENDRON, OR THE ART OF SUBSTRUCTURE

By Léo ROSSHANDLER

The Museum of Modern Art in New York presented to us some years ago an exhibition on the theme *Architecture without Architects*<sup>1</sup>. This showed us houses, buildings, even village and whole towns that were the results of the invention of the inhabitants of the places. We were struck by the beauty of the forms, by the adaptation to the environment, by the efficient use of space, materials and decoration, in short, by the excellence of the solutions found to the problems of housing and the function of the buildings. All this had been accomplished during the course of history without the aid of graduate architects. By all evidence, the communities contained a goodly number of anonymous architects, educated simply in the hardest and truest school, that of experience.

Would it be possible to discover among us an art without artists? Upon visiting *The Exhibition of Three Artists*, as people are pleased to call it, organized at the Saidye Bronfman Centre<sup>2</sup>, we realize that two of the exhibitors, Tsipora Levy and Abraham Bazak, are truly artists, but that the third, Ernest Gendron, does not seem to deserve this glorious title. In the biographies published at the time of the exhibition, Levy and Bazak tell us of the schools they attended, and the prizes won during the course of their careers, and give us other information tending to justify the rôle of artist, but the same is not true of Gendron. No school, no diploma, no prize, simply the abridged story of a life: lumberman, soldier, acrobat, comedian, wrestler, mechanic, handyman. The dichotomy goes even further. If Gendron says he is a gambler, that he is not afraid to earn the few pennies he needs for living by playing pool, that he lives in a hovel on the money he receives from welfare, that he has plenty of nerve and has associated with thieves<sup>3</sup>, this has gone by unremarked, it does not make an artist. And yet they exhibit paintings from his hand, under sanctioned forms: vernissage, speeches, articles in the press, etc.

On the other hand, a great deal of good will is shown toward Gendron. He is known as a primitive painter, a naïve artist, a spontaneous

creator, adjectives which are only so many excuses. What ought to be said is that he possesses an extraordinary technique, that he is a marvellous portraitist, a knowledgeable colourist, a poet of the image, a psychologist of modern life, that he speaks a contemporary visual language. Since this is not being said, I am happy to have the opportunity of asserting it here.

The reader has perhaps not been reassured. Gendron, who has passed his sixtieth birthday, does not belong to the SPAQ<sup>4</sup> or to C.A.R.<sup>5</sup>; he has not been presented in art galleries or in museums. He does not teach anywhere. The Arts Council has not taken an interest in him, the Art Bank has not visited his place of work, the minister of Cultural Affairs of Quebec is ignorant of his existence. As a last straw, he is reproached for not painting childhood memories like Grandma Moses, the prototype of the so-called naïve artist<sup>6</sup>. He is placed in the same class as Arthur Villeneuve<sup>7</sup>, even if Gendron refuses any comparison with his colleague from Chicoutimi who, he says, «is not serious because he does not finish his canvases». By all evidence, Gendron and Villeneuve are not comparable, they follow divergent paths.

What does Gendron paint and how does he paint? His works are the reflection of the ordinary life of every day, particularly of the bluff that crowns it, in this case the glories of instant History offered to us by politics, the press, the media: President Kennedy and his group, Pope Pius XII and his canary, René Lévesque and John Diefenbaker, Charles de Gaulle and Churchill, even Hitler is not missing from the roll-call. He is interested also in persons who are not leaders of men: Picasso appears in front of his castle, Olivier Guimond, «the man who makes millions of people laugh», is there with his charming smile and Marilyn Munroe, naked, separated by a deep river from the humanity that they would like to convince that she is the image of dreamed-of happiness. There is also the portrait of Charlie Chaplin, a picture Gendron considers his masterpiece.

He made «the only radio of its kind in the world», a shrine of an old set surrounded with painted scenes produced in the spirit of medieval hunts. Finally he created a collection of fancy handkerchiefs whose decoration and colouring are comparable to the most beautiful Persian carpets, which are mentioned here only in the quality of an illustration, Gendron not having been inspired by them at all.

The technique of this painter is of the most uncommon and personal. He uses enamel which he applies with toothpicks or wooden matches. Gendron obtains clear, velvety, often sculptured pictorial coatings. The nose of the general (you recognize him without its being necessary to name him) stands out from the surface of the picture and of the figure and frightens you with its realism. It is in no way a matter of mockery or caricature, much to the contrary. The beautiful flat and polished black of the dress costume that the figure wears contrasts knowledgeably with his face submitted to a movement of volumes accentuating its strength. Fortunately, the force of which I am speaking is entirely in Gendron's art and not in the face of the subject. In another connection, we have a desire to pinch Olivier Guimond's cheeks, the texture is so well moulded. Through his patience, his concern for doing well, his gift as an illustrator, his decorative knowledge, Gendron belongs to the family of the monks and artists of the Middle Ages, creators of illustrated manuscripts, of books of the hours which are the glory of museums to-day.

After Villeneuve, Gendron reveals that there is a very rich source of art in the people. But it is only occasionally that art emanating from the substructure of society, workers, persons in lesser trades, persons fallen from their class, is taken seriously. The dizzy circus of the art of the twentieth century could have seized upon Gendron and enrolled him in the Pop group which is very healthy in Quebec, thank goodness. But because Gendron escapes every category, all the classifications dear to the priests of art, he demonstrates the limitless possibilities of creation that exist among us and everywhere else. If it is true that all and sundry are not in a position to produce objects of an aesthetic nature, as it is true that not everyone is suited to having a driving licence, it is just as certain that a great number of persons, especially in the social levels apart from the cultured or the official or the avant-garde (a trinity as well installed, but as little certain as the Other), possess the gift of creating. Let them take courage and, with or without official help, let them follow the path traced out by Gendron. It is then that we shall see an explosion of art in Quebec. It is then that Quebec will have its art without artists. What is valid for Quebec is equally valid for the rest of the world.

François Gagnon did not hesitate to say that Villeneuve was one of the greatest artists in Quebec<sup>8</sup>; let him allow me, while I agree with him, to say the same about Ernest Gendron. And there he is, finally, a consecrated artist.

1. *Architecture without Architects — A Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*, a publication by Bernard Rudofsky on the exhibition presented at the Museum of Modern Art in New York from November 9, 1964 to February 7, 1965; New York, Garden City, Doubleday Company Inc., 1964.
2. The Saidye Bronfman Centre of the YM-YWHA, Visual and Fine Arts Department. Tsipora Levy, Abraham Bazak and Ernest Gendron exhibition, from February 6 to March 15, 1974.
3. Information given personally by Ernest Gendron to the author (February, 1974).
4. Society of the Professional Artists of Quebec.
5. Canadian Artists Representation.
6. Georges Bogardi, *The Montreal Star*, February 14, 1974. A critical view of the work of Gendron, in which the latter is compared unfavourably with Grandma Moses.
7. *La Presse*, Montreal, February 9, 1974. A remark of the critic referring to Villeneuve and Gendron, which said: «Personally, I do not believe that genius can be found at this level.»
8. *Les Chroniques du Québec d'Arthur Villeneuve*, Catalogue of the exhibition held at the Museum of Fine Arts in Montreal, from March 3 to April 16, 1972. Conclusion of François Gagnon's introductory article.

(Translation by Mildred Grand)

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