

## Between heaven and earth

# paterson Ewen

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*Halley's Comet as Seen by Giotto, 1979. Acrylic and fluorescent paint on galvanized steel and gouged plywood, 229 x 244 cm. Anonymous gift, 1994, Art Gallery of Ontario Collection*

THE MAJOR EXHIBITION *PATERSON EWEN: EARTHLY WEATHERS/HEAVENLY SKIES* TRACES THE SINGULAR PICTORIAL ADVENTURE OF THIS CANADIAN ARTIST WHO WAS PART OF THE MONTRÉAL ARTISTIC COMMUNITY DURING THE FORTIES, FIFTIES AND SIXTIES. ESTABLISHED IN LONDON, ONTARIO, SINCE 1968, EWEN TODAY IS CONSIDERED ONE OF THE LEADING FIGURES ON THE ARTISTIC SCENE IN CANADA. HE NOT ONLY REVITALIZED THE LANDSCAPE TRADITION IN HIS JOURNEY FROM ABSTRACTION TO FIGURATION, BUT ALSO, IN HIS WORK OF THE LAST DECADES, EXPLORED AN IMAGERY AND MATERIALITY THAT ARE UNIQUE IN THE RECENT HISTORY OF PAINTING.

Organized and circulated by the Art Gallery of Ontario, the exhibition follows a thematic approach to reveal Ewen's fascination with earthly and heavenly phenomena, and the way in which his vision of the natural world has imparted its magnificence and inventive power to his art.

Paterson Ewen's career spans six decades; he was born in Montréal in 1925. It is an aesthetic progression marked by exploration and experimentation, continuity and disjunction, that emerges from the 60 or so works in the exhibition: the figurative paintings and drawings from the late forties and early fifties, when Ewen was studying at the School of Art and Design at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts with Goodridge Roberts, his most influential teacher; several paintings and works on paper from the fifties and sixties, illustrating the various forms of abstraction which the artist investigated under the impact of the Automatists and American Abstract Expressionists; the large pieces of the late sixties and early seventies, made of rough materials (galvanized steel, rubber, linoleum, etc.), suggesting a new figuration of natural phenomena (rain, thunder and water, for example) and heralding Ewen's most important works, his landscapes on plywood shaped, grooved and gouged with the electric router he has used consistently since 1971.

From that time on, Ewen abandoned the traditional painter's tools and introduced his preferred subjects which have been of endless fascination to him. The representations of cosmic realities (comets, tornadoes, eclipses, and so on) which he executes with all the force of his creative gestures, and of which the exhibition offers us some brilliant examples, remain some of the boldest, most enigmatic and most consummate works in art today.

In addition to a remarkable group of works given to the Art Gallery of Ontario by the artist and several generous donors, the Montréal presentation of the exhibition includes a significant selection of pieces from the collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal along with recent paintings belonging to Ewen himself. This tribute to Paterson Ewen will permit a better understanding of the lyrical and epic dimension of this artist's complex body of work which, according to Matthew Teitelbaum, Chief Curator of the Art Gallery of Ontario, "suggests the experience of nature not merely as an image to look at, but as an event in which to participate."

■ SANDRA GRANT MARCHAND



Paterson Ewen in 1988  
Photo: Carlo Catenazzi, courtesy of the  
Art Gallery of Ontario

MAY 23 TO SEPTEMBER 21, 1997

*Pink Full Moon*, 1994  
 Acrylic on gouged plywood  
 226.1 x 228.6 cm  
 Coll.: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
 Photo: Equinox Gallery



# paterson Ewen

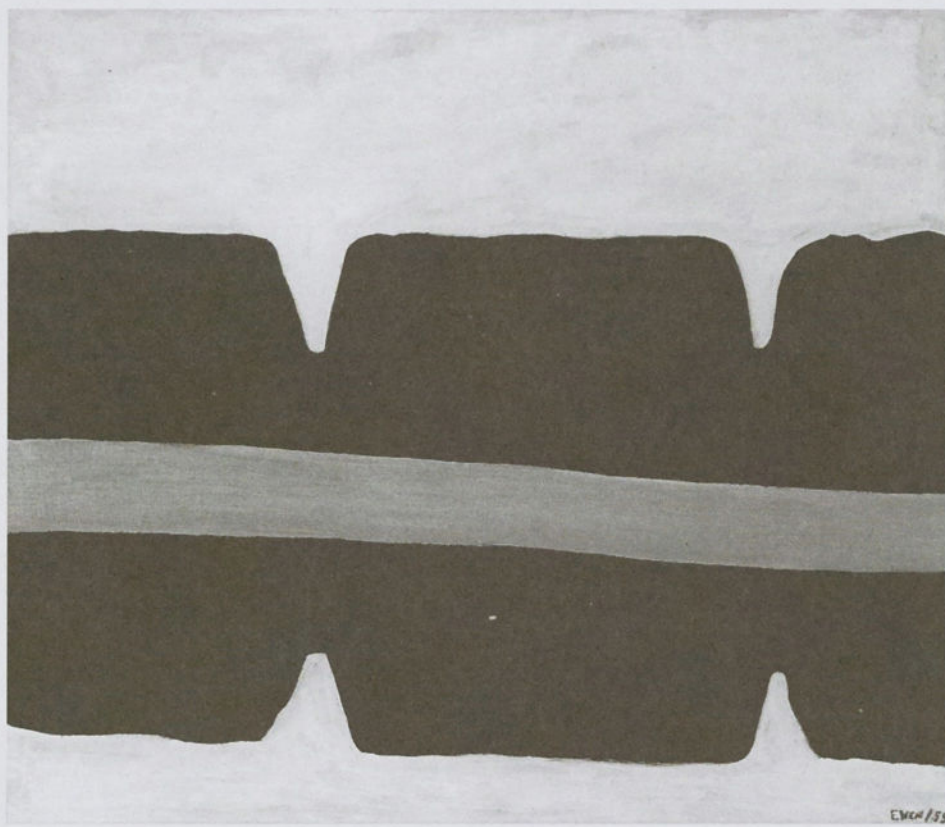
## Brief overview of a collection

HOW DO WORKS BY CANADIAN PAINTER PATERSON EWEN FIGURE IN THE COLLECTION OF THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL? THE MUSÉE HAS SIGNIFICANT HOLDINGS BY THIS ARTIST: 16 PIECES IN ALL, COMPRISING 10 PAINTINGS PRODUCED BETWEEN 1956 AND 1994, FIVE DRAWINGS FROM 1962-1964 AND A SILK SCREEN FROM 1957. THIS LAST WORK, *BLAST*, ACQUIRED IN 1965, INTRODUCED EWEN'S ART INTO THE COLLECTION. IT ATTESTS TO HIS AFFILIATION WITH THE MONTRÉAL ARTISTIC COMMUNITY, SINCE IT IS HIS CONTRIBUTION TO AN *ERTA PORTFOLIO*<sup>1</sup> BRINGING TOGETHER 10 ARTISTS TO EXPLORE, UNDER THE TECHNICAL DIRECTION OF JEAN-PIERRE BEAUDIN, THE THEN RELATIVELY NEW POSSIBILITIES OF SERIGRAPHY. ALSO NOTEWORTHY IS THE GENEROSITY OF MARCELLE AND GÉRARD BEAULIEU WHO, IN 1968, GAVE THE MUSÉE THE 1963 PAINTING *UNTITLED*, AND THAT OF BRUNO M. AND RUBY CORMIER FOR THEIR 1985 DONATION OF THE 1956 *UNTITLED*.

The five oil pastels on paper produced in 1962-1964 indicate the austere simplicity and the effectiveness of Ewen's pictorial approach, with its strong preference for the insertion of a central motif – circular, rectangular – literally swept and penetrated by the accumulation of colourful strokes. The quality of the surfaces, the movement and excesses of material express the paradoxical confrontation of impulse and order. The five paintings from 1962 and 1963 (*The Star*, about 1962, *Square Sunset*, 1962, *Untitled*, 1962 [monochromatic blue], *Untitled*, 1962 [monochromatic orange] and *Untitled*, 1963) convey a deep attachment to a landscape structure altered by the shifting, or even disappearance, of the horizon line. Two works from the fifties reveal both the artist's mastery of post-Automatism and his familiarity with American Abstract Expressionism (*Untitled*, 1956), and the persistence, that would carry on throughout the next four decades, of a formal vocabulary celebrating the organic world and vital principles (*Courant de vie*, 1959). *Diagrama of a Multiple Personality*, from 1966, encompasses seemingly broken contours and curves within the grid, flat tints and hard edges. A few years later, in *Star Traces Around Polaris*, 1973, other trajectories, stellar ones this time, evoke a phenomenological, poetic conception of reality. Literally "traced," gouged out of the wood of the pictorial plane, the constellations, landscapes, storms and moonlight (*Pink Full Moon*, 1994) stand out as the complete expression of a personal, plastic, cosmic universe.

■ JOSÉE BÉLISLE

1. The other nine participants in the publication were: Gérard Tremblay, André Jasmin, Roland Giguère, Léon Bellefleur, Albert Dumouchel, Marcelle Ferron, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Maurice Raymond and Jean-Pierre Beaudin.



*Courant de vie*, 1959  
 Oil on canvas  
 126.8 x 152.5 cm  
 Coll.: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
 Photo: Denis Farley

guillaume



*Concise History of Prehistoric Man, 1996*  
Installation  
Photo: SYB'L S. - Pictures, Antwerp

SINCE HE EMBARKED UPON HIS CAREER IN THE 1970S, GUILLAUME BIJL HAS PRODUCED SOME OF THE MOST STRIKING WORK ON THE VERY DYNAMIC BELGIAN CONTEMPORARY ART SCENE. THIS EXHIBITION, THE FIRST PRESENTATION OF BIJL'S WORK IN A CANADIAN MUSEUM, WILL GIVE VISITORS TO THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL A CHANCE TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH AN ARTIST KNOWN PRINCIPALLY IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES.

Essentially taking the form of installations, some of them very large, Bijl's work is characterized by a realism that seems innocuous at first glance, but whose ironic nature quickly becomes apparent. In this spirit, Bijl questions the links between art and various social rituals, particularly those arising out of the consumer society.

Bijl divides his work into four main categories, based on the tone and nature of the pieces and the context in which they are presented. In its Montréal version, this exhibition contains works from the "transformation-installation" and "composition" categories.

"Transformation-installations" are the form used most often in Bijl's work. These pieces reproduce, in true-to-life scale and details, various readily recognizable locations: body building gym, antique shop, auction house, TV quiz show set, and museum gallery, for example. The artist describes these installations, which are always presented in places dedicated to art (galleries, museums, etc.), as being "a reality in a non-reality" – taking as his starting point the idea that an artistic space is "unreal" and "functionless," insofar as it is often seen as having

no real usefulness. At once anonymous and spectacular, these works are presented as three-dimensional still lifes attesting to the rites and values of contemporary society.

The smaller "compositions" (generally called "compositions trouvées" [found compositions] – an allusion to the notion of "found object") constitute bits of reality taken from everyday situations which, most often, are closely related to the consumer society (such as their mode of presentation, in the form of displays). In keeping with the spirit that animates Bijl's work as a whole, these pieces suggest a kind of archeology of today's world, whose order and appearances they mimic in order to better reveal its artificiality.

Guillaume Bijl was born in Antwerp in 1946. His work has been shown at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1981), the Venice Biennale (Belgian Pavilion, 1988), New York's New Museum (1989), and the Kassel Documenta (1992), among other venues. This exhibition and the publication accompanying it were produced by the Antwerp Museum of Contemporary Art (MUHKA).

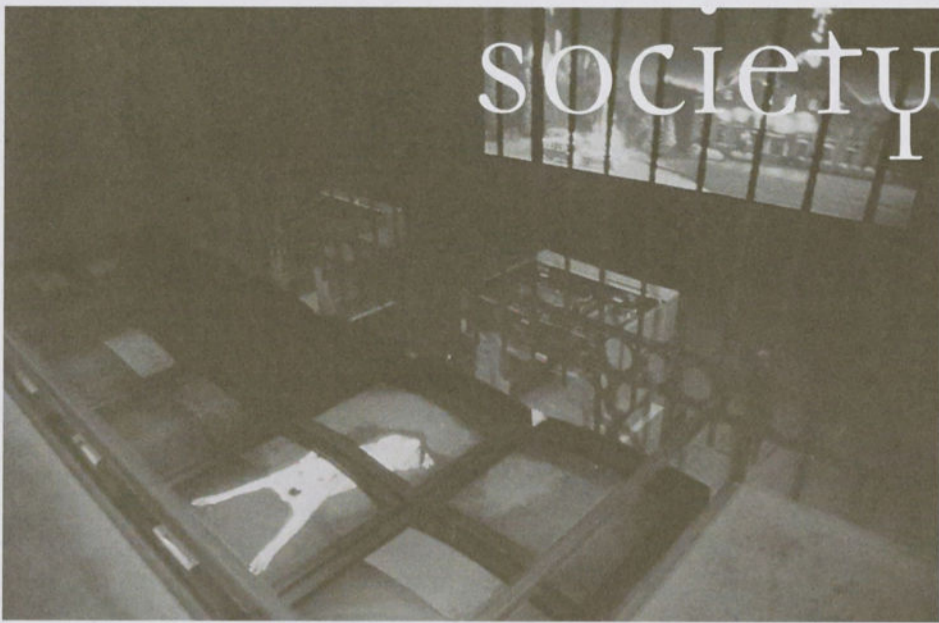
■ PIERRE LANDRY

MAY 23 TO SEPTEMBER 21, 1997



*Composition trouvée, 1993*  
Various materials  
Photo: SYB'L S. - Pictures, Antwerp

*White Devil*, 1992-1993  
Interactive video installation  
6 laser disc players, 2 video projectors,  
12 monitors, iron grating  
Courtesy of the Holly Solomon Gallery, New York



THE PAUL GARRIN EXHIBITION IS THE FIRST SOLO PRESENTATION IN CANADA OF THE WORK OF THIS AMERICAN ARTIST, BORN IN 1957, WHO LIVES AND WORKS IN NEW YORK. A FORMER STUDENT OF HANS HAACKE AND VITO ACCONCI – RESPECTIVELY INSTALLATION AND PERFORMANCE ARTISTS DURING THE SEVENTIES – AND SINCE 1981 AN ASSISTANT AND COLLABORATOR OF NAM JUNE PAIK – ONE OF THE MAJOR PLAYERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO SINCE THE SIXTIES – PAUL GARRIN BELONGS TO A SECOND GENERATION OF ARTISTS WHOSE WORKS ARE DISTINGUISHED BY THEIR TECHNOLOGICAL

# • paul Garrin in chaos

innovation and their social import. For Garrin, using and experimenting with electronic media (video, computer, interactive system, Internet, etc.) stem, above all, from a conception of the work as a trigger of social awareness.

The themes which Garrin has developed through his multimedia works, from his earliest videos in 1985 to his interactive video installations produced from 1990 on, raise questions about the persistence of social injustice and violence, police surveillance, and censorship, as well as the use of advanced technologies for military purposes.

The installations entitled *Yuppie Ghetto with Watchdog* (1990) and *White Devil* (1992-1993) engage the public in an interactive experience that elicits thoughts on the "culture of surveillance," which manifests itself in a number of aspects of our society. The installations draw the viewer into scenes that touch on the conflict between people who are subjected to urban violence, and those who seek to protect themselves from it. In *White Devil*, as the viewer approaches the virtual grounds of a mansion, the motion prompts a white

pit bull to spring up on the screens of monitors turned over in a kind of ditch. The barking guard dog appears to follow the visitor, who is caught in an uncomfortable position. This simulation of an imminent danger sparks a physical and emotional reaction, as the visitor now feels what it is like to be excluded, and a sudden awareness of the social environment which we create from day to day.

A selection of videos produced by Garrin – his *vérité* experiments of the eighties – completes the exhibition and illustrates the approach of an artist for whom the electronic media and the inventive exploration of its possibilities afford an opportunity for forcefully expressing the issues of our time.

Like other exhibitions of interactive installations, such as *Osmose* by Char Davies and *Le Salon des ombres* by Luc Courchesne, presented at the Musée in 1995 and 1996, Paul Garrin's *Society in Chaos* introduces the public to outstanding works that are exemplary of the creative application of new technologies. ■ SANDRA GRANT MARCHAND

JUNE 5 TO AUGUST 10, 1997

## P PROJECT series

DANIEL VILLENEUVE

*Suite #6*, computer-generated model of project  
Computer image: André Hébert



*SUITE #6* (PROJECT SERIES 21) ■ FOR ABOUT A DECADE NOW, PAINTER DANIEL VILLENEUVE HAS DEVELOPED A BODY OF WORK NOTABLE FOR ITS CONSISTENCY AS WELL AS THE UNDENIABLE RICHNESS OF ITS VISUAL VOCABULARY. AFTER EXPLORING VARIOUS ARTISTIC AVENUES, VILLENEUVE'S PAINTING HAS GRADUALLY evolved towards abstraction, with geometric accents a prominent feature of his work in the last few years, until just recently. In his current practice, the artist examines the scope of the expressive possibilities offered by a vocabulary based essentially on the grid motif, formed by the meeting at right angles of a number of stripes in different colours and sizes.

Stimulated by what occupying the Musée's Banque Laurentienne Gallery can represent for a painter like him, Daniel Villeneuve rises to the challenge here with intelligence and panache. For this occasion, he embarks on a new facet in his work, in which painting and architecture are closely connected. In this spectacular project entitled *Suite #6*, the artist presents three monumental murals which designate and underscore, in three stages in time and through distinctive colour variations, three specific, complementary qualities of the surrounding architectural space. Inspired, as well as determined, by the configuration of this gallery of the Musée, these works create a unique site where painting and architecture reveal their complicity, in a rare, fruitful dialogue bringing out each other's qualities.

A Québec native, Daniel Villeneuve has lived and worked in New York for the past five years. This exhibition is his first at the Musée. ■ GILLES GODMER

AUGUST 19 TO OCTOBER 19, 1997

# DIANE DUFRESNE and RICHARD LANGEVIN artists in residence at the Musée

THE MUSÉE'S THIRD ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE SESSION, SCHEDULED FOR SUMMER 1997, HAS BEEN RESERVED FOR DIANE DUFRESNE AND RICHARD LANGEVIN. TOGETHER, THEY ARE WORKING ON A DUAL-FACETED EVENT BEGINNING WITH THE PRESENTATION OF STAGE ENVIRONNEMENTS THAT WILL BE EXHIBITED AS AN INSTALLATION IN BEVERLEY WEBSTER ROLPH HALL. THE SECOND PART CONSISTS OF A VOCAL AND GESTURAL PERFORMANCE BY DIANE



DUFRESNE WHICH WILL TAKE PLACE WITHIN THE INSTALLATION CREATED BY RICHARD LANGEVIN. THEIR PROJECT INCORPORATES THE LYRIC ART, VISUAL ART AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES, IN A COMING TOGETHER OF ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES THAT MESHES PERFECTLY WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF THE MUSÉE'S MULTIMEDIA EVENTS PROGRAM.

DIANE DUFRESNE, A REMARKABLE PERFORMER, ORIGINAL SONGWRITER AND DYNAMIC STAGE ARTIST, IS KNOWN PRIMARILY FOR HER VOICE, HER WORDS FULL OF IMAGERY AND THE PASSION SHE CONVEYS WITH HER WHOLE BODY. HER VENTURE AT THE MUSÉE REPRESENTS A CHALLENGE FOR HER, LEADING HER YET AGAIN TO TAKE NEW CREATIVE RISKS. TO FOLLOW THE PROGRESS OF THIS PROJECT, YOU ARE INVITED TO VISIT DIANE DUFRESNE'S WEB SITE AT THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS: <http://www.dianedufresne.com>.

RICHARD LANGEVIN, SCULPTOR AND COMPUTER ARTIST, WILL PROVIDE DIANE DUFRESNE WITH SUPPORT FOR THE FORMAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECT OF THE PRESENTATION. HIS CAREER HAS INVOLVED THE ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS, WHICH HE HAS EXPRESSED IN TEACHING AS WELL AS IN HIS OWN ARTISTIC PRACTICE. HE CURRENTLY DIRECTS TRAINING AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES RELATED TO DIGITAL-IMAGE PROCESSING FOR THE COMPANY CYCLONE, ART ET TECHNOLOGIE.

THE EVENT OF THIS COMING SUMMER ONCE AGAIN ENTAILS A CO-PRODUCTION BETWEEN THE MUSÉE AND ARTISTS. IT FOLLOWS PRODUCTIVE RESIDENCES BY ROBERT LEPAGE – FOR THE CREATION OF HIS MULTIMEDIA PIECE *Elsinore*, SINCE PRESENTED A HUNDRED OR SO TIMES IN A SERIES OF TOURS AROUND THE WORLD – AND JEAN-PIERRE PERREULT – FOR THE SECOND PART OF HIS CHOREOGRAPHIC WORK *Les Années de Pèlerinage*, FOR WHICH A CANADIAN TOUR IS IN THE PLANNING. IT IS WITH PRIDE AND CONVICTION THAT THE MUSÉE PARTNERS THIS RESEARCH CONDUCTED BY ARTISTS IN MULTIDISCIPLINARY DOMAINS, BY OFFERING THEM TANGIBLE SUPPORT IN THE CREATION PHASE. ■ YOLANDE RACINE

THE ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE WILL CREATE THEIR WORK FROM JULY 14 TO AUGUST 19, 1997.

THE PERFORMANCE WILL BE PRESENTED FROM AUGUST 20 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 21, 1997, FROM WEDNESDAY TO SUNDAY, AT 8:30 P.M.

THE INSTALLATION WILL BE ON VIEW THROUGHOUT THE SAME PERIOD, FROM TUESDAY TO SUNDAY, DURING REGULAR MUSÉE HOURS.

Photo: Richard Langevin

FOR THE SECOND YEAR IN A ROW, THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL DAY CAMP WILL OFFER BOYS AND GIRLS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE FOCUSING ON THE VISUAL ARTS. TOGETHER WITH SPECIALISTS FROM THE MUSÉE, THE YOUNG "CAMPER" WILL EXPLORE VARIOUS TECHNIQUES IN PAINTING, PRINTMAKING, DRAWING AND SCULPTURE. THEY WILL HAVE A CHANCE TO TOUR THE EXHIBITIONS, DISCOVER THE MUSÉE'S NOOKS AND CRANNIES, AND ORGANIZE A VERNISSAGE OF THEIR OWN WORKS FOR AN END-OF-SESSION EXHIBITION. ACTIVITIES LED BY THE DAY CAMP TEAM WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE MUSEUM'S SCULPTURE GARDEN AND IN THE CAMP'S INDOOR PREMISES, WHERE THE YOUNGSTERS WILL EACH HAVE THEIR OWN SPACE IN THE PRATT & WHITNEY CANADA ART WORKSHOPS.

ACCORDING TO THE ASSOCIATION DES CAMPS DU QUÉBEC, "IN ITS FIRST SEASON OF OPERATION, THE MACM DAY CAMP WAS CERTAINLY UP THE CHALLENGE. (...) ITS ORGANIZERS LAID THE FOUNDATIONS OF A SOLID PROGRAM BASED ON HIGH-QUALITY CONTACT WITH THE YOUNG CAMPER, AGED

FROM 8 TO 12. (...) THE GOAL OF THE DAY CAMP IS TO ENABLE THE CHILDREN TO CREATE, INVENT AND IMAGINE. THE RESULTING CREATIONS, WHETHER INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE, CALL UPON MEMORY, INVENTION AND OBSERVATION."

THIS YEAR, THE DAY CAMP WILL OFFER SIX ONE-WEEK SESSIONS, FOR NEW AGE GROUPS: AGES 6-8 FROM JULY 7 TO 11; AGES 9-11 FROM JULY 14 TO 18; AGES 12-14 FROM JULY 21 TO 25; AGES 6-8 FROM JULY 28 TO AUGUST 1; AGES 9-11 FROM AUGUST 4 TO 8; AND AGES 12-14 FROM AUGUST 11 TO 15.

THERE IS A MAXIMUM OF 20 PARTICIPANTS PER WEEK. THE COST IS \$125, WITH A \$25 DISCOUNT FOR EACH ADDITIONAL CHILD FROM THE SAME FAMILY. DAYCARE SERVICE IS AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE BETWEEN 7:30 AND 9 A.M. AND 4 AND 6 P.M. FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION, CALL: (514) 847-6253.

THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL DAY CAMP IS ACCREDITED BY THE ASSOCIATION DES CAMPS DU QUÉBEC (ACQ). ■ C. B.

## Musée Day camp summer '97



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: LIZANNE DESROCHES, FLORENCE GAGNON PILON, AUBE BASTIEN, CORINA MIHAELA PARASCHIV, LAURENT BENGHOZI, TOUSSAINT RENAUD, BLAISE RENAUD, SARAH ISMERT, ÉMILIE LEFEBVRE, VALÉRIE LAMBERT, JEAN-FRANÇOIS PÉRILLAT-TURBIDE, CATHERINE PÉRILLAT-TURBIDE, MARIE-CLAUDE BLOUIN, GENEVIÈVE CADIEUX, MIRELLA AMATO AND CATHERINE LEGENTIL.



# Art Lovers and collectors club



Jacques de Tonnancour and a Malaysian beetle, 1992. Photo: Jean Esar

THE BRAND-NEW ART LOVERS AND COLLECTORS CLUB OF THE MUSÉE BRINGS TOGETHER PEOPLE INTERESTED IN SHARING THEIR PASSION FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, OF COURSE, AS WELL AS THOSE WHO SIMPLY ENJOY COLLECTING ART OBJECTS.

The Club will provide an outstanding forum for exchanging information, and will host four exciting activities annually. This coming May 7, Musée conservator Marie-Noël Challan-Belval will furnish valuable advice on maintenance, storage and conservation for art works kept in a private home or office. Next, a 10-day trip to two world art capitals is scheduled for September. Club members will travel to Venice, in time for the famous *Biennale*, and then to Kassel for the *Documenta* exhibition. They will be accompanied by a Musée professional who will act as a guide and offer insight into the works presented at these events that involve numerous international artists. The trip will afford a wonderful opportunity to discuss international art from different points of view.

In November, the Club will hold a tour of the private collection of Roy Lacaud Heenan, Chairman of the Musée's Board of Directors. The exact date of the visit is to be announced. We should also mention that, this past March 19, the Club welcomed its very first guest speaker, artist Jacques de Tonnancour, who is a great insect collector, as well. Mr. de Tonnancour shared with his enthusiastic audience the richness of his art and the passion that has been a driving force throughout his life, and further discussed the role this particular collection has played in his work.

Club members enjoy free access to the three annual gatherings, each to be followed by a cocktail reception, as well as escorting on the trip to Venice and Kassel. For further details, please call Manon Blanchette, at (514) 847-6911, or write: Art Lovers and Collectors Club of the MACM, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 185 St. Catherine Street West, Montréal, Québec H2X 1Z8. Annual membership in the Club costs \$200 per person or \$300 per couple. ■ CLAUDE GUÉRIN

## A very popular Mousseau exhibition



In front of works by Mousseau, we see: Marie Lavigne, Chairwoman of the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec; Michel Robidas, designer; Francine Grimaldi; Julie Snyder; Marcel Brisebois; Paul Paré, Manager, Communications and Marketing, at Hydro-Québec; and Katerine Mousseau. Photo: Martin Vigneault

The opening of the retrospective exhibition devoted to Mousseau was a big hit! This past January 30, more than 1,000 people took the museum by storm. The visitors, more familiar with Mousseau's work in the metro, had a chance at the Musée to discover paintings, collages, sculptures, light-objects, works on paper and on fabric, and major pieces in the areas of set design and public art. On this memorable evening, representatives of the various cultural sectors answered the Musée's invitation and came to pay tribute to the spirit of Mousseau.



From left to right: Manon Blanchette, Director of Communications and Marketing, Sylvain Simard, Québec Minister of International Relations, and Marcel Brisebois, Director of the Musée. Photo: Martin Vigneault

# friends of the musée

## FRIENDS OF THE MUSÉE

Becoming a Friend of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal means getting passionately involved in the museum's life. It means receiving free mailings of *Le Journal du Musée*, along with invitations to openings and the calendar for each season. It means being the first to have all the information you need to take full advantage of the benefits offered by the Friends' membership card: free admission to all the Musée's exhibitions, as often as you wish, a "Friends" price for subscriptions to a variety of art magazines, and discounts at the Musée's boutique, bookstore and a number of other stores. Above all, it means showing your support for Canada's only museum devoted exclusively to contemporary art.

Ask for our brochure, by calling (514) 847-6271, and don't put it off any longer: become a Friend of the Musée. Annual membership: \$50; students and senior citizens: \$25; families: \$75; corporate membership: \$250. Special rates available for groups of more than 10.



Michel Boulanger  
*L'Impossible Verticale*, 1995  
Oil on canvas  
200 x 150 cm

## MY ART COLLECTION AT THE MAC: FIRST ACQUISITION

Thanks to the generosity of the Friends and the success of the *My Art Collection at the MAC* campaign, chaired by Louis Lagassé, a new work has been acquired by the Foundation for the Musée's collection. The work in question is a splendid painting by Michel Boulanger (born in Montmagny in 1959), titled *L'Impossible Verticale*. It is a piece that lends itself to leisurely scrutiny, so that viewers may discover, according to their own, personal experience, motifs that can be identified with a familiar reality. Michel Boulanger's painting is at once scholarly and entertaining. It demonstrates a thorough knowledge of art history with its references and quotations, and reveals a genuine critical spirit through its spirit of mockery and subversive vision.

## VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are always enthusiastic in responding to the requests of the Musée's various departments. Whether lending a hand during particular activities like the open house, or promoting new ventures, they can be counted on for special events as well as regular operations. Volunteers' motivation can make a great difference in relations with museum users and with employees and professionals. The services they provide are much appreciated and increasingly sought after. And we are happy to say that more and more of them are now joining our teams.

At the Media Centre, 10 volunteers work a total of 65 hours a week filing records in the documentary collection. The volunteers in the cloakroom put in the 45 or so hours a week this service requires. On open house days, when we have to double or even triple our staff, the volunteers' presence adds an extra touch to the festive atmosphere.

If you have three or more hours a week to devote to the vitality of your Musée, and if you want to be part of our big family, contact the Volunteer Coordinator, at 847-6907.



Joanne Forgues, outgoing President. Photo: Y. Provencher

## NEW PRESIDENT

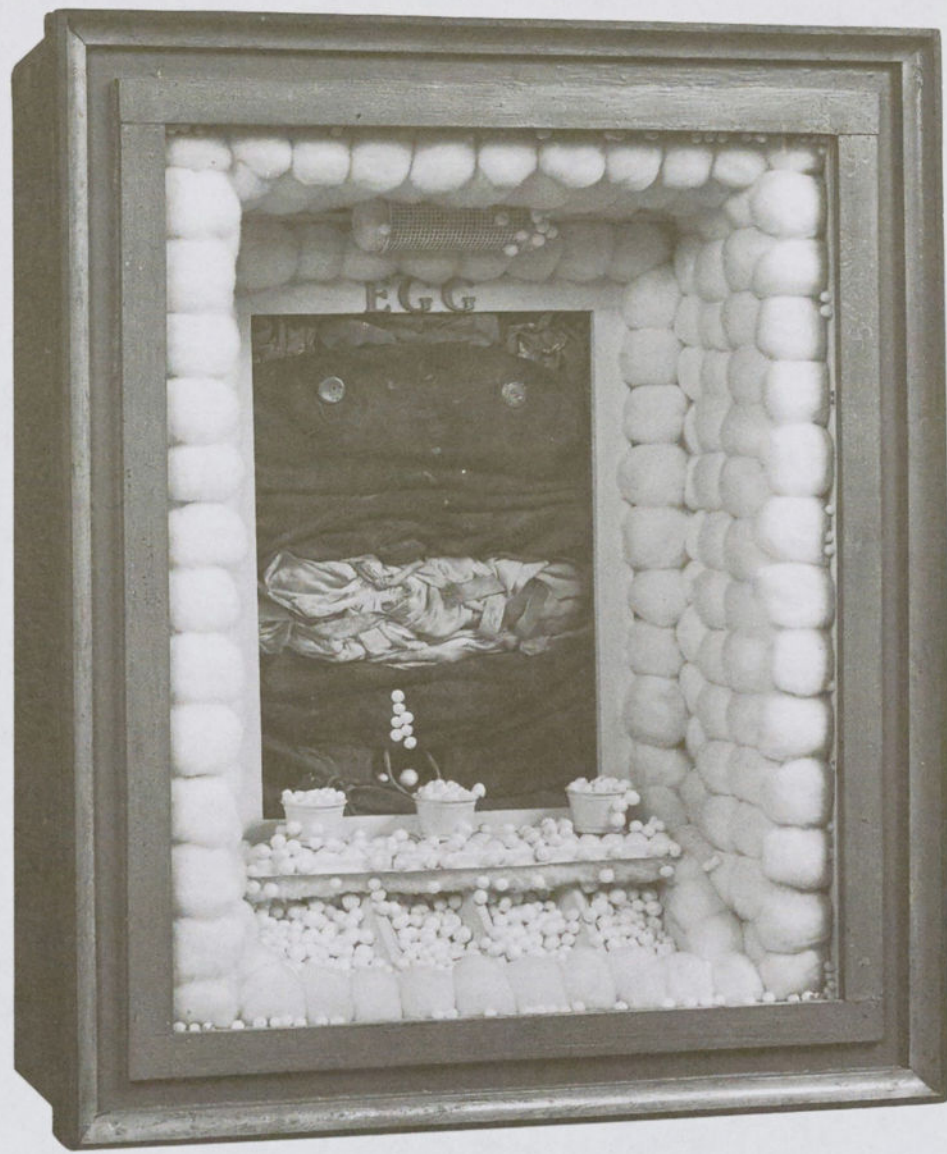
Last November, Denis D'Etcheverry succeeded Joanne Forgues as President of the Fondation des Amis du Musée. With a view to taking advantage of the experience already gained, so as to maintain a healthy balance between the institution's revenues and expenditures, he continued the tradition of the Annual Ball, reintroduced the art auction and carried on with the planned draw for a work by Riopelle (to be held in October). This series of activities has permitted ongoing improvement in the financial situation at a time when, more than ever, the Musée is counting on the generosity of its Friends.

Joanne Forgues has been active at all levels of the Board since 1991, and contributed to extending the scope and impact of the Friends' activities at Musée. After holding the position of President for two years, she is passing the torch to Denis D'Etcheverry without, however, abandoning the Fondation, as she is chairing the Riopelle draw. We have always appreciated her dedication, her energy, particularly in organizing events, and her ability to rally good people to good causes, and are happy to continue to have the benefit of her skills and her enthusiasm.

■ A. L.

Irene f.  
Whittome

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE FOLLOWED IRENE F. WHITTOME'S WORK CLOSELY FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS OR SO, A DISTINCT, PERSISTENT VISION STANDS OUT. THIS IS AN ARTIST WHO, OVER TIME, SEEKS, ACCUMULATES AND INVENTS SIGNS, IMAGES AND OBJECTS MARKED – IN A WAY INVESTED – WITH A UNIVERSAL MEMORY. IN THEM, THE TRACES OF THE CURRENT AND THE PERENNIAL, HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE AND PERSONAL HISTORY, ARE INTENTIONALLY MINGLED.



*Egg*, 1969-1970  
Mixed media  
70.1 x 58 x 23.5 cm  
Coll.: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
Photo: Denis Farley

Viewed in its entirety, Whittome's aesthetic project literally encompasses the notion of museum, not only because it questions, evaluates and reproduces the institution's ways of classifying, preserving and presenting, but also, and above all, because it is defined within the very idea of collection and collecting activities.

As part of the series of monographic shows organized from the permanent collection, the *Whittome* exhibition presents 10 works produced between 1969 and 1992 and taken from the Musée's collections, along with two new pieces. Together, they outline a singular conceptual and expressive venture.

The box entitled *Egg* (1969-1970), the three etchings *Screen Doors for "T."* (1971), the collage-assemblage *La Dame aux castors* (1973), the sculptures in the *Annexe au Musée blanc (Altar)* (1975-1976), the two paintings *Silent Ledgers* (1980) and *New Testament* (1982-1988), the 40 drawings grouped together as *Creativity; Fertility* (1985) and the installation *Émanation = le Musée noir* (1991-1992): all these works are convincing examples, whether considered separately or as a whole, of a rigorous quest for meaningful objects and a complete, multidisciplinary practice.

Irene F. Whittome was initially trained in drawing and printmaking, in Vancouver from 1959 to 1963 and in Paris from 1963 to 1968. Using found objects, handmade paper, string, encaustic, pigments, and so forth, she recreates enigmatic assemblages placed under glass or in display cases, hieratic, totemic sculptures arranged in friezes or on the floor, solemn, austere, minimal paintings, graphic series of explosive gestural power, collections of curiosities, drawings or photographs – altogether, an extraordinary creative inventory dedicated to re-contextualizing the artifact and the gesture. Between *Le Musée blanc* and its *Annexe (Altar)* (1975-1976), and *Musée noir* (1991-1992), there is certainly much more than a mere interval of 15 years and the obvious contrast in chromatic values. There is first, in the elaboration of this masterly series of personal museums – of which the 1989 *Musée des traces* is an important component – the pursuit of the fundamental intention of crystallizing the outline and organization of her own collections, whether real or made-up. Similarly, between the box *Egg* (1969-1970), the revealing collage *La Dame aux castors* (1973) and the explicit graphic allusions of *Creativity; Fertility* (1985), we see, by stratification and superimposition, a multifaceted search for origins and identity. The product of supreme intuition and new associations, the two brand-new works turn to a rescued water tower and a reconstructed gymnasium to elicit fundamental, recurring themes: energy and light, in *Château d'eau : lumière mythique* (1997), and the soul, the appearance and the mythology of the clothing in which we encase ourselves, in *Gymnasium: Outfit of the Soul* (1997). ■ JOSÉE BÉLISLE

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