

For immediate release

LA COUR DES MIRACLES
BY LOUIS-PHILIPPE DEMERS AND BILL VORN
AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

Montréal, June 9, 1998. From June 17 to August 30, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents *La Cour des Miracles* by Montréal artists Louis-Philippe Demers and Bill Vorn. This exhibition takes the form of an extraordinary multimedia environment populated by 30 or so robotic entities, each with its own "personality." The machines detect any human presence and react to it. In this presentation, the artists offer a reflection on individual and social behaviours.

The hard-to-predict social behaviour of machines

Louise Ismert, multimedia events coordinator, notes that the semblance of life in Demers and Vorn's robotic entities rests not on a physiological representation of the living, but rather on the sounds and movements determined by the system's programming, which turns each metal frame into an individual figure. The behaviour of each entity is dictated by its own perception of the situation, and conditions its conduct with respect to the other machines — hence the illusion of social behaviours that is sought by the artists.

In this presentation, Demers and Vorn achieve uncertain, hard-to-predict behaviours. Once a series of "rules" has been defined on the machine, the robotic organism processes the information and infers behaviours from it that break away from the initial programming. Accordingly, in *La Cour des Miracles*, our presence and movements influence the unfolding of a chain of events which we cannot control. The project allows us to observe the inescapable reflex of a projecting of feelings which we cannot help having towards anything that calls out to us.

Both "cyber-freaks," Louis-Philippe Demers and Bill Vorn have worked together since 1992 on creating robotic installations in unusual environments in which they explore an aesthetic of behaviour.

Some Prestigious Awards

Louis-Philippe Demers and Bill Vorn's works have won international awards at the following events: *Lightforms'98*, Art & Science Collaboration - New York, 1998 : Leprecon Award for Interactivity; *Prix Ars Electronica'96*, ORF -Ars Electronica, Linz, Autriche, 1996 : le Interaktive Kunst Distinction Award; *IDMA'96*, International Digital Media Awards, Toronto: Best Non-Commercial Interactive Artwork Award and Best of Show Award.

Meeting with Louis-Philippe Demers and Bill Vorn on Wednesday, June 17

Louis-Philippe Demers and Bill Vorn will meet the public on Wednesday, June 17 at 5 p.m., when they will discuss various aspects of their artistic approach.

The exhibition received financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Dissemination Assistance Program.

The creation of *La Cour des Miracles* was made possible by financial assistance from the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

This exhibition is a more developed version of the installation previewed in Chicago in conjunction with ISEA 97.

- 30 -

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