



NEWS RELEASE

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GIVERNY, LE TEMPS MAUVE  
Recent Works by Suzanne Giroux  
at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Montréal, October 23, 1990. From November 4, 1990 to January 27, 1991, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal will present Giverny, le temps mauve, a selection of eight video projections by Québec artist Suzanne Giroux. These recent works all take their inspiration from the famous garden of French Impressionist painter Claude Monet, located on his property at Giverny.

Suzanne Giroux creates what she calls video-paintings, paintings employing video trompe-l'oeil. She uses a fixed video camera, and hence a single plane, and deliberately records a slightly out-of-focus image. In the projection, the technical supports are hidden behind a false wall. The effect is striking, the confusion inevitable. Especially since, this time, the artist has chosen to use video projections, not videocassette recorders and monitors as in her previous exhibitions. Nothing is left to chance in this ingenious work. The artist controls the smallest details. The precise placement of each element amplifies the beauty and harmony of the whole. The colours vibrate, the contrasts rain down. Finally, movement appears. Viewers paying attention will be surprised to find themselves contemplating a changing work. Painting is not what it used to be. Neither is video.

Giverny, le temps mauve continues the artist's investigation of the limits of video. Once again, Suzanne Giroux affirms and brings out certain specific characteristics of this medium. The first question that arises is that of time and length. The works literally show time passing. The occasional use of the time display code at the bottom of the screens further reinforces this desire to put marked-out time into images, to create painting in motion, to practise an art that is constantly evolving. With video-paintings, viewers do not even have a work in front of their eyes. The work progress before them, in real time. The second question relates to the light in Giroux's works, more precisely luminous energy. An ion is not pigment. A screen is not a canvas. Video renders colours through evanescent, contrasting outlines. Some objects are guessed at; others disappear. As in Monet's Water Lilies, painted at Giverny, the forms break up into masses of intense, vibrant colour. Abstraction is not far off. The screen -- like the master's painting, but in its own way -- "crosses the mirror of reality."

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The choice of Monet's garden at Giverny, is thus not an innocent one. Giroux is clearly exploring the "pictorial" effects which may be hidden within her contemporary medium. At the same time, she tries to draw from art history the example of a new experience of reality, a new relationship to beauty, which has become deeply subjective. Monet himself imposed his personal vision of things, notably in his famous series on Haystacks or Rouen Cathedral. Giroux went to Giverny precisely to rediscover and rework the foundations of this approach -- to quote and refer to them, but above all to insert them in her own work.

Suzanne Giroux founded the visual arts department at the Séminaire de Saint-Georges de Beauce in the mid-eighties. She holds a post-graduate diploma in aesthetics from the Sorbonne, which followed a master's in art history at the Université de Montréal, and is now completing her Ph.D. in Paris.

While her career is still young, Suzanne Giroux is establishing herself as a major figure in a new generation of Québec artists. Her first solo exhibition, Revisiter le modèle, presented at the P.R.I.M. Vidéo gallery in Montréal in 1989, was greeted most favourably by critics. Her works have already aroused enviable interest abroad. The University of Florida in Gainesville and the Museum of Art in Fort Lauderdale have devoted solo exhibitions to her, and she has also taken part in international events in France and the United States.

Giverny, le temps mauve is entirely devoted to recent works by Suzanne Giroux. In this way, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal wishes to fulfil its mandate of presenting and promoting young artists who are worthy of attention, as a result of both the originality and quality of their artistic approach and the fundamental questions it gives rise to.

The exhibition is organized by Réal Lussier, curator at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

STCUM bus service, via line 168, is now available throughout museum hours, from Tuesday to Sunday between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

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