

LE RÊVE D'UNE OMBRE BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS CANTIN AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN STARTING DECEMBER 10

Montréal, December 1, 1994. From December 10 to January 29, as part of its Project Series, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal is presenting *LE RÊVE D'UNE OMBRE* by Jean-François Cantin. The exhibition consists of a cinematographic installation in which the Montréal artist develops certain current concerns of his: the desire for representation, the question of the image and the notion of time.

Well known in Québec art circles for some 15 years now, Jean-François Cantin was initially associated with video installation. According to curator Gilles Godmer, "he was among the first artists here to explore the expressive possibilities of this medium, particularly via installation, which was then still relatively new. In recent years, Cantin has taken a great interest in the playful, poetic and erotic potential of light projections produced using optical devices." This installation represents the first part of the artist's *Suites et chroniques* cycle. He returns to video here, at the same time incorporating his investigations of recent years.

LE RÊVE D'UNE OMBRE makes use of two distinct processes in the same image. The first is that representing the shadow of a bare tree branch, tossing in the wind. This shadow is produced by the projection of a light source onto a wall; between the two walls, a branch is suspended. Then, on the opposite wall, the same shadow of the tree branch is multiplied by means of lenses (an extension and metaphor for the eye) mounted on spectacle frames arranged on glass shelves.

On the human condition

Gilles Godmer adds, in the exhibition brochure entitled *Projected Shadows*, that the image chosen by Jean-François Cantin almost has the power of an archetype. "Lurking just beneath the dramatic shadow of a stark and wind-tossed branch is, symbolically, the human condition, a condition of solitude, ephemerality, desolation and death. [...] The shadow plays the same role as the skull or the spiralled lemon peel that are two recurring and necessary features of seventeenth-century *vanitas* paintings. It acts as a mirror, showing us the early signs of our imminent downfall. It compels reflection on our own fate."

Godmer goes on to say: "While at the start of Cantin's career, physical space occupied a definite place in his works, it has been progressively renounced. In his light projections -- apart from the anthropomorphism of certain forms -- all human presence has also been gradually eliminated. But never, perhaps, so markedly as in *LE RÊVE D'UNE OMBRE*, where the absence is flagrant. Paradoxically, never has Cantin's work spoken to us so clearly and so masterfully of the human condition."

It should be noted that the Musée is also presenting *Propos type*, in the Gazoduc TQM room. This video work was produced by Jean-François Cantin in 1977 and is part of the Musée collection.

Meeting with Jean-François Cantin on December 14 at 6:30 p.m.

The artist will meet the public on Wednesday December 14 at 6:30 p.m., when he will discuss various aspects of his work. The meeting will be held in the Banque Laurentienne gallery. Please mention *Meeting with Jean-François Cantin* at the door.

Previous exhibitions

Born in Montréal, Jean-François Cantin studied at the school of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and continues to live and work in Montréal. He has taken part in a number of exhibitions. His one-man shows include:

- 1994 *Espace Fabula*, Salerno, Italy
Expression, Saint-Hyacinthe
- 1990 *Lanterne*, Interference Gallery, Toronto
- 1987 *Appareil incandescent*, Saw Gallery, Ottawa

He has taken part in the following group exhibitions, among others:

- 1994 *Palomar ou le Voyeur captif*, 5235 Côte-des-Neiges, Montréal
- 1991 *Quelques optiques du photographique*, Maison de la culture Frontenac, organized by Dazibao, Montréal
- 1990 *Visions 90*, CIAC, Montréal
- 1988 *Montréal / Berlin 88-89*, Saidye Bronfman Centre, Montréal, Goethe-Institut Montréal art gallery, Lavalin art gallery, Montréal, and Bahnhof Westend, Berlin

Finally, we should mention two permanent installations:

- 1993 *Présence and Séjour*, Monument national, National Theatre School of Canada, Montréal

LE RÊVE D'UNE OMBRE by Jean-François Cantin is the fourteenth exhibition in the Project Series. This series offers a forum for young artists exploring bold new avenues and for artists who have reached a certain level of maturity in their expression. Since its inception two years ago, the Project Series has brought us the works of François-Marie Bertrand, Michèle Waquant, Joseph Branco, Guillermo Kuitca, Guy Pellerin, Sylvie Readman, Eric Cameron, Jean-Jules Soucy, Claude Hamelin, Laurie Walker, Jana Sterbak, Thomas Corriveau and Alain Paiement.

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