

RIOPELLE: EARTH AND FIRE AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN

Montreal, October 19, 1993. The Musée d'art contemporain presents the exhibition **RIOPELLE: EARTH AND FIRE**, on view from October 22 to January 2, 1994. In 1984-1985, this internationally renowned Quebec artist executed a series of large scale enamel-on-lava works made from extracts of natural volcanic deposits found in Auvergne, France. This presentation, which has been made possible with the collaboration of Michel Tétreault Art International, constitutes a premiere exhibition, Montreal being the first part of a North American tour.

Jean-Paul Riopelle was always fascinated by pottery but it was not until the mid-1980's that he produced this series of large enamelled and fired lava sheets. Replete with figures of birds and fish but also more abstract shapes, "the series is...", according to curator of the exhibit, Yolande Racine, "...like his ongoing interest in creating pottery, a reflection of Riopelle's particular penchant for working with earth and fire." Through his work, he invites us to confront the basic elements of nature.

According to art critic René Viau, "though [these works] are products of earth and fire, they seem, paradoxically, almost fluid, aquatic, curiously similar to those other shining examples of Riopelle's work - his inks, watercolours, gouaches."

It was in the studios of the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul de Vence that Riopelle began experimenting with this medium with ceramist Hans Spinner. Riopelle succeeded in producing, out of a heavy material, compositions of an incredible lightness. The end-result is spectacular: fluid gouaches that, for René Viau, "seem to float just like the figures, forms, colours and objects which are nevertheless enshrined in the heart of these caskets of brilliant earth."

Le Musée est fier de souligner le 70^e anniversaire de naissance du célèbre artiste québécois Jean-Paul RIOPELLE en exposant un ensemble de six laves émaillées, intitulées *Sans titre*. Les formats sont parfois imposants, les œuvres datées de 1984, varient en effet de 100 à 350 cm.

Le Musée a conçu certaines activités entourant l'exposition consacrée à Jean-Paul RIOPELLE. Monique Brunet-Weinmann, historienne d'art proposera deux rencontres avec le public portant sur l'exposition **RIOPELLE : TERRE ET FEU**. Elles auront lieu le 1^{er} décembre à 12 h et le 5 décembre à 14 h. Un vidéo réalisé en 1982 par l'Office national du film du Canada et intitulé **RIOPELLE** sera diffusé le 15 décembre, à 14 h et 18 h ainsi que les 18 et 19 décembre, à 14 h. Les projections ont lieu à la *Salle Gazoduc TQM*.

Rappelons que Jean-Paul RIOPELLE est représenté par Michel Tétreault Art International qui présente jusqu'au 7 novembre l'exposition *Riopelle Œuvres vives*.

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