

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**60,000 MILK CARTONS LATER: JEAN-JULES SOUCY'S
L'OEUVRE PINTE AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
STARTING DECEMBER 10**

Montreal, December 2, 1993. **L'OEUVRE PINTE**, consisting of a *Crazy Carpet* and a *Milky Way*, is a new work by artist Jean-Jules Soucy on view at the Musée d'art contemporain from December 10 to January 23. The ensemble of this work is the result of a collection of over 60 000 empty milk cartons supplied by the general public and various organizations. The two works are truly striking in their formal and chromatic richness and in their economy of means and structural simplicity. **L'OEUVRE PINTE** is the 8th exhibition to be part of the Project Series.

Amusing and thought-provoking

Above all, Jean-Jules Soucy tries to establish a link between people and art. Through his use of found objects (in this case, milk cartons), he sensitizes a large group of people to the need of recycling and encourages them to participate in the process. He also gets them interested because they are, in fact, aiding in the process of creating a work of art. By practising what he calls *bricolage engagé*, (committed assemblage) made up of everyday recyclable objects, and by the importance of colour and irony, Soucy's work becomes something amusing and seductive but also disturbing and thought-provoking.

In his fight against gloom and doom, Soucy has clearly opted for fantasy and wit. He offers a reflection on the methods and ways by which contemporary art develops in relation to pop and decorative art.

A play on words

Réal Lussier, curator for the exhibition in collaboration with Danielle Legentil, underlines the recurring feature of plays on words in the artist's practice. "From one creation to the next, puns serve both as source and complement to the work; often the artist will take them to such a point that the meaning is superimposed and the images are upset." The two pieces in **L'OEUVRE PINTE**, *Tapis stressé (Crazy Carpet)* and *Voie lactée (Milky Way)*, are good examples of Soucy's use of puns. "The pun is manifested not only by the fantasy-like spirit of the artist but also by his extraordinary ability to coax poetry out of the simplest things, and to transform the most ordinary of realities."

The *Tapis Stressé* is located in the Project Series gallery and is essentially a colourful, "motified" woven carpet that covers the surface of the floor. The *Voie lactée* is on view in the main entrance of the Musée and takes on the form of snowflakes.

Originally from the town of La Baie, in the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean area, Jean-Jules Soucy draws much of the content of his work from his native territory and it is still the theatre of the various creations via which he expresses his social commitment. A number of his pieces are, in fact, political comments on the important everyday issues facing the area. In 1987, for example, in his *Coupe-froide*, he put woollen tuques on hundreds of rocks lying on the banks of a river in denunciation of the industrial pollution suffered by it. Other installations question artistic conventions like in *Vol de canards* executed in 1988 at the Musée du Fjord (town of La Baie). The visitors who saw the three thousand painted aluminum-foil duck heads on display were encouraged to steal them in full view and with the full knowledge of the museum's security guards.

Réal Lussier feels that the artist reminds one of the Dadaists and the Surrealists in his attitude of provocation, his interest in everyday objects and his sense of the absurd. Soucy, however, does not belong to any particular movement or style.

Jean-Jules Soucy will meet the public on Sunday, December 12 at 2 pm, when he will discuss various aspects of his artistic process. And, on **December 10, at 5:30 pm**, the Musée will draw the names of the winners for a lunch for 2 at *La Rotonde Restaurant*, as well as year-long membership to the Friends of the Musée. Eligible for the drawing are those who kindly participated in our quest of milk cartons this past November.

The Musée wishes to thank the following companies or organizations for their cooperation: the CECM, Crèmerie des Trois-Rivières, Fédération des producteurs de lait du Québec, Laiterie Chalifoux, Laiterie Château, Laiterie de la Baie, Laiterie Mont-St-Hilaire, Aliments Ault, FBI Brands, Produits alimentaires Mont-Blanc, Natrel and Perrette.

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