

## COLLECTIONS OF THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

While many American contemporary art museums' collections begin with works created after World War II, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal has chosen to collect works dating from 1939.

John Lyman, a teacher, painter, and art critic whose work is still having a profound influence on Canadian artists today, founded the Contemporary Art Society of Montreal in 1939, initiating an entirely new approach to art in Canada. Lyman, who studied under Matisse in Paris, introduced contemporary art to Montreal as a reaction against what he termed "the souvenir painting" being produced at that time by the "Group of Seven", artists who felt that the work of Canadian artists should be based solely on Canadian subjects. The "Group of Seven" included painters Arthur Lismer, Frederick Valey, J.E.H. MacDonald, Franklin Carmichael, Lawren Harris, A.Y. Jackson, and Frank Johnston.

With the recent acquisition of the Lavalin collection in June 1992, the Musée's permanent collection now holds some 4 600 works and includes art from every major movement of the past 53 years. Sixty percent of the collection is made up of the Quebec artists.

In making acquisitions, the Museum has chosen works which best illustrate key periods in the history of contemporary art. Numerous representatives of major movements include those from the New York School of abstract expressionism ("Classic Fragments", 1947 by Hans Hoffman), geometric abstraction ("Tuscany", 1964 by Josef Albers), post-pictorial abstraction (Jules Olitski, "Radical Love", 1972, and "Street Singer", 1970, by Larry Poons), Pop art ("Bolt Cutters", 1973 by Jim Dine, Robert Rauschenberg's "Hoarfrost Mule", 1974), minimalism ("Newbrugkwerk Dusseldorfgedwidmet", 1976, by Carl Andre), conceptual art (Dennis Oppenheim's "A Sound Enclosed Land Area, Milano, Italy", 1969), and Arte Povera ("Tavolo" by Mario Merz, 1978). Other important artists in the collection are Warhol, Picasso, Mapplethorpe, and Lichtenstein.

The Museum began to collect photography in earnest after 1978, making the decision to acquire prints by early pioneers in the medium, some of which date to the beginning of the twentieth century. Photographs in the collection include "New York Stock Exchange" (c. 1930) by Berenice Abbott and "Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico" (1941) by Ansel Adams.

Video art has been part of the permanent collection since 1979. Included in the Museum's holdings are "Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts, Part II" by Robert Fillou (1979); "Intercept the Rays" by Nan Hoover, 1982; and Fabio Mauri's "News From Europe Part I" and "News From Europe Part 2: Vegetables", both produced in 1978.

Although operational funds for the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal are provided in full by the Quebec provincial government, acquisitions must come largely from other sources. The Museum has enjoyed a high level of support from the community since its founding in 1964, with donations from artists, collectors, art galleries, art associations, private companies, and foundations. The Friends of the Museum, formed in 1982, has also been the source of numerous acquisitions, providing financial resources for over 350 works to date. Monetary donations from the general public have been used to purchase paintings such as "Portrait au visage rose et bleu" by Henri Matisse.

Important collections given to the institution include 105 works of post World War II Quebec art given by collectors Gisèle and Gérard Lortie in 1971, and the extraordinary 1973 gift from the National Museums of Canada of 75 paintings by Paul-Émile Borduas, with 12,500 documents from the artist's personal records.

The Museum had moved into its spacious new facilities but acquisition objectives for the permanent collection will continue to focus on the art of Quebec with strong additional interest in international works representing major trends in art, both those from the past as well as those which will emerge in the future.

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