

**JOSEPH BRANCO EXHIBIT: STILL LIFE  
AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN  
UNTIL APRIL 11**

Montréal, February 3, 1993. From February 13 to April 11, the Musée d'art contemporain will present an exhibition by Québécois artist **JOSEPH BRANCO : STILL LIFE**. Part of the Project Series, *Still Life* uses certain aspects of the classical still life genre, and offers something quite distinctive. The installation takes the form of several moulded elements placed on walls such as large plates (four feet in diameter), frames and a shelf upon which are placed different objects made of glass, ceramics, wax, bronze and rubber.

Joseph Branco has radically altered the traditional still life genre; he gives it a space, a frame within which the spectator can circulate, much like the eye wandering over a canvas. The notion of the frame should be understood in its widest sense. The wall is the support (the table) upon which the objects are arranged. In this particular installation, mouldings take the form of paintings or objects which are easily recognizable and fragment the space while imposing no particular direction or path.

From his first creations, a group of painting-objects executed in the mid-eighties, Joseph Branco began defining the principal parameters within which his work would evolve. Pierre Landry, curator of the exhibition explains: "Unframed, cut-out or moulded so as to resemble different objects (a table, for example, or a frame), these canvases explore with some subtlety the various mechanisms that operate within the pictorial practice. "Painting is approached through an examination of its various components - frame, support, surface, image. Yet the artist exposes and transposes these elements so that they are perceived not so much in their basic materiality, but from the more complex viewpoint of their relations to one another and to the exhibition space, as well as their various uses throughout the history of painting.

**Why still life?**

When he was a student, Joseph Branco created a work inspired from a still life by Henri Matisse. "It seemed to me to lend itself to an analytic approach (cut-out, assemblage, collage)", he says. When he handed in his work, he was surprised to see that he was the only student to have chosen a still life. He saw this as a personal choice and above all a question of sensitivity. "My conception of still life made me see it as a kind of laboratory, an ideal place in which to conduct experiments. Since then, I have never stopped asking questions regarding painting in terms of this pictorial form."

A native of Québec, Joseph Branco studied at the University of Montréal and at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). He has had six solo exhibitions and as many group exhibitions, the most recent being **Instabilités du regard**, presented in 1992 at La Cour des Arts in Ottawa. His first group exhibition, entitled **Peinture au Québec: une nouvelle génération**, was conceived in 1985 by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

The exhibition **JOSEPH BRANCO : STILL LIFE** is part of the Project Series which presents the work of a new artist every six weeks. The series provides a solid platform for young artists who are exploring new and exciting avenues in contemporary art and for other artists who have attained a certain maturity of expression.

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