



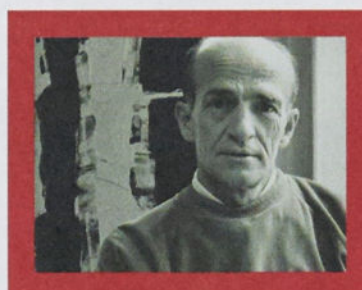
Sans titre, 1950. Gouache on paper, 18,9 x 22,2 cm. Bequest of Claude Hinton
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

BENSON & HEDGES

presents

Borduas and the Automatist Epic¹

Photo: Janine Niepce



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"THE LIMITS OF OUR DREAMS BECOME NO LONGER WHAT THEY WERE.... A NEW COLLECTIVE HOPE WILL BE BORN.... TO THIS GLOBAL REFUSAL WE CONTRAST FULL RESPONSIBILITY.... PASSIONS SHAPE THE FUTURE SPONTANEOUSLY, UNPREDICTABLY, NECESSARILY.... A MAGNIFICENT DUTY FALLS ON US: HISTORY ELECTS US TO PRESERVE THE PRECIOUS TREASURE IT BEQUEATHS.... OUR TREASURE IS POETIC RESOURCE: THE EMOTIONAL WEALTH ON WHICH THE CENTURIES TO COME WILL DRAW...."²

When, on August 4, 1948, a collective manifesto entitled *Refus global* appeared in Montréal, its chief instigator, Paul-Émile Borduas, and its 15 other signatories³ were making an aesthetic and historic gesture, the artistic and ideological repercussions of which have endured. With "resplendent anarchy" as its dominant theme, the project contained, in a cardboard portfolio illustrated with a watercolour by Jean-Paul Riopelle, two other written pieces by Borduas (*Commentaires sur des mots courants* and *En regard du surréalisme*), three short pieces by Claude Gauvreau (*Bien-Être*, *Au coeur des quenouilles* and *L'ombre sur le cerceau*), the text of a lecture by Françoise Sullivan (*La danse et l'espoir*), an essay by Bruno Cormier (*L'oeuvre picturale est une expérience*) and a statement by Fernand Leduc (*Qu'on le veuille ou non*).

To mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of this incendiary, action-stirring, theoretical and poetic manifesto, the Musée has chosen to present some outstanding aspects of its collections which illustrate the artistic genesis and the immediate consequences of what one of its main protagonists, poet-playwright Claude Gauvreau, aptly called the "Automatist epic." And so, based on the extensive Borduas Collection (105 works), the Paul-Émile Borduas Archives (302 archival files) and a selection of some 40 historical works out of the 200 or so representing the individual output, over the years, of artists who were co-signatories of the *Refus global* — Marcel Barbeau, Marcelle Ferron, Pierre Gauvreau, Claude Gauvreau, Fernand Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Françoise Sullivan — we will broadly outline a time of exploration and change, of denunciation of excessive attachment to the past, and affirmation of avant-garde expression.

Paul-Émile Borduas is a key figure in Québec and Canadian art. His monumental body of work and his writings strongly influenced the contemporary pictorial aesthetic. The vast scope of the Borduas Collection enables us to illustrate the principal stages in his artistic development: his early career and student works of the 1920s; the figurative works of the 1930s; the radical transformation of his painting in the early forties and the gouaches of 1942; the Automatist adventure and the *Refus global* (1948); the New York period (1953-1955); and the Paris years (1955-1960).

In addition, the exhibition will lay particular emphasis on the Automatist episode, and on the specific approaches of these artists committed to change and authenticity: "Today, a group exists with wide, courageous branches that extend beyond frontiers."⁴ ■ JOSÉE BÉLISLE

MAY 9 TO NOVEMBER 29, 1998

1. The exhibition title comes from a critical piece by Claude Gauvreau, "L'Épopée automatiste vue par un cyclope," published in the issue of *La Barre du jour* devoted to the Automatists (January-August 1969).

2. Excerpts from the *Refus global* [as published, in French and in English translation, in: François-Marc Gagnon and Dennis Young (eds.), *Paul-Émile Borduas. Écrits/Writings. 1942-1958* (Halifax: The Press of The Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1978)].

3. Madeleine Arbour, Marcel Barbeau, Bruno Cormier, Claude Gauvreau, Pierre Gauvreau, Muriel Guilbault, Marcelle Ferron, Fernand Leduc, Thérèse Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Maurice Perron, Louise Renaud, Françoise Riopelle, Jean-Paul Riopelle and Françoise Sullivan.

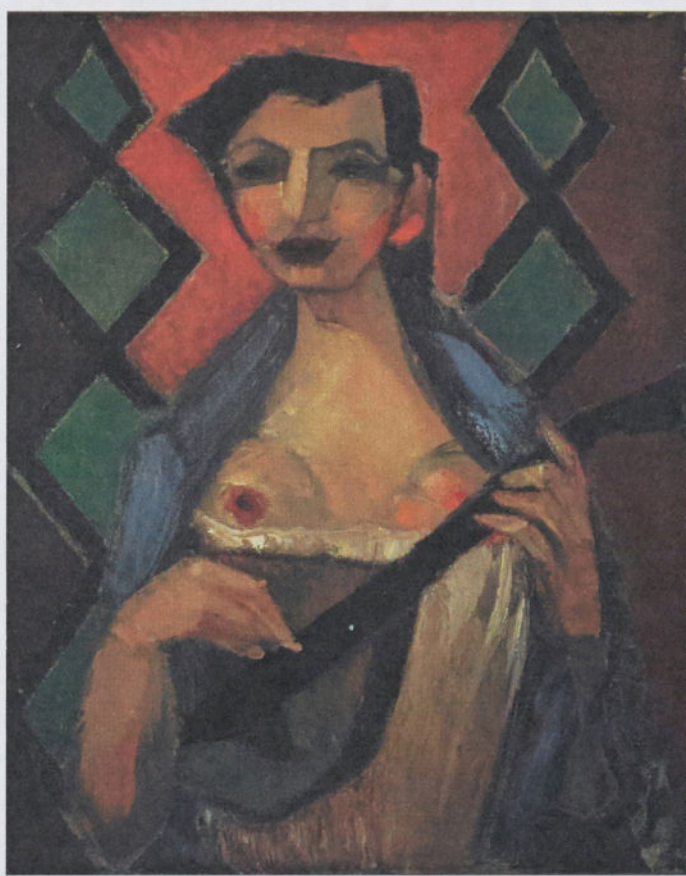
4. Excerpt from *Refus global*.

paul-émile Borduas: biographical notes

BORDUAS IN QUÉBEC IN THE 1940S

NEVER BEFORE PAUL-ÉMILE BORDUAS HAD THERE BEEN EXPRESSED IN QUÉBEC WITH SUCH FORCE AND BOLDNESS THE DESIRE TO BREAK OUT OF ISOLATION AND TRADITION. IN THIS SENSE, PAUL-ÉMILE BORDUAS' PAINTINGS AND WRITINGS CONSTITUTE SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RECORDS OF MODERN QUÉBEC, WHILE POWERFULLY NARRATING THE CULTURAL PASSAGE FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY.

Femme à la mandoline, 1941. Oil on canvas. 61 x 50.5 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

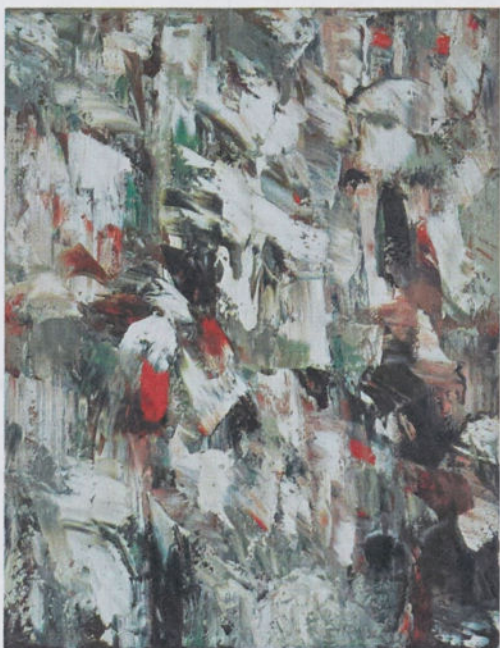


In *Abstraction Verte*, 1941, which Paul-Émile Borduas later described as his first non-preconceived painting, there are the first hints of the "Automatist tempest already gathering on the horizon." A debate over terminology begins with an important and successful exhibition of Borduas' "Surrealist" gouaches in 1942. In the artist's first solo show influences of **Surrealism** and Cubism are noted, but mediated by Borduas' ambiguous approach which marks the transition from figuration to a pictorial **Automatism**.

Although not yet known as the "Automatists," the group's first exhibition took place in Montréal at 1257 Amherst Street in 1946. Paul-Émile Borduas was the leader and the best-known figure of this emerging group. Marcel Barbeau, Roger Fauteux, Pierre Gauvreau, Fernand Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau and Jean-Paul Riopelle participated, as well. Other artists would also be associated with the movement which took textual form in *Refus global*, an Automatist manifesto published in 1948 of which Paul-Émile Borduas was the principal author and instigator. The artist's declamatory text urged Québec to open up to the world and caused much heated discussion for its shattering critique of the reigning Catholic provincialism at the time. It would ultimately cost Borduas his teaching job at the École du Meuble. Although subsequently translated into English by the British Surrealist Simon Watson Taylor, and linked to the larger Surrealist project by André Breton, it had few foreign echoes. *Refus global* must be understood within the social context of Québec in the first half of this century.

BORDUAS IN NEW YORK FROM 1953 TO 1955

In New York and in the summer painters' colony of Provincetown, Borduas produced a vast amount of work and made his final break with Surrealism. His paintings from this intense period still made use of the palette knife but abandoned the backgrounds that receded into infinity and instead moved them forward. His New York paintings explored luminosity in the pictorial matter through the use of colour and with echoes of **Analytical Cubism**. It is during this time that he assimilated, in his own way, the principal elements of **Abstract Expressionism**, while continuously refining his own work. Harold Rosenberg's 1952 article "The American Action Painters" identified the new trend in American art known as "**Action Painting**," where the canvas becomes an arena in which to "act" and where the image is the result of an unpremeditated "encounter" between artist and easel. This is, of course, how Borduas saw his own approach to painting. Clement Greenberg's writings on the pictorial surface, on painting's essential qualities, on scale and on all-overness also exerted great influence on the art world in those years. The influence of Jackson Pollock's drip technique on Borduas' work, for example, is obvious in a series of watercolours exhibited in his second one-man show at the Passedoit Gallery. Prior to his departure for Paris he made arrangements to show work at the Martha Jackson Gallery which would later become his representative in New York.



Composition, 1954. Oil on canvas. 91.5 x 71 cm
Lavalin Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

make way for magic!
make way for objective mysteries!

make way for love!

make way for necessities!

BORDUAS IN PARIS FROM 1955 TO 1960

Borduas attached great importance to his "prolonged stay" in New York well into the exile of the Paris years. Along with a renewed interest in Jackson Pollock, Borduas was also interested in the **Tachiste** Georges Mathieu, who together with Pierre Soulages and others was at the centre of the Parisian avant-garde known as **Art Informel**, a term coined by the French critic Michel Tapié, in a book of 1952, *Un art autre* (Another Art). We cannot really describe these last years in Paris as successful, although the artist did exhibit his work in several European cities with some critical acclaim, notably in London and Düsseldorf. Exhibitions in New York and Montréal were also held during this period. For his first solo Paris exhibition, at the Galerie Saint-Germain, he would wait until 1959. Soon after his death in 1960, the first retrospective exhibition of his work was mounted in Amsterdam. ■ JOHN ZEPPELELLI



Sans titre (n° 28), about 1959. Oil on canvas, 89.3 x 116 cm
Gift of National Museums of Canada, Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

Abstract Expressionism: mid-1940s through 1950s

Abstract Expressionism would come to symbolize American post-war art and contribute greatly to the New York School's emerging international dominance. It synthesized numerous sources from modern painting including Expressionism and organic forms from Surrealism. Categorically excluding realism, the movement was intensely self-expressive, manifested in form, line or colour. It encompassed disparate styles: from the poured or dripped paintings of Jackson Pollock to the spiritual intensity of Mark Rothko. More an attitude than a specific style, it reflected the influence of European artists who had fled war-torn Europe, and of existential philosophy, while also echoing earlier abstract paintings by Kandinsky, the saturated colour of Matisse and the graphic expressionism of Van Gogh.

Action Painting

Paint is dripped, splashed or otherwise applied with expressive gestures to the canvas in this variety of Abstract Expressionism. The expression was coined by Harold Rosenberg in 1952.

Analytical Cubism: 1907-1912

A conceptual visual language following Paul Cézanne's lead for geo-

metrical forms in nature. A structural investigation of space which is broken up into interlocking facets, offering several viewpoints of a subject all at once. Picasso and Braque are the main exponents of this early phase of Cubism which was devoted to the analysis of the forms of objects.

Art Informel: 1950s

The direction taken by Abstract Expressionism in Europe, emphasizing intuition and spontaneity. The resulting abstract works successfully challenged the Cubist tradition that dominated the Parisian art scene. The term was popularized by the critic Michel Tapié in a book from 1952 called *Un art autre* (Another Art). Art Informel should not be confused with formlessness, as it does not repudiate form but simply denotes a rejection of the structure and discipline of geometric abstraction.

Automatism

Rooted in Surrealism, the term describes the technique of creating a work of art without the intervention of conscious thought or will, resulting in the free association and interplay of unpremeditated thought. Three types of Automatism were proposed: mechanical, psychological and "surrealistic." In Québec, Automatism is an art movement which began in the

1940s and is characterized by unpreconceived, "automatic" gestural marks, or chance, accidental approaches to drawing and painting.

Initially, the Automatists were linked to the Surrealist movement and to André Breton's writings, for their explorations of the accidental and the interplay of colours under the influence of the subconscious. Borduas' Automatism, however, did not have very much in common with the Freudian dream orientation and biomorphic motifs of much Surrealist art. A technique of visible strokes of the palette knife usually suspended against receding brushed backgrounds would ultimately characterize Borduas' Automatist period. Worked with the palette knife, his non-objective forms evoked the mineral realm more than the living world, while the formal language explored the specific character of the material, namely paint.

Surrealism: 1924-1945

Manifesto of Surrealism, 1924, by André Breton is the official birth certificate of the movement: "pure psychic automatism....Thought dictated in the absence of all control exerted by reason...." Surrealism emerged in Paris as a trend in literature exploring irrationality and absurdity using psychoanalytic thinking. In the visual arts its immediate antecedent was Dada with

which it retained many links. Surrealism developed a variety of games and techniques involving the spontaneous emergence of unconscious language including chance and automatic effects. Two divergent stylistic paths developed: the lyric and abstract Automatism of Masson and Miró, in contrast to Dali and Magritte's dreamlike, highly rendered imagery in a delineated, naturalistic mode.

Tachisme

Derives from the French word "tache," a blot or stain, and is a subset of Art Informel which yielded works related to the poured or dripped paintings of Action painters. The Tachistes also emphasized the significance of each area or blot of paint. The artist Georges Mathieu, for instance, abandoned the paintbrush and squeezed paint directly from the tube onto the canvas.

educational activities in connection with Borduas

THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL IS PLEASED TO PRESENT THE MAJOR BORDUAS COLLECTION TO ITS VARIOUS PUBLICS. FIRST, TO ITS LOYAL STUDENT VISITORS, WHO LEARN ABOUT BORDUAS AND THE AUTOMATISTS STARTING IN HIGH SCHOOL, AND NEXT TO CHILDREN, FOR WHOM THE AUTOMATIST GESTURE AND PLAY ARE ONE AND THE SAME AND, FINALLY, TO ADULT VISITORS CURIOUS ABOUT QUÉBEC MODERNITY AND THE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION OF THIS PERIOD WHICH HAS BEEN SO INFLUENTIAL ON OUR CULTURE OF TODAY.

THIS YEAR, THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SIGNING OF THE *REFUS GLOBAL* IS AN OCCASION FOR MANY DIFFERENT CULTURAL EVENTS IN QUÉBEC. THE MUSÉE, FOR ITS PART, WILL PRESENT A WHOLE RANGE OF ACTIVITIES, FROM MAY 1998 TO JANUARY 1999, PARALLEL TO THE EVENTS SCHEDULED BY ITS CULTURAL PARTNERS AND IN RESPONSE TO VISITORS' REQUESTS.

DIDACTIC EXHIBITIONS

RESTORING BORDUAS' WORKS

An exhibition presenting the techniques used for the conservation and restoration of Borduas' works, organized in cooperation with the Centre de conservation du Québec.
May 9 to November 29, 1998

BREATH OF INSPIRATION

Dots or lines that have been blown through a straw? This hybrid category reflects the way the colour is applied. It's a matter of triggering chance occurrences and seizing the unexpected. . .

The surprising relations between visual elements, the spontaneity of the gesture, and the immediacy of the effect produced by this method won over several artists in the Automatist group. This didactic exhibition devoted to the "breath of creative inspiration" presents selected works on paper from the Musée's Collection, mostly produced by this group of Québec artists.

August 21 to November 22, 1998

THEMATIC TOURS

BORDUAS AND SURREALISM

The question of the unconscious

Weeks of May 10, June 21, August 9 and October 4, 1998

THE AUTOMATIST EXPERIENCE

A look at the art produced by the signatories of the *Refus global*

Weeks of May 17, June 28, August 16 and October 11, 1998

THE WORK AND THE MANIFESTO

Refus global, Projections libérantes, and the sociopolitical context in Québec

Weeks of May 24, July 5, August 23 and October 18, 1998

THE MAGIC OF SIGNS

A look at Borduas' pictorial practice through a study of his touch

Weeks of May 31, July 12, September 13 and October 25, 1998

THE PEN AND THE BRUSH

Selected moments in the life of Borduas, as illuminated by his correspondence

Weeks of June 7, July 19, September 20 and November 1, 1998

THE QUESTION OF MODERNITY

Modernism in Québec, the United States and Europe

Weeks of June 14, July 26, September 27 and November 8, 1998

These one-hour tours will be offered in French, daily at 1:30 p.m. and Wednesday evenings at 6:15 p.m., and in English, daily at 3 p.m. and Wednesday evenings at 7:45 p.m.

WORKSHOPS

BREATHLESS!

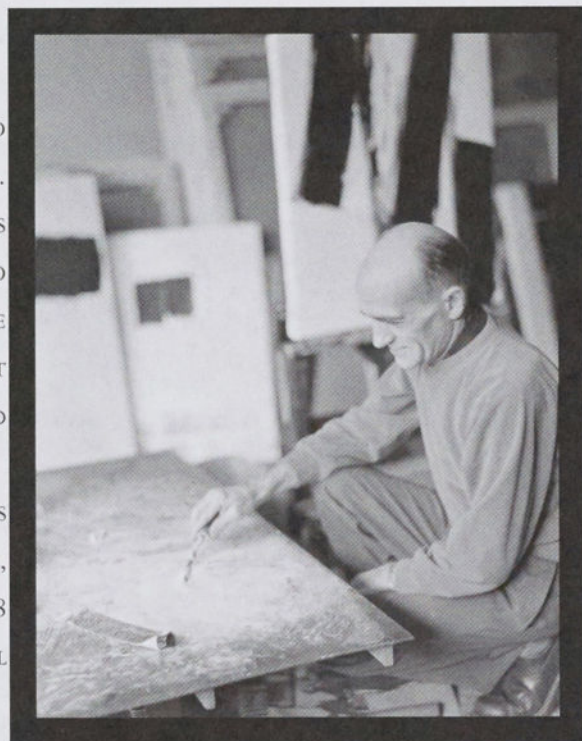
After viewing the works in the exhibition *Breath of Inspiration*, participants will paint pictures by blowing on blobs of coloured ink, either directly with their mouths or through a straw. The boundless diversity of the results produced will take our breath away!

THE GESTURE IN PAINTING

Following a thematic tour of the exhibition (The Magic of Signs or The Automatist Experience), visitors will be invited to try automatist painting for themselves. They will paint abstract images using different spatulas. Spontaneity is the name of the game!

Saturdays in October at 1 p.m., and Wednesday evenings in November 1998 at 6:30 p.m.

\$6 per adult. Reservations: (514) 847-6253



BORDUAS ON THE INTERNET

(<http://Media.MACM.qc.ca>)

RESEARCH SITE

A new method of disseminating data on documentary research will be tried with the creation of a Borduas research site reachable from public access terminals set up in the Reading Room, as well as via the Internet, of course. This will be a permanent site, which will evolve continually and have an interactive dimension.

Starting September 1998

"FAMILY PREVIEWS"

On the Media Centre site, a Web page will allow parents to make their own plans for a visit to the exhibition by their children aged 4 to 12. It provides information on the artist, his life, his work and his impact on Québec culture. Games and questionnaires will help parents make the visit lively, interesting and instructive for their children.

June to December 1998

"TEACHER PREVIEWS"

On the Media Centre site, a Web page will allow elementary-school teachers to prepare their pupils for the exhibition. This tool will also encourage teachers to review, with their classes, their actual experience and the notions acquired on their visit to the Musée.

September to December 1998

TALKS

LED BY MARIE-FRANCE BÉRARD,
COORDINATOR OF VISITS TO THE MUSÉE

- 1) Borduas et l'expérience automatiste
June 3 and October 7, 1998
- 2) Le pouvoir des mots : manifestes et correspondance
June 10 and October 14, 1998
- 3) La magie des signes
June 17 and October 21, 1998
- 4) La question de la modernité
June 24 and October 28, 1998

The talks will be presented in French, from 6:30 to 9 p.m., in the Gazoduc TQM Room. Registration: (514) 847-6253

POETRY VERSUS VISUAL ARTS MATCH ON THE THEME OF THE REFUS GLOBAL

Beverly Webster-Rolph Hall, Saturday, May 9, 2 to 4 p.m. Free admission

Event organized in collaboration with Le Sabord and UNEQ's 4^e Festival de la Littérature

THE STATE OF THE ARTIST'S STATUS: A STATUS FOR ARTISTS OR FOR THE STATE?

Cinquième salle, Wednesday, May 20, 2 to 5 p.m. Free admission

Debate organized in collaboration with the Regroupement des artistes en arts visuels du Québec (RAAV)

POETRY EVENING, WITH READINGS BY VARIOUS QUÉBEC POETS

Cinquième salle, Wednesday, May 20, 7 to 9 p.m. Free admission

Organized in collaboration with the Union des écrivains québécois (UNEQ)

Le Condor embouteillé, 1942. Gouache on paper, 57.5 x 44.2 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay



paul-émile borduas:

chronology



- 1905** Born November 1, at Saint-Hilaire, Québec
- 1920** Begins work with Ozias Leduc of Saint-Hilaire, a noted painter known throughout Eastern Canada
- 1923** Enters the École des Beaux-Arts in Montréal
- 1927** Begins teaching at the Plateau School
- 1929** Studies with Maurice Denis in Paris
- 1937** Appointed Professor at the École du Meuble in Montréal
Maurice Gagnon publishes an article on Borduas in *La Revue moderne*
- 1939** The Contemporary Arts Society is founded in Montréal by a small group of engaged artists, Borduas among them
- 1941** A year of experimentation; first abstract paintings
- 1942** Exhibits 45 gouaches at the Théâtre de l'Ermitage in Montréal
Gives a public reading of his *Manière de goûter une oeuvre d'art*
- 1943** Exhibits 30 paintings presenting his evolution since 1940 at the Dominion Gallery in Montréal
Publication of *Borduas* by Robert Élie, at Les Éditions de l'Arbre
- 1946** First Montréal exhibition of the group not yet known as the Automatists
Automatism: creating a work of art without the intervention of conscious thought; painting characterized by unpreconceived, automatic gestural marks
Automatist painters (1946-1955): Marcel Barbeau, Paul-Émile Borduas, Marcelle Ferron, Pierre Gauvreau, Fernand Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Jean-Paul Riopelle

- 1947** *Automatisme* exhibition in Paris, at the Galerie du Luxembourg
Declines André Breton's invitation to participate in the Surrealist exhibition in Paris
- 1948** Publication of *Refus global* which causes Borduas' dismissal from the École du Meuble
Refus global signed by Paul-Émile Borduas, Madeleine Arbour, Marcel Barbeau, Bruno Cormier, Claude Gauvreau, Pierre Gauvreau, Muriel Guilbault, Marcelle Ferron, Fernand Leduc, Thérèse Leduc, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Maurice Perron, Louise Renaud, Françoise Riopelle, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Françoise Sullivan
- 1949** Publishes an autobiographical text *Projections libérantes*
- 1953** Leaves Québec for New York
- 1954** Exhibits 24 paintings in his first New York show at the Passedoit Gallery
La matière chante, an exhibition in Montréal selected by Borduas, proves the Automatist Movement to be an enduring factor in the Montréal art world
- 1955** Second one-man exhibition at the Passedoit Gallery
Montréal collectors purchase 18 paintings to help finance Borduas' move to Paris
Moves to Paris in September; finds a studio on rue Rousselet
- 1956** Makes a major sale to New York gallerist Martha Jackson
- 1957** First solo exhibition at the Martha Jackson Gallery
Exhibits at Arthur Tooth and Sons in London, U.K.
- 1958** Exhibits at the Alfred Schmela Gallery, Düsseldorf, Germany
Two Canadian Painters: Borduas — Town at Arthur Tooth and Sons
- 1959** First one-man exhibition in Paris at the Galerie Saint-Germain
- 1960** February 22, dies in Paris of a heart attack
Awarded posthumously the Guggenheim National Section Award for *L'Étoile noire*



Borduas exhibition at the Théâtre de l'Ermitage, Montréal, in 1942. Photo: Henri Paul

studiolo martha fleming & lyne lapointe

SINCE MEETING IN MONTRÉAL IN 1981, MARTHA FLEMING AND LYNE LAPOINTE HAVE PRODUCED AN EXTRAORDINARY COLLABORATIVE ARTISTIC EFFORT, WHOSE FRUITS TO DATE HAVE LITTLE OR NO EQUIVALENT, EITHER LOCALLY OR ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE. FLEMING/LAPOINTE'S WORK BEGAN IN 1982, WITH THE NOW FAMOUS PROJET BUILDING/CASERNE #14, WHICH WAS THE FIRST INSTANCE OF THE ARTISTS TAKING OVER AN ENTIRE ABANDONED BUILDING, IN THIS CASE A FIRE STATION. IT HAS PROCEEDED WITH REGULARITY AND RIGOUR, IN MONTRÉAL, WHICH INSPIRED AND GAVE RISE TO THEIR ARTISTIC PROJECT

as a whole, and then beyond our borders, in cities like New York, Madrid, London and Sao Paulo. Each time, their rich, complex undertaking develops from a particular architecture, a disused building, whose sociopolitical dimension and fantastic power of evocation it tends to bring out. Supported by extensive research which gives a prominent place to the feminist perspective, numerous other issues then come into play: history (as it is manifested in our environment, for example), science, colonialism, the diversity of power, notions of private and public, the marginalization of women, lesbian desire, the symbolic aspect of certain human activities (such as collecting), and so forth.

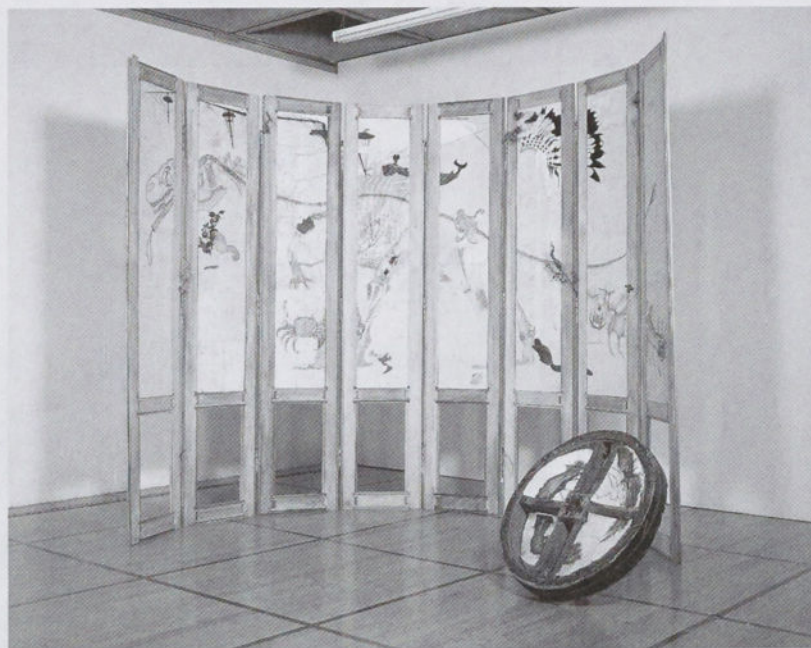
This exhibition, organized by the Art Gallery of Windsor, covers 15 years of collaboration between the two artists. It includes paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, furniture and a variety of artifacts from different sources, along with several works added for its Montréal presentation. Designed to avoid a presentation that would lean towards a chronological reconstruction of each of the projects, the show has also been mounted as a kind of archeology of fragments grouping together, in a new order, works or elements of the projects which the two artists have produced over the years. In this way, the exhibition sets out to provide both a reflection and an extension of their working method, as well as a convincing overview of the scope of their interests and their particular critical viewpoint.

The exhibition is accompanied by a major publication co-produced by the Art Gallery of Windsor and Éditions Artex. ■ GILLES GODMER

MAY 28 TO SEPTEMBER 13, 1998



Projet Building / Caserne #14, 1982-1983
Detail of installation. Photo: Françoise Boulet



Allégorie de la colonisation, 1989-1990. Parchment (1834), wood, plywood, old paper, jute cord, metal, waxed linen thread, lead pencil, oil painting, mixture of pure pigments and varnish, 9 elements: 8 panels 342.6 x 711.1 cm, 1 wheel 111.8 cm in diameter
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Denis Farley



Eleven arches..., Carrick Bay, Dumfriesshire, 17 October 1995, Private Collection, New York
Courtesy Galerie Lelong, New York

Andy Goldsworthy

Arch

ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING PRACTITIONERS OF AN ART CLOSELY INVOLVED WITH NATURE IS CERTAINLY ANDY GOLDSWORTHY. EVER SINCE HIS EARLIEST WORKS, PRODUCED IN THE LATE SEVENTIES, HE HAS SURPRISED AND CAPTIVATED US WITH THE MASTERY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HIS WORK, WHICH REVEALS HIS AWARENESS OF NATURE AND THE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP HE HAS WITH IT.

Born in Cheshire in 1956, this English sculptor has had a deep attachment, since childhood, to the land and landscape, and has developed a body of work made up of interventions in nature, which are usually discreet and ephemeral and which reveal a virtuosity and exceptional refinement as well as remarkable observation of natural elements. In commissions of larger-scale works, his approach is distinctive for its judicious, subtle inclusion of the sculptural project in the surrounding landscape.

Put together exclusively from what nature places within his reach — branches, stones, leaves, earth, or even ice and snow — Goldsworthy's sculptures are generally delicate constructions which leave a trace only through photographic records. Essentially, the work, formed around a series of recursive themes, demonstrates a conception of art in which man maintains a special relationship with the natural environment, based on his understanding of the site.

For this first Canadian showing of the artist's work, the presentation is built, more specifically, around the theme of the arch; the various pieces gathered here all relate to this theme. Consisting of a sculpture, photographic works and drawings, the exhibition examines the place which this theme holds in the artist's work as a whole, and allows us to contextualize the erection of a monumental arch on the site of the Cirque du Soleil's new headquarters in Montréal.

Andy Goldsworthy, who in a way reformulates a long English artistic tradition of direct intervention in the landscape, has previously exhibited his work on many occasions, particularly in Europe, Japan and the United States. His works on natural sites have been produced in various locations around the world, during his frequent travels, as well as around his home in the countryside of Dumfriesshire, a border county of Scotland. ■ RÉAL LUSSIER

APRIL 8 TO JUNE 7, 1998

Micah Lexier, 37

THE PRACTICE OF TORONTO ARTIST MICAH LEXIER BEGAN IN THE EARLY EIGHTIES AND DEVELOPED LARGELY AROUND THE NOTIONS OF IDENTITY AND BELONGING. THIS DENSE YET VERY INTELLIGIBLE WORK FOCUSES PRINCIPALLY ON OUR RELATIONS WITH OTHERS, THE SPACE DELINEATED BY A LIFETIME — AND THE CRITERIA ON WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL'S CHARACTERIZATION IS BASED.

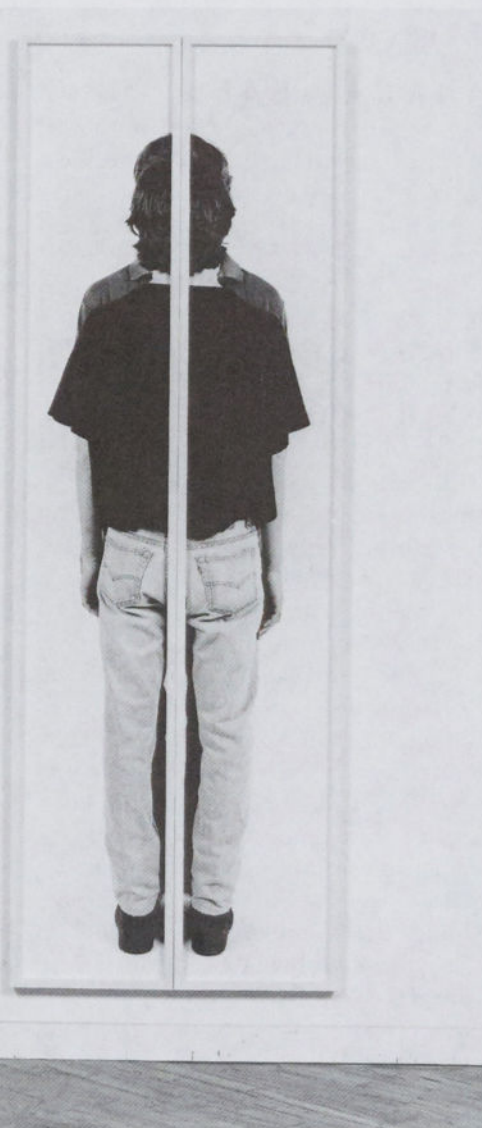
At first glance, Lexier's works are distinguished by their meticulous technique, which seems deliberately devoid of any form of expressivity (use of methods or materials associated with industrial manufacturing processes, simple compositions, sometimes abstract shapes). A certain detachment, as well as an obvious restraint, seem to mark this work. But Lexier's art is also enlivened by a strong emotional component based mainly on borrowings from the tradition of the portrait and self-portrait. Doubtless its chief quality is that it delivers, through an arguably "cold"

aesthetic, an extremely powerful emotional charge.

In developing his pieces, Lexier makes frequent use of measurement and quantification, an effort that has the effect, simultaneously, of constraining and exacerbating that part of the affect which underlies any attempt to define the individual. The notion of measurement, and the comparative relations that emerge from it, thus constitute both the organizing principle of these works and the basis of their strength. This aspect of Lexier's approach is central to this exhibition of pieces produced over the last 10 years.

A native of Winnipeg, Micah Lexier has lived and worked in Toronto for some years now. His work has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions, both in Canada and abroad. He has also produced works of public art, including the piece entitled *The Hall of Names* (1997), created for the National Trade Centre in Toronto. The present exhibition is the artist's first at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. This exhibition received financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Dissemination Assistance Program. ■ PIERRE LANDRY

JUNE 17 TO SEPTEMBER 20, 1998



Double Portrait (Vanderburgh Brothers 2), 1995
Framed black and white photograph, 213.4 x 73.7 x 2.5 cm
Photo: Cheryl O'Brien, courtesy Jack Shainman Gallery, New York

the Musée... friends of

and the adventure of contemporary art

THE FRIENDS OF THE MUSÉE ARE KICKING OFF THEIR MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN BY LAUNCHING A NEW FRIENDS BROCHURE. UNDER THE BANNER *THE ADVENTURE OF CONTEMPORARY ART*, WE INVITE ALL THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED IN CONTEMPORARY ART, AND IN ITS MUSEUM, TO BECOME FRIENDS OF THE MUSÉE. WITH THE SIZABLE INCREASE IN 1997 ATTENDANCE AT THE MUSÉE, THE NUMBER OF FRIENDS ALSO ROSE APPRECIABLY. IN ADDITION TO ENJOYING INCREASINGLY ATTRACTIVE BENEFITS, FRIENDS GET A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO *LE JOURNAL DU MUSÉE*, THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND INVITATIONS TO ALL OPENINGS AND SPECIAL FRIENDS ACTIVITIES.

To become a Friend of the Musée, all you have to do is call (514) 847-6270. When you charge your membership to your credit card, your request is processed immediately, and you will receive your membership card the same week. If you would rather receive a membership form which you may then return with your payment, we will be happy to send one out to you promptly.

ANNUAL BALL

Last April 18 was the date of the museum's Annual Ball. The Musée's most loyal supporters gathered there, as they do every year, to celebrate the coming of spring.

NEW ACTIVITY SUMMER SOLSTICE AT THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL

To take advantage of the arrival of summer, along with guided tours of the exhibitions *Borduas*, *Eleanor Bond* and *Martha Fleming & Lyne Lapointe*, and the Sculpture Garden, a new, young and dynamic committee, made up of Ève Beauchamp, Fannie Charron, Philippe Fehmiu, Michel Lacroix, Élisabeth Lapointe, Lenny Lipes, Pablo Rodriguez, Nathalie Roy, Sophie Savoy and Robert Vézina, is throwing a party in keeping with its ebullient image and full of surprises. This inaugural event will take place in the Sculpture Garden and Beverley Webster-Rolph Hall on Thursday, June 18, from 6 to 9 p.m. For more details, or for an invitation (if you are not a Friend of the Musée), call (514) 847-6271. All those who wish to take

this opportunity to become Friends of the Musée will enjoy a special introductory rate.

VOLUNTEERS

As you no doubt already know, the museum cloakroom is run by a terrific team of volunteers. More than 40 of them share the job of greeting you, answering your questions and looking after your personal effects while you visit the exhibitions. These dedicated Friends also lend a hand in all kinds of endeavours to help us serve you better: mailings of invitations and *Le Journal du Musée*, and preparation and reception duties for special events.

The Media Centre also has the benefit of a splendid team that files art-related documents such as brochures, invitations, press clippings, handwritten notes, correspondence and exhibition catalogues.

This past February 20, at a cocktail reception in their honour, a number of volunteers were presented with certificates attesting to the number of hours they have contributed, which ranged up to 500. Being a Musée volunteer is a privilege reserved for Friends. Among our Friends, the volunteers act as ambassadors and convey their attachment to the museum better than anyone. By welcoming visitors as if they were their own friends or family, they contribute to making the museum a place of discovery where people feel at home and are happy to come, and come again. If you have three hours a week to spare and are interested in volunteer work, act now to become a Friend and ask to join the volunteers, by calling (514) 847-6907, between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., Tuesday to Friday. ■ A. L.



Annual Ball organizing committee. Front row: Sylvie Boivin, Bridget Fetterly and Fernanda Ivanier. Back row: Josée Lacoste, Marie-Claude Desjardins, François Dell'Aniello, Chantal Roy and Danièle Patenaude. Camera-shy: Michelle Beauregard, Manon Blanchette, Ann Birks, Denis D'Etchevery and Mélanie Kau. Photo: Michel Mercé

"HI, HOW ARE YOU TODAY? ENJOY YOUR VISIT!" THOSE ARE GENERALLY THE FIRST WORDS YOU HEAR ON ARRIVING AT THAT HIVE OF ACTIVITY KNOWN AS THE CLOAKROOM.

Inside, there are busy bees called VOLUNTEERS. I am one of them. We form somewhat of a special category at the museum. We are the people you usually see first, and we are the ones you see again when you leave and we wish you "Good-bye. Come again!"

I find our role rewarding, and much appreciated by visitors. There is always a bit of warmth shared. We get compliments, as well as criticism. Foreign visitors talk to us about their countries, or Montréal. Sometimes they tell us stories.

Personally, I like this exchange of pleasantries. The good will can be felt on both sides. I am always happy to come to the Musée. I like the atmosphere, the life and the sense of youth in motion. The feeling is never sombre — quite the contrary, we have fun and even kid around. Whether we are 20 or 80 years old, students, unemployed, professionals or retired, the Musée "hive" is always stimulating and *sympathique*. ■ OLGA ZOZOULA, VOLUNTEER



Sylvie Bouchard, Colin-Maillard, (detail), 1992
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
Cover of new promotional brochure for the Friends of the Musée

portrait of a summer visitor,

August 1997

PORTRAIT OF A SUMMER VISITOR. YOU MIGHT THINK THIS IS THE TITLE OF A WORK ON DISPLAY AT THE MUSÉE. HOWEVER, IT IS NEITHER A WORK NOR AN EXHIBITION, BUT A FLESH-AND-BLOOD PICTURE OF THE "NEW VISITOR" TO THE MUSÉE. "NEW" BECAUSE, SINCE THE MUSEUM MOVED DOWNTOWN, ATTENDANCE HAS TRIPLED, FROM AN AVERAGE OF 40,000 VISITORS A YEAR TO 120,000 — PROOF POSITIVE OF THE PHENOMENAL EXPANSION IN THE MUSEUM'S CLIENTELES. THE GREATEST PROGRESS WAS MADE IN TOURIST VISITORS, WHO ABOUND IN MONTRÉAL FROM MAY TO OCTOBER.

We based ourselves on the premise that the fall-winter clientele was local, while visitors in spring-summer were mainly tourists. But where did they come from, who were they, where were they going? To find out more about these visitors and follow their evolution over time, the Musée conducted several surveys in recent years. We now present you with a portrait of the summer visitor, as outlined in the summer of 1997 and developed in collaboration with the firm of Omniscope. In the next issue, we will offer a profile of the winter visitor.

In 1997, the summer visitor was most likely a woman (52%) who came to the museum alone (49%) or with friends or relatives (30%). She could have been a

tourist living in the United States or Canada (25%), France (19%) or another country (13%). Québec visitors accounted for 43% of attendance. The summer visitor is between 20 and 29 years old (36%), or between 30 and 39 (26%). The language spoken at home is mainly French (54%), followed by English (38%). Finally, this museum-goer is a lover of contemporary art. In the past three years, he or she has visited, apart from the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, from one to three museums of contemporary or modern art (37%), or even more than six such museums (25%). ■ DANIELLE LEGENTIL

The survey covers individual visitors, not groups.

On Sunday, May 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
it's American Express Montréal Museums Day!

Tour of the collection of Roy Lacaud Heenan,
November 1997. Photo: Caroline Hayeur



year two of the Musée's collector club

THE ART LOVERS AND COLLECTORS CLUB OF THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL HAS EMBARKED UPON ITS SECOND YEAR OF OPERATION. THIS YEAR'S SCHEDULE COMPRISES FOUR TALKS AND A TOUR OF A PRIVATE COLLECTION. THIS COMING MAY 13, THE DIRECTOR OF THE MUSÉE, MARCEL BRISEBOIS, WILL PRESENT A PERSPECTIVE ON THE DIFFERENT FACETS RELATED TO GIFTS OF WORKS OF ART. HE WILL ALSO OFFER HIS THOUGHTS, AS A MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPORT REVIEW BOARD, ON THE MANY FACTORS AFFECTING THE TAX BENEFITS OF MAKING SUCH GIFTS.

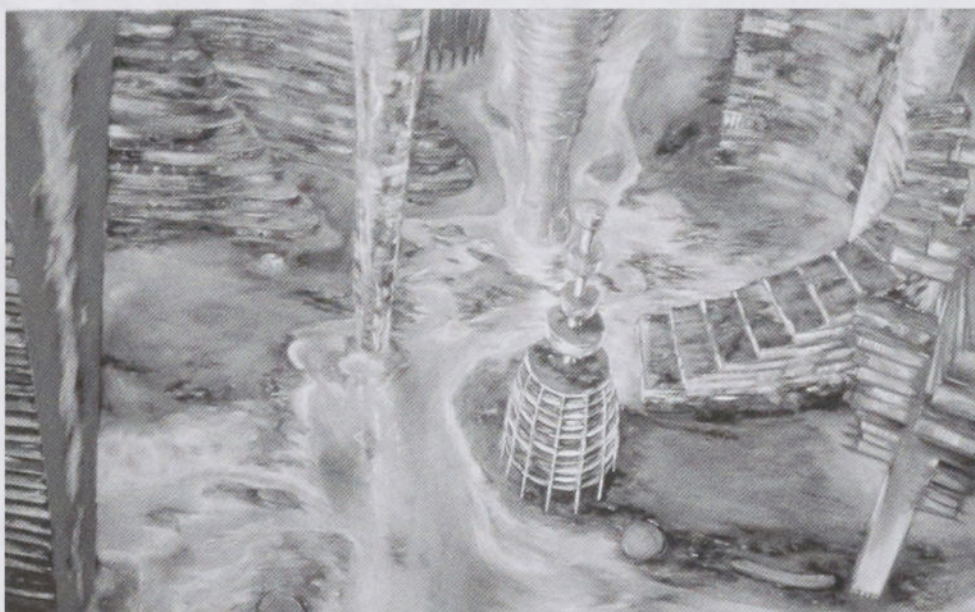
On September 9, Monique Gauthier, Collection Registrar at the Musée, will cover the various aspects to do with archives, their importance within a collection, and the handling they require for their conservation. She will illustrate her talk with a selection of works, particularly from the Paul-Émile Borduas Collection, in conjunction with the exhibition *Borduas and the Automatist Epic*.

Two events have already taken place. Paulette Gagnon, Chief Curator at the Musée, launched the 1998 season this past February. She addressed Club members on the major stages in building the

Musée's collection, and illustrated its highlights with selected works of art. In April, Adam D. Weinberg, Curator of the Permanent Collection of New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, discussed the issue of the risk involved in purchasing a work of contemporary art and the criteria that guide him as curator of the collection. Later in the year, a tour of a private collection will be held. The date will be confirmed this summer. Last year, Club members were treated to a tour of the private collection of Roy Lacaud Heenan, Chairman of the Board of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

For two years now, the Art Lovers and Collectors Club of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal has brought together a growing number of people interested in sharing their passion for contemporary art, as well as those who simply enjoy collecting art objects. Annual membership in the Club costs \$200 per person or \$300 per couple. For further information, please contact Manon Blanchette, Director of Communications and Marketing, at (514) 847-6911. ■ CLAUDE GUÉRIN

Rotterdam Pioneers New Technologies for the Subterranean Eco-Suburb, an Environment with Clean Air, Clean Water and Abundant Daily Sunshine, from the Cosmoville series, 1995
Oil on canvas, 250 x 400 cm. Collection of the artist. Photo: Bob Goedewaagen



eleanor Bond

THIS EXHIBITION PRESENTS THE WORK OF CANADIAN ARTIST ELEANOR BOND WHO, FOR MORE THAN A DECADE NOW, HAS PURSUED A PICTORIAL PRACTICE CENTRED ON THE CREATION OF NEW SOCIAL SPACES.

Since 1985, Eleanor Bond, who lives and works in Winnipeg, has produced series of large paintings that are like fictional landscapes drawn from her thoughts on contemporary society. The *Work Station* series (1985-1988) puts forward a vision of an industrial and residential architecture stamped with the dynamics of transformation and social restructuring, while the series entitled *Social Centres* (1989-1991) focuses more on utopian environments, sites of community megaprojects. The more recent series *Cosmoville* (1995) and *Some Cities* (1997-1998), featured in the present exhibition, further explore the issues inherent in the themes of urban development and social reorganization. Bond's painting is that of a visionary who turns her acute consciousness of current socioeconomic conditions into allegories of a futuristic world.

The exhibition offers the public 11 large paintings, taken mainly from Bond's work over the past few years. The first group, *Cosmoville*, which has not previously been seen in Canada, is made up of four works painted in Rotterdam in 1995, during the artist's six-month stay in that city. The second, comprising five paintings and entitled *Some Cities*, was produced over the last year and will be displayed here for the first time in its entirety. Two paintings from the *Social Centres* series, never shown before in Montréal, will provide a significant reference point for the concerns underlying Bond's approach since the beginning of the nineties.

In concentrating on two major series of recent paintings by Bond, the exhibition will thus be an opportunity for visitors to discover her large-scale works, in which the forms seem to break down. The strangeness of the perspectives, the effect of the glazes and the saturation of the colours give these "floating images" a "cinematic" presence that sets them apart from other creations in this genre. They also possess an ability to include viewers in a fictional universe, while confronting them with the chaotic realities of a technological, post-industrial world.

Eleanor Bond has exhibited her work regularly in Canada and abroad. This first solo exhibition at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal will, together with the exhibitions *Attila Richard Lukacs* in 1994, *Louis Comtois* and *Christian Kiopini* in 1996 and *Daniel Villeneuve* in 1997, contribute to an assessment of a generation's current pictorial practice. This exhibition received financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Dissemination Assistance Program. ■ SANDRA GRANT MARCHAND

MAY 28 TO SEPTEMBER 13, 1998

Élément de culture...



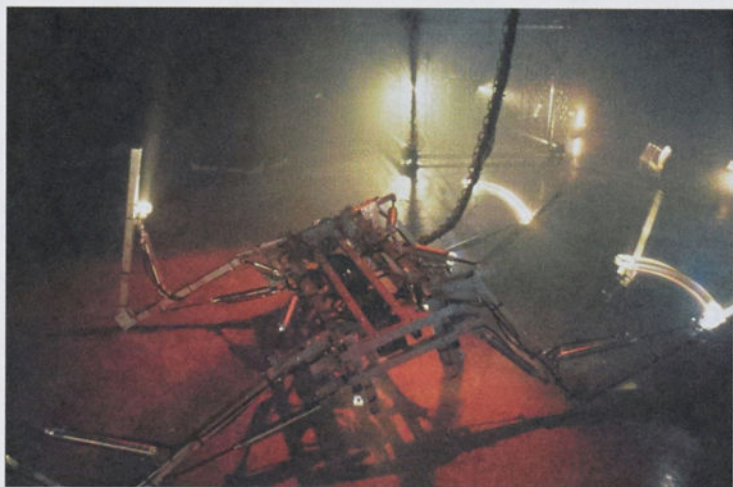
A newspaper of distinction!

Subscriptions (514) 985-3355

Louis-philippe Demers and Bill vorn

La cour des miracles

IN MEDIEVAL CITIES, LA COUR DES MIRACLES WAS THE AREA OF TOWN WHERE BEGGARS, CRIPPLES AND CROOKS FOUND REFUGE. LA COUR DES MIRACLES AS CONCEIVED BY MONTRÉAL ARTISTS LOUIS-PHILIPPE DEMERS AND BILL VORN IS AN UNUSUAL MULTI-MEDIA ENVIRONMENT POPULATED BY MACHINES THAT DETECT ANY HUMAN PRESENCE AND REACT TO IT. BOTH "CYBER-FREAKS," LOUIS-PHILIPPE DEMERS AND BILL VORN HAVE WORKED TOGETHER SINCE 1992 ON CREATING ROBOTIC INSTALLATIONS IN IMMERSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH THEY EXPLORE AN AESTHETIC OF BEHAVIOUR.

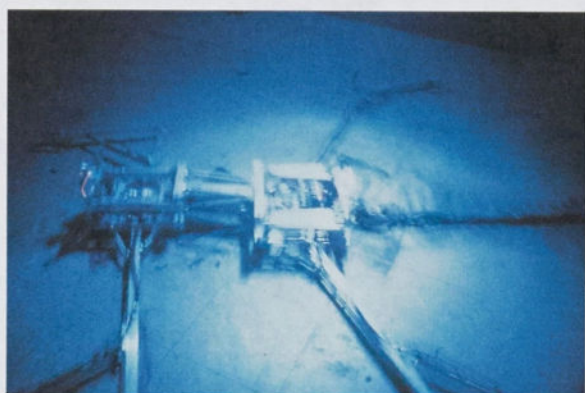


La Cour des Miracles contains 30 or so robotic entities, each with its own "personality." The semblance of life rests not on a physiological representation of the living, but rather on the sounds and movements determined by the system's programming, which turns each metal frame into an individual creature. 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 Demers-Vorn.

"We want to achieve uncertain, hard-to-predict behaviours — in the same sense as the generally deterministic scripts defining computer-mediated interaction. In fact, once a series of 'rules' has been defined on the machine, the robotic organism processes the information and infers from it, virtually autonomously, behaviours 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 emerging behaviours are group reactions generated by the sum of all the individual reactions. They are hard to predict because they depend on an overall interpretation of an exponential number of possibilities. The immersion stimulates our senses without subjugating our intellect. The Demers-Vorn project allows us to experience "the inescapable reflex of a projecting of feelings which we cannot help having towards anything that appeals to us." *La Cour des Miracles* is a reflection on both individual and social behaviours.

La Cour des Miracles, presented in Beverley Webster-Rolph Hall from June 17 to August 9, 1998, is a more developed version of the installation previewed in Chicago in conjunction with ISEA 97. This exhibition received financial support from the Canada Council for the Arts, Dissemination Assistance Program ■ LOUISE ISMERT

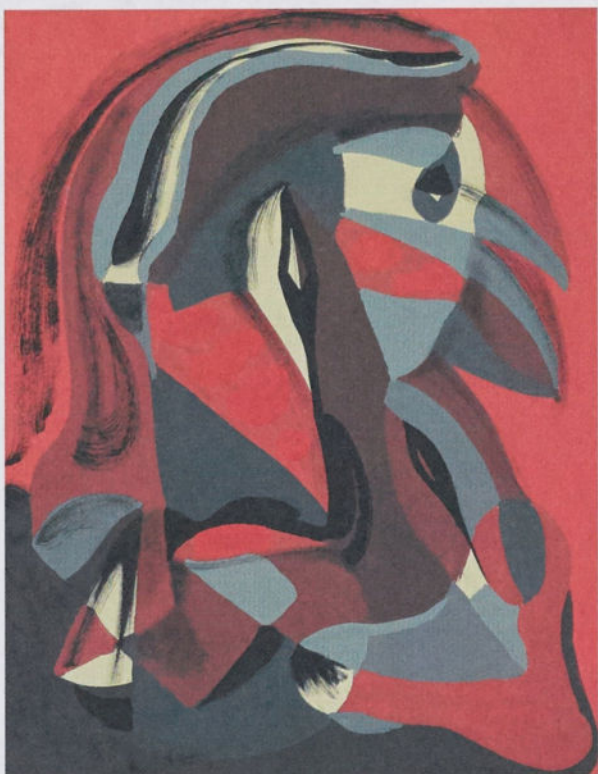
JUNE 17 TO AUGUST 30, 1998



Photos: Louis-Philippe Demers and Bill Vorn

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Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 185 St. Catherine Street West, Montréal, Québec H2X 1Z8 – Tel. (514) 847-6226
Media Centre Web site: <http://Media.MACM.qc.ca>



Chantecler, 1942. Gouache on paper. 61.3 x 47.5 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

The Borduas collection

of the musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

IN ADDITION TO BEING THE DEPOSITORY OF THE PAUL-ÉMILE BORDUAS ARCHIVES — UNIQUE ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS CONTAINING NOTES, MANUSCRIPTS, CORRESPONDENCE, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND MORE IN ITS 302 FILES — THE MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL HAS 105 WORKS BY BORDUAS, FROM THE 1920S UP TO HIS DEATH IN PARIS IN 1960. A TOTAL OF 72 PAINTINGS, 32 WORKS ON PAPER AND ONE SCULPTURE ENABLE US TO TRACE THE DAZZLING ARTISTIC JOURNEY FOLLOWED BY THE SAINT-HILAIRE-BORN PAINTER, FROM HIS INITIAL FIGURATIVE FORMULATIONS FREELY INFLUENCED BY STYLISTIC AND SYMBOLIC CONSIDERATIONS, THROUGH THE ABSOLUTE AFFIRMATION OF AUTOMATISM, THE SPONTANEOUS GESTURE AND THE CHANCE OCCURRENCE, TO HIS SPARE, ABSTRACT PICTORIAL SPACES LADEN WITH A POIGNANT EXISTENTIAL DEPTH.

The Borduas Collection has grown progressively over the years, from the first purchase in 1965 of the painting *Translucidité* (1955) to the recent 1995 gift of the small gouache *Sans titre* (1950), a bequest of Claude Hinton. The acquisition, in 1971, of the Lortie Collection, which included 12 works by Borduas — among them *Coin du banc (Gaspésie)* (about 1938), *L'Île fortifiée* (1941), the gouache *Chantecler* (1942), *Viol aux confins de la matière* (1943), *3.45 Palette d'artiste surréaliste* (1945), *Épanouissement* (1956) and *3+3+4* (1956) — brought to 18 the number of Borduas works at the Musée. The 1973 gift from National Museums of Canada consolidated, in a significant way, the Musée's substantial representation of the artist's work. This gift comprised 46 paintings (mainly from the 1950s), four watercolours, three gouaches (1942), one charcoal (1943) and a group of 21 small inks done on Gitanes cartons (about 1955-1960).

Since then, a further 30 works have come to the Musée, 15 of them thanks to the generosity of donors who wished in this way to contribute to building the Collection; these are Gisèle and Paul-Marie Lapointe, Max Stern and Iris Stern, Irène Legendre, Bruno M. and Ruby Cormier, Françoise Legris and the Galerie Morency. Among its other results, the acquisition of the Lavalin Collection, in 1992, added eight more Borduas works to the Musée's possession. The Borduas Collection constitutes one of the highlights of the Musée's collections. It illustrates the scope and depth of the Borduas *œuvre* and, presented in virtually its entirety (more than 90 of the 105 works) for the first time since our last exhibitions in 1982 and 1983, it once again reveals, but from another perspective, the extraordinary expressive power of a unique aesthetic quest. ■ JOSÉE BÉLISLE



Cheminement bleu, 1955. Oil on canvas. 147.5 x 114.5 cm
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Max Stern. Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay



**NATIONAL
BANK**

In tribute to the actions and passion of these artists who
refused to abandon their convictions
and whose strength continues to inspire us today.