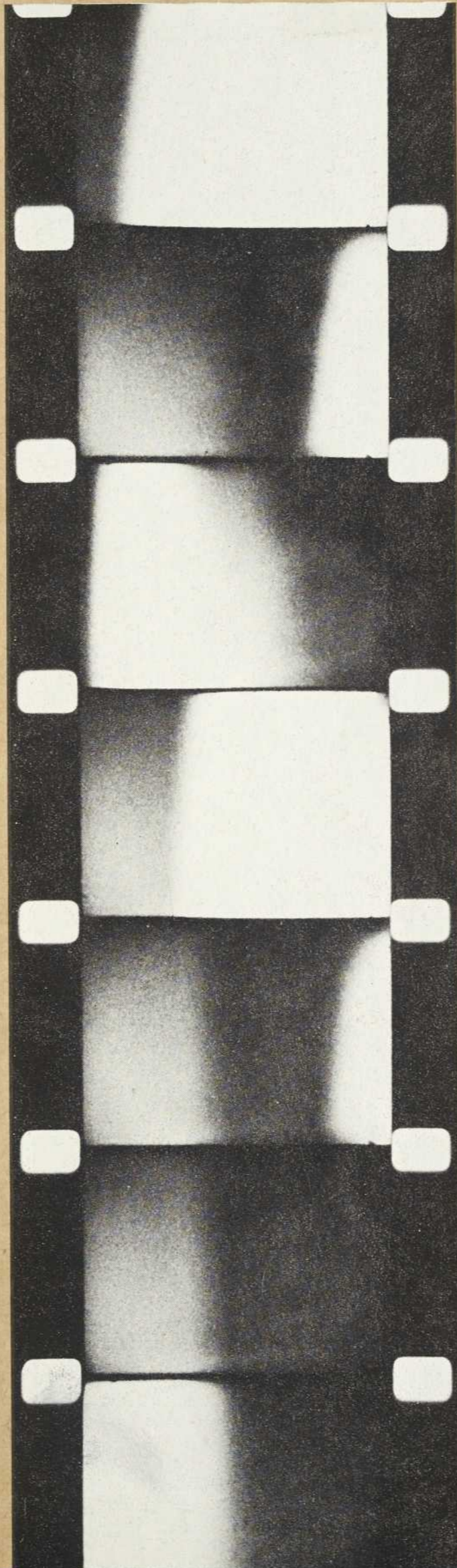


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Angles droits concentriques, huile sur bois, 1956, 80 x 80 cm, collection Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach.

FRANÇOIS MORELLET

par Gilles Gheerbrant

"On va certainement me critiquer... on dira qu'il n'y a plus de peinture, plus de touche. Mais mon but est tout autre: dans le noir est morte la couleur et maintenant, elle ne joue aucun rôle. Que le barbouillage meure à son tour."

Alexandre Rodtchenko, journal, 21 août 1919 ⁽¹⁾

Depuis vingt-six ans, c'est-à-dire depuis qu'il a vingt six ans, François Morellet pratique un travail artistique systématique, — articulant essentiellement des lignes, des points et des tirets en noir et blanc — mais dans lequel de nouvelles idées ou de nouveaux développements des idées de base viennent constamment enrichir une oeuvre qui constitue la plus cinglante réponse à ceux qui pourraient s'inquiéter de la possibilité de travailler de façon prolongée avec des systèmes simples et intelligents. Lorsque l'historien d'art nord-américain, généralement peu au fait de ce qui se passe de l'autre côté de l'Atlantique, ou qui a classé définitivement Morellet dans la rubrique "op-art", découvre l'oeuvre de cet artiste dans le catalogue de l'importante rétrospective à la Nationalgalerie de Berlin et au Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris en 1977-78, il ne peut manquer d'éprouver un curieux sentiment de déjà-vu puis d'être pris de malaise et de sentir une partie de ses certitudes s'écrouler quand il regarde la date de création des peintures de Morellet. Il a en effet devant les yeux un tableau à bandes horizontales étagées de 1952 qui lui fait inévitablement penser à un Noland de 1967, un tableau à bandes verticales rythmiques de 1952 également qui lui fait penser à des oeuvres postérieures de plusieurs artistes, un certain nombre de tableaux réalisés de 1952 à 1957 et qui ressemblent étrangement à des Stella de 1959 à 1968, des superpositions de trames de 1952 à maintenant qui évoquent des Sol Lewitt postérieurs, et on pourrait continuer ainsi longuement la liste des précédents que l'on trouve dans l'oeuvre de Morellet. Bien entendu, c'est tout à son honneur d'avoir eu autant d'"épigones" conscients, ou le plus souvent inconscients, mais il convient de bien noter la date d'exécution de ses oeuvres pour se faire une idée juste de ce que Morellet a accompli. En fait, des artistes que j'ai nommés plus haut, ou auxquels j'ai fait allusion, c'est sans doute Sol Lewitt qui ressemble le plus à Morellet ou dont les préoccupations sont les plus proches de celles de ce dernier, même s'ils diffèrent par certains côtés ainsi que nous aurons l'occasion de le voir par la suite. Si l'on prend le cas de Stella, on s'aperçoit que les deux artistes sont parfois proches au niveau des "images" que l'on trouve dans leurs travaux respectifs, mais sont en fait radicalement opposés au niveau des intentions. Comme l'a très bien montré Dieter Honisch, Morellet s'intéresse avant tout à "ordonner le champ du tableau de façon régulière et surtout logique" alors que Stella se préoccupe surtout de la délimitation du champ. ⁽²⁾

Morellet a été très impressionné par sa rencontre au début des années 50 avec l'art arabe qu'il a découvert en Espagne, à Grenade surtout, et qui lui a fourni l'exemple d'un "all over" d'une intelligence jamais égalée. C'est cette rencontre, jointe à celle des idées de Max Bill et de l'art concret suisse ⁽³⁾ qui fait basculer Morellet vers un art systématique qui abandonne toute idée de composition, avec ce que cela comporte de déséquilibre équilibré, au profit d'une organisation rationnelle et uniforme du champ du tableau. Il fallait un certain courage et un certain esprit de contradiction pour se lancer dans cette voie anti-romantique, froide et systématique en France en 1952, et Morellet était bien le seul Français à avoir cet esprit à l'époque. Il avait toutefois à ce moment-là quatre bons amis qui travaillaient dans un esprit assez proche, Ellsworth Kelly (dont Morellet nous a appris qu'il avait une vénération particulière pour Max Bill auquel il rendit plusieurs fois visite, un fait qui est généralement ignoré ou passé sous silence quand on discute de Kelly), Alain Naudet qui, entre 1952 et 1955 a fait une dizaine de tableaux très "minimal", Almir Mavignier, peintre brésilien qui pratiquait un pointillisme systématique et Jack Youngerman, autre peintre américain, qui devait devenir plus lyrique par la suite, mais qui était à ce moment-là, sinon systématique, du moins assez "minimal".

Comme il l'écrit dans son "Avertissement" de 1972, Morellet a, depuis 1952, "fabriqué des objets inutiles (donc artistiques) caractérisés par l'absence de tout intérêt de composition ou d'exécution et la présence de systèmes simples et évidents faisant souvent appel au hasard réel ou à la participation des spectateurs".

Essays d'examiner en détail ces caractéristiques sur lesquelles Morellet attire lui-même notre attention.

Tout d'abord le champ du tableau est le plus souvent intégralement rempli de signes répétés d'une manière uniforme, en fonction d'un principe structuraliste d'organisation et non d'une quelconque idée de composition. Il n'y a pas de hiérarchie, pas d'endroits privilégiés, mais une fondamentale unité et homogénéité de la surface. Les tableaux sont comme découpés dans des structures plus vastes, ce qui veut dire que l'on peut en imaginer les prolongements à l'infini. Ce qui préoccupe Morellet c'est l'organisation interne et non la délimitation du champ, et cela n'est pas vrai seulement quand on parle de tableaux ou de dessins, mais nous est confirmé à un autre niveau par la genèse de la fameuse sphère-trame de 1962 par exemple. En effet Morellet avait d'abord pensé suspendre dans l'espace un cube constitué d'une multitude de petits cubes intérieurs dont les arêtes seraient matérialisées par un assemblage de tiges métalliques. Mais les essais lui ont montré que quand le cube tournait, on percevait beaucoup moins les différentes superpositions à l'intérieur du cube que ce qui se produisait en périphérie, sur le pourtour constitué par la projection des arêtes du cube extérieur dans le plan de vision. Et c'est pourquoi, finalement, il a opté pour une forme sphérique, définie mais ouverte, permettant de voir ce qui se passe à l'intérieur: dans les tiges de métal qui structurent le vide en une sphère, il n'y a plus de bord. De la même façon, dans la "répartition de piquets équidistants, avec les sommets au même niveau" de 1971, les piquets sont visibles dans les zones de plus grande dépression des jardins vallonnés du CNAC, et on imagine leur répartition uniforme se prolongeant sous terre dans les zones les plus hautes.

Si l'on revient aux tableaux de Morellet, et qu'on les considère du point de vue de leur aspect général, on constate qu'ils sont le plus souvent réalisés en noir et blanc, et toujours avec une volonté évidente de neutralité dans l'exécution qui est la plus mécanique possible. (4) Les lignes sont tracées à la règle et à la roulette, les surfaces ne comportent aucun accident particulier mais se présentent comme égales et lisses, dénuées le plus possible de toute trace manuelle qui viendrait distraire l'attention du propos fondamental du travail en introduisant une note poétique ou simplement "artistique". Il est parfois difficile de maintenir cette neutralité et Morellet parle lui-même du danger qu'il a rencontré pendant les années 60 "de créer de beaux objets putains et luxueux..." C'est pourquoi il a "rapidement préféré aux métaux (un peu précieux) la lumière directe et particulièrement le néon dont l'effet est dur, net, sans ombre ni reflet."⁽⁵⁾

Qu'il s'agisse de néon, de constructions métalliques, de toiles sur chassis ou de grands calques punaisés directement sur un mur, il y a toujours un système en action dans le travail de Morellet, et depuis 1956 chaque oeuvre est pourvue d'un titre qui énonce de façon concise et claire le système qui en est le moteur.⁽⁶⁾ Ainsi par exemple un tableau de 1958 s'intitule "4 doubles trames 20°, 22°5, 45°, 67°5" ou un tableau de 1974 "Tirets dont la longueur et l'espacement augmentent à chaque rangée de 5mm", ou encore cette série de 3 toiles formant une pièce de 1973 "3 toiles de 4m. de périmètre avec une diagonale horizontale". Ce titre constitue l'énoncé de ce que Morellet appelle volontiers la règle du jeu ou l'idée préconçue, le système qui pourrait être communiqué par téléphone à un assistant qui produirait alors une oeuvre soit exactement semblable, à celle que Morellet pourrait faire de son côté, soit, selon la part d'ouverture que comprend le système, un pur équivalent, renvoyant de la même façon à la règle commune. Cela va évidemment beaucoup plus loin que les 3 "Telefonbid" que Moholy-Nagy a réalisés en 1923 en décrivant de façon détaillée au contremaître d'une fabrique d'enseignes en émail une composition sur papier millimétré qu'il avait devant les yeux, composition très dépouillée et géométrique, mais composition avant tout intuitive et non régie par un programme.

Les règles du jeu de Morellet sont en fait les modèles génératifs (au sens de Chomsky) d'autant de grammaires qui engendrent les oeuvres. Du reste les systèmes de Morellet sont en général très simples et les oeuvres parfaitement et immédiatement lisibles: on peut comprendre ce qui se passe sans même avoir au besoin de regarder le titre qui n'est que confirmation.

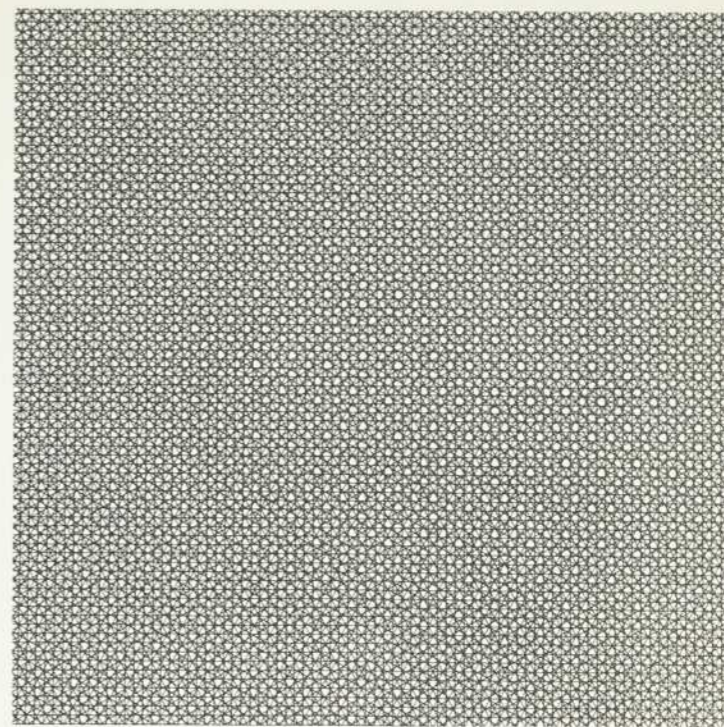
Les systèmes de Morellet peuvent se regrouper en cinq grandes familles: juxtaposition, superposition, hasard, interférence et fragmentation. Tout cela est très clairement défini et expliqué dans le catalogue que nous avons mentionné plus haut et auquel nous renvoyons le lecteur intéressé à en savoir plus long. Disons simplement que le principe de juxtaposition et le principe de superposition interviennent dès 1952, le principe d'interférence dès 1953 et le hasard à partir de 1958. Le principe de fragmentation a été utilisé pour la première fois en 1954 mais se manifeste surtout depuis 1973 et a abouti en 1977 à toute une série de pliages qui sont particulièrement remarquables.

À la différence de l'art concret qui produit des objets esthétiques qui fonctionnent, mais qui sont clos, qui sont des choses finies et définitives, l'art systématique ou génératif amène des séries plus ou moins illimitées d'oeuvres engendrées par un même système dont elles sont autant d'exemplifications qui sont tout aussi définitives prises une à une mais qui renvoient les unes aux autres, produisent des effets de complémentarité, de retournement, d'équivalence, de référence etc.

Si un système intelligent est intelligemment traité et présenté, il ne manque pas de se produire des résultats visuellement et intellectuellement intéressants. Il y a bien entendu une part d'intuition ou d'arbitraire pour en arriver à des règles ou des procédures personnelles, mais, l'intérêt visuel des résultats et l'attrait intellectuel de la simplicité et de la rigueur du processus, joint au fait que cet intérêt et cet attrait sont parfaitement matérialisés dans une oeuvre qui lie indissociablement le processus au résultat, tout cela fait que le travail se trouve parfaitement justifié en dernière analyse.

Quelques exemples d'oeuvres récentes de Morellet qui me touchent beaucoup visuellement et intellectuellement: un tableau carré est rempli de lignes parallèles équidistantes inclinées à 5°, et ce tableau est basculé à l'accrochage de telle sorte que les lignes qu'il contient deviennent horizontales. Autre exemple: sur le principe des "tirets verticaux avec deux interférences", Morellet a réalisé un multiple qui s'édite de lui-même: au lieu de la feuille de papier ou de la toile, une planche de bois, et au lieu des deux réseaux de lignes, des entailles à la scie de telle sorte qu'à chaque fois que les traits de scie se rejoignent, un exemplaire du multiple est réalisé et tombe. Autre exemple encore: dans une série de quatre dessins exposés récemment à Montréal (voir illustration du premier et du quatrième dessin) la première ligne horizontale de points du premier dessin se retrouve comme première ligne verticale du dernier dessin, du fait du processus suivi.

"Une expérience véritable doit être menée à partir d'éléments contrôlables en progressant systématiquement suivant un programme. Le développement d'une expérience doit se réaliser de lui-même, presque en dehors du programmeur." Cet extrait de "Pour une peinture programmée", texte écrit par Morellet en 1962 rejoint tout à fait les préoccupations théoriques du groupe Art Concret fondé en 1930 à Paris par Theo van Doesburg ou certaines des "Sentences on conceptual art" formulées par Sol Lewitt en 1968. En ayant recours à des systèmes qu'il fait jouer et dont il accepte les résultats sans les "retoucher" une fois que le processus a été mis en branle, Morellet cherche à supprimer au maximum les décisions subjectives et arbitraires que prend un artiste guidé par son "inspiration" c'est-à-dire sa sensibilité, ses habitudes culturelles ou ses goûts. Il n'est pas question d'établir une quelconque mystique du

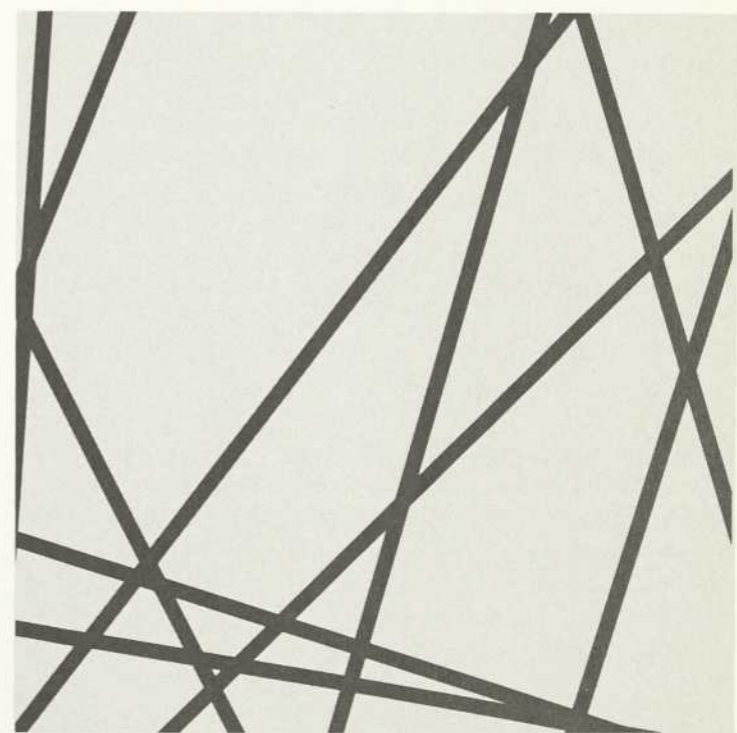


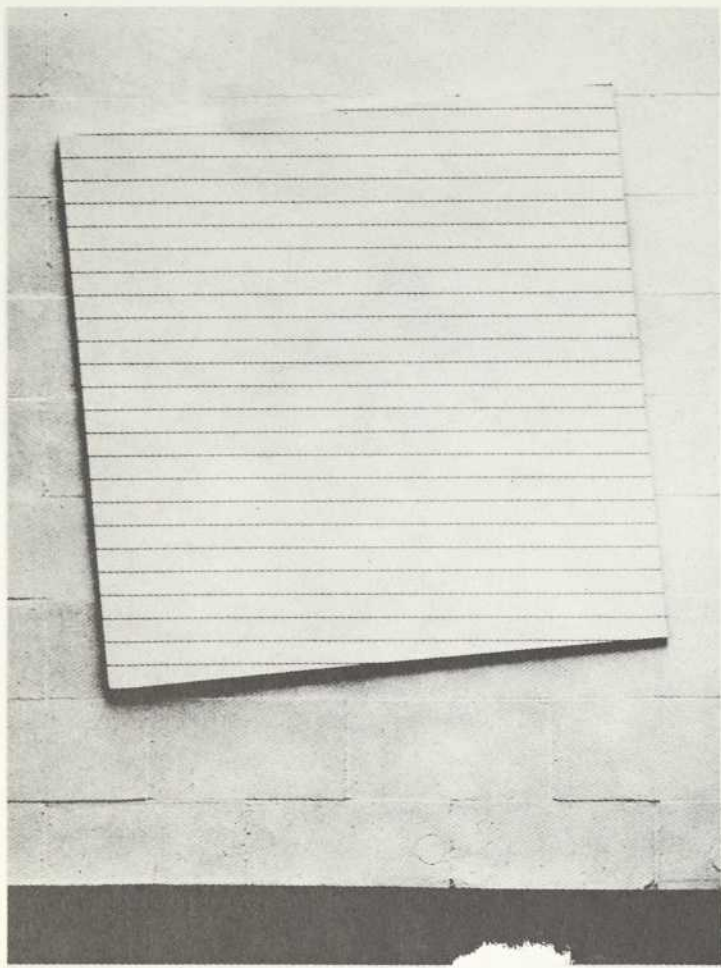
4 doubles trames, 0°, 22°5, 45°, 67°5, huile sur bois, 1958, 80 x 80 cm, collection particulière, France.

système mais il me semble important, fondamental qu'à partir du moment où l'on a décidé de travailler d'une manière logique et d'utiliser un système, on ne vienne pas alors s'en écarter sous le moindre prétexte. Les systématiques européens en général, et Morellet en particulier me semblent avoir à ce tégard une attitude beaucoup plus saine et cohérente que bon nombre d'artistes des États-Unis qui ont pu donner l'impression d'être systématiques. Dans le cas de Stella et Poons, l'évolution ultérieure de leur production a rendu les choses très claires et enlevé tout ambiguïté, mais si Lewitt est effectivement systématique, on cite très souvent en sa compagnie Rockburne et Bochner, or les plus récentes expositions de ces deux artistes ont montré que le système que l'on évoque constamment à leur propos est en fait chez eux un leurre idéologique servant à masquer des travaux finalement assez rétrogrades dans lesquels la couleur apparaît avec une fonction purement cosmétique ou qui nous ramènent, toute réflexion faite, à Poliakoff ou à certains épigones de Malevitch.

Le système peut être construit à partir de la constatation de certains phénomènes du monde environnant qu'il s'agit en les systématisant de rendre plus clairs et perceptibles, d'articuler d'une façon nouvelle et synthétique, ou bien il peut s'agir d'une logique abstraite dont l'artiste ne peut pas savoir a priori quels résultats visuels elle va donner. Les mathématiques (élémentaires) peuvent servir à la formulation des problèmes, mais elles sont un simple outil et jamais une fin en soi. En fait la visualisation de formules mathématiques n'a

10 lignes au hasard, huile sur toile, 1971, 140 x 140 cm, collection particulière, France.



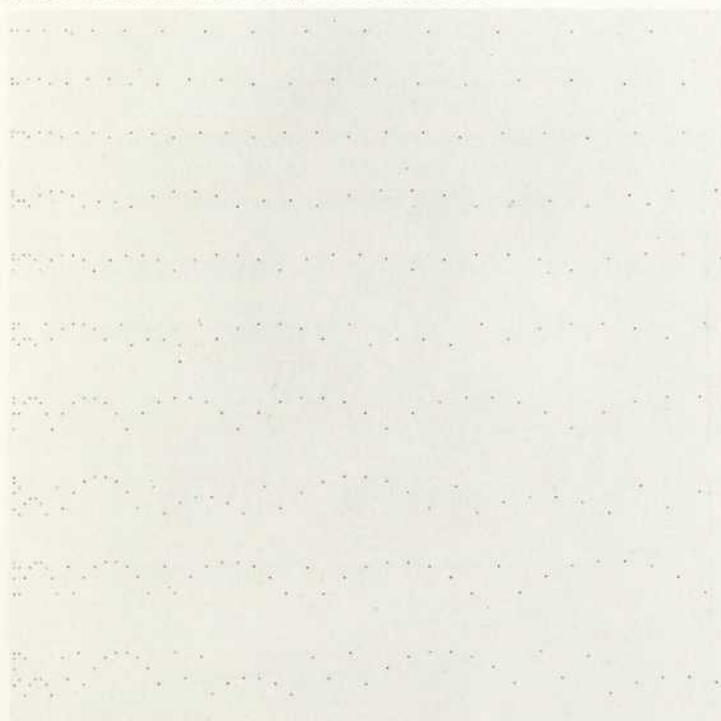


Trame 5° placée horizontalement, huile sur toile, 1976, 200 x 200 cm, collection particulière, France.

rien à voir avec l'art systématique ou génératif dans lequel il s'agit beaucoup plus de logique que de mathématiques.

Tous les artistes qui travaillent avec des systèmes sont attirés par le hasard et cherchent à le mettre en oeuvre dans des structures simples. Mais alors que certains s'en remettent à des exécutants qui peuvent toujours laisser intervenir des biais personnels à l'intérieur de certaines contraintes données, Morellet refuse de laisser agir ses biais à lui, ou ceux d'assistants éventuels: il choisit de faire appel à un hasard extérieur, objectif, non biaisé par les inclinations d'une personnalité et utilise à cette fin le générateur de nombres au hasard universellement accessible que constitue un annuaire du téléphone. Ainsi le tableau "Répartition aléatoire de 40,000 carrés suivant les chiffres pairs et impairs d'un annuaire de téléphone" de 1961. Il est vrai que le terme hasard en français est assez vague et ambigu, mais on aura compris que le hasard de Morellet, le hasard systématique est très éloigné de tous les petits hasards d'"accidents de travail" qui existent dans la peinture traditionnelle.

Points avec un espacement de 5mm, 10mm, 15mm, 20mm, etc.; hauteurs 5mm, 10mm, 15mm, 20mm, 25mm, 30mm, 35mm, 40mm, 45mm, 50mm, encre et crayon sur papier, 1977, 68 x 68 cm, collection Jacques Palumbo, Montréal, photo Gabor Szilasi.



D'ailleurs l'artiste qui travaille de façon non systématique va provoquer le hasard une fois, puis va le provoquer à nouveau, peut-être avec des résultats opposés, jusqu'à ce qu'il soit en définitive satisfait. Comme le dit Morellet, ce qu'on fait alors c'est "une touche d'une certaine façon, puis on en fait une autre, mais, bien sûr, le mouvement de la main, la peinture qui éclabousse un peu, tout cela n'est pas contrôlé, et ce n'est pas parce qu'une chose n'est pas contrôlée ou mal contrôlée qu'elle a le droit d'être dite au hasard."

Prendre un recul vis-à-vis de l'oeuvre d'art a toujours été l'une des préoccupations majeures de Morellet et le hasard comme l'utilisation de systèmes permet de créer ce recul. L'utilisation du spectateur comme créateur, comme participant favorise également cette prise de distance. Déjà le fait que l'oeuvre est lisible et vérifiable par le spectateur confère à celui-ci un rôle actif de ratification. De façon plus directe, l'idée de l'artiste comme meneur de jeu et toute la question de la participation du spectateur a été importante dans le groupe de recherche d'art visuel dont Morellet fut l'un des fondateurs. Laissons-le évoquer ici ce que fut le groupe et la place qui y était faite au spectateur.⁽⁷⁾

"Quand le groupe d'amis que nous formions avec Elsworth Kelly, Alain Naudet, Jack Youngerman et Almir Mavignier s'est dispersé vers 1955, Kelly retournant aux États-Unis, Naudet arrêtant de peindre, Youngerman devenant plus lyrique et Mavignier partant en Allemagne, alors j'ai été très seul. À la fin de 1956, j'ai rencontré François et Vera Molnar, peintres tous les deux, originaires de Hongrie et qui travaillaient d'une façon assez systématique. Au début on se rencontrait peu, puis on se rencontrait plus, et nous voulions former un groupe, mais il n'y avait personne d'autre à Paris que nous aurions pu inviter à se joindre à nous. En 1959-60 de nombreux artistes sont arrivés d'Argentine, parmi lesquels Le Parc, Rossi, Sobrino, Demarco et Miranda et, avec eux, plus Joel Stein, Servane, Yvaral et les Molnar, nous avons fondé le Groupe de recherche d'art visuel en 1960. Au début nous étions une douzaine et puis très vite il n'est plus resté que Le Parc, Rossi, Sobrino, Yvaral, Stein et moi. Les Sud-Américains et Yvaral, plus jeunes que moi, venaient plus de l'op-art et de Vasarely alors que je venais de l'art concret et systématique, mais nous étions tout de même très près les uns des autres par rapport à ce qui se faisait à ce moment-là à Paris. Au départ c'est le côté systématique qui a été le point de ralliement, puis ce fut la participation du spectateur. Je n'ai jamais été le plus gros pilier du temple à la participation du spectateur, mais j'étais tout à fait d'accord; c'était surtout Le Parc et Joel Stein qui étaient les plus dynamiques pour organiser ces labyrinthes, ces parcours mouvementés, ces fêtes que devenaient de plus en plus les expositions du groupe. J'ai lu un

Points avec un espacement de 5mm, 10mm, 15mm, 20mm, etc.; hauteur 680mm, encre et crayon sur papier, 1977, 68 x 68 cm, collection Jacques Palumbo, Montréal, photo Gabor Szilasi.

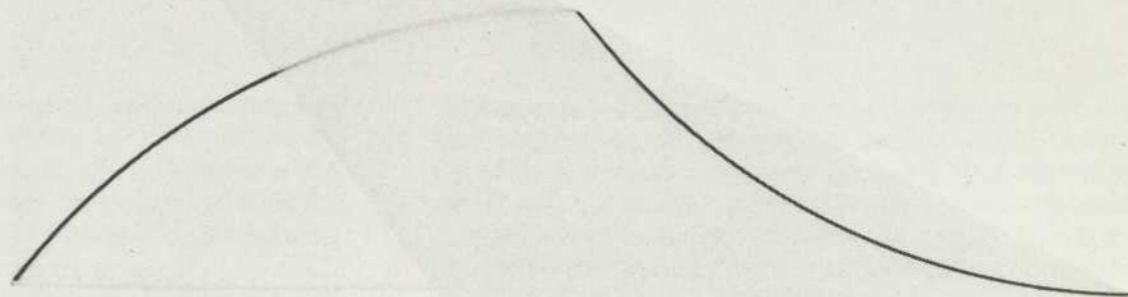
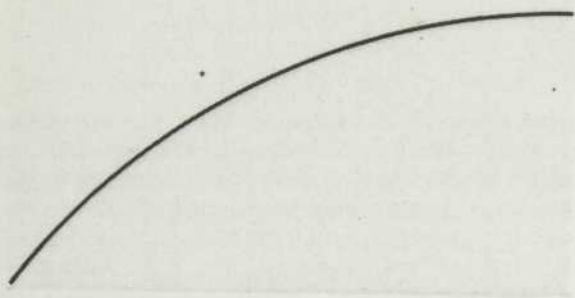


texte d'Agam dans lequel il disait que tout ce que le spectateur trouve en manipulant ses objets, lui Agam l'avait déjà trouvé consciemment ou inconsciemment, mais non, ça n'était pas du tout notre idée que l'on était responsable de ce que trouvait le spectateur. On essayait seulement d'être responsables du déclic qui fait que les spectateurs deviennent créateurs, et c'est tout. Je crois que des choses très positives ont été faites à ce moment-là, des choses éphémères mais dont il reste des documents. On a organisé une journée à Paris dans la rue, en plusieurs endroits; dans certains, c'était du matin au soir et c'était presque hystérique. Après un moment de recul, les gens jouaient avec les choses, les cassaient, faisaient la fête. On était vraiment au point pour réveiller les gens et faire la fête. En avril 1968, on avait prévu d'organiser quelque chose le mois après, et alors, ceux qui ont de la mémoire peuvent se rappeler ce qui s'est passé en mai 1968. Les amateurs nous ont coupé l'herbe sous le pied, et la fête avait pris des proportions telles que notre action aurait pu paraître un peu dérisoire. Ce fut l'une des raisons de la dissolution du groupe, et puis aussi il y avait des options politiques différentes pour les uns et pour les autres. D'autre part c'est toujours facile d'être un groupe uni quand personne n'est une vedette, mais à ce moment-là, le prix de la biennale de Venise avait un peu mis le projecteur sur Le Parc, qui le méritait, d'accord, mais c'est aussi le groupe qui avait eu le prix sans être nommé désigné et cela avait fait une petite cassure. De toute façon le groupe a duré de 1960 à 1968 et être en ménage à six pendant huit ans, c'est déjà beaucoup.

Ce qui est intéressant, c'est de voir que vers 1960 des gens soit de mon âge, soit plutôt plus jeunes, qui faisaient une peinture systématique ou au moins anti-individuelle, se sont dit "puisqu'on fout en l'air l'individu, pourquoi faire un art par un individu?" et cela a semblé possible à ce moment-là de faire un art collectif et anonyme. Des groupes d'artistes comme le Gruppo N à Padoue, Le Gruppo T à Milan, le Gruppo Mid plus tard à Milan également, le groupe Zero en Allemagne et le Groupe de recherche d'art visuel à Paris manifestent tous cette volonté d'un art anonyme et collectif. On faisait des fêtes où chacun amenait des choses à soi qui servaient dans le labyrinthe et on réalisait des oeuvres de participation pour lesquelles c'était impossible de dire que c'était l'un ou l'autre en particulier qui était l'auteur, et ça je crois que ça n'est pas mal. Maintenant on a évolué sans doute différemment, moi je suis beaucoup plus revenu au côté systématique et "minimal", et la plupart des autres ont continué un côté plus "op-art" et moins systématique. Je ne fais pas de jugements de valeur, je crois que c'est comme ça."

L'absence de composition, une réalisation volontairement neutre, le recours à des systèmes, au hasard, et la revendication d'un rôle actif pour le spectateur, sont autant de caractéristiques de l'oeuvre de Morellet et autant de moyens permettant de faire un art anti-romantique. Tout cela correspond en fait à un souci moral de l'artiste ainsi qu'il sera clair après lecture de cet autre extrait d'une conversation entre Morellet et l'auteur de cet article.

"Si on prend une boîte de couleur liquide et qu'on la renverse sur une toile, il va se passer quelque chose, et ce sera forcément intéressant. Tout ce qui vient modifier une surface bien blanche comme celle de cette toile, c'est intéressant. À ce moment-là, celui qui va voir ce que j'ai fait va penser des choses, ça lui rappellera des choses de la nature ou ça lui permettra de mieux rentrer en lui-même, ou ça lui paraîtra triste ou gai, je ne sais pas. Et ce que je trouve ahurissant, et ce contre quoi je réagis, c'est que je puisse à ce moment-là croire que je suis le père de ce qui va se passer chez lui, que je suis responsable de l'émotion, de la rêverie, de tout ce que l'on veut que va provoquer la chose que j'ai faite. Et ça c'est l'une des choses qui m'énervent le plus, cette importance que les artistes se sont octroyée depuis le romantisme en croyant d'abord que l'art est une transmission de message et ensuite que ce que reçoit le spectateur c'est ce message que les super-dieux que sont les artistes roman-



Pliage à 90° d'un arc de cercle sur un rectangle 1 x 2, et Pliage en diagonale d'un arc de cercle sur un rectangle 1 x 2, calque et encre, 1977, 68 x 136 cm chacun, collection particulière, Montréal, photo Gabor Szilasi.

tiques transmettent consciemment, ou ce qui est encore beaucoup plus fort, inconsciemment.

Je crois qu'il y a une façon d'éviter cela, c'est que le procédé de réalisation qui a été suivi soit clair, nommément désigné dans le titre ou apparent dans l'oeuvre même. Quand Duchamp désigne un porte-bouteille, il le fait de telle façon qu'on sait bien que ce porte-bouteille n'a pas été fait par lui et que tout ce qui se passe entre le porte-bouteille et nous, c'est bien entre le porte-bouteille et nous que ça se passe, et non entre Duchamp et nous. Quand Rodtchenko prend des éléments en bois de longueur égale et qu'il les assemble, il y a le système d'assemblage, mais il n'y a pas de composition; tout ce qui fait croire à la poésie ou à la philosophie de l'art est limité au maximum.

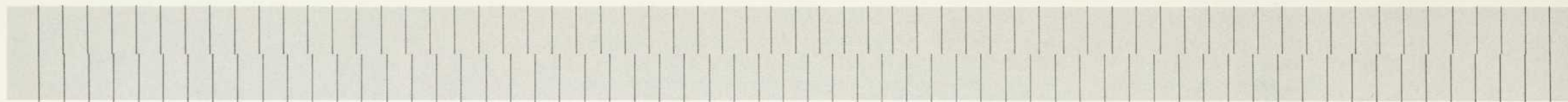
L'art existe par l'activité du spectateur bien plus que par celle du créateur qui n'est là que pour préparer un emplacement pour que le spectateur amène son pique-nique culturel, sensible, philosophique, etc., qu'il va consommer. Alors les artistes qui jouent au

prophète, qui jouent au médium, lien entre des forces cachées, divines ou autres et le pauvre spectateur qui lui n'a pas la chance de rentrer en communication avec ces mondes extraordinaires que seuls les génies peuvent connaître, les artistes qui jouent à cela, je trouve qu'ils sont malhonnêtes et dangereux.

Malhonnêtes parce que ce n'est pas vrai, et dangereux parce qu'ils reprennent le même mécanisme que tous les grands hommes mystificateurs ont pris, et que tous les tyrans ont pris, que ça soit Hitler ou Staline. Quoi qu'on dise, Hitler ressemble à Beuys et Beuys à Hitler, même si Beuys n'a aucun penchant pour la dictature (et je sais très bien qu'il est tout à fait contre les idées d'Hitler), mais son idée de faire croire ou de laisser croire à un personnage mystérieux et qui fait des choses incompréhensibles, qu'il faut adorer et qu'on adore — parce que l'adoration des jeunes pour Beuys en Allemagne est un phénomène que l'on ne retrouve dans aucun autre pays — c'est quelque chose de dangereux. Tous les gens qui continuent de faire croire qu'il y a des génies, des

surhommes, et qui font croire à cette mystification sont dangereux. Un artiste-peintre n'est pas dangereux, mais quand on le fait adorer pour une façon d'être qui peut être celle d'un homme politique demain, je trouve cela mauvais. C'est ma seule morale en art, mais c'est important et ça divise pour moi les artistes en deux, d'une part ceux qui prennent une distance vis-à-vis de l'oeuvre d'art et que j'appelle systématiques, et les autres. Et je me sens beaucoup plus prêt d'artistes qui n'utilisent pas la géométrie, mais qui sont systématiques, que d'artistes qui utilisent la géométrie sans être systématiques.

Si Lichtenstein agrandit un "cartoon" sans y toucher, — ce qu'il ne fait pas d'ailleurs, — si Daniel Spoerri colle les reliefs d'un repas sans y toucher, — ce qu'il fait, — l'un et l'autre prennent un recul, prennent une distance, et je trouve cet art "systématique" au sens large; mais si un constructiviste met un petit carré bleu dans un coin et rose dans un autre parce qu'il trouve que c'est mieux comme cela, et bien je le trouve immoral, d'après ma morale à moi.



Tirets avec 2 intertférences (2 rangées), encre sur papier, 1973, 4 x 64 cm, collection Gilles Gheerbrant, photo Gabor Szilasi.

C'est une frontière que l'on retrouve dans l'art conceptuel qui regroupe des mystiques, des grands-prêtres aussi bien que des gens comme Huebler qui, quand il prend une photo à la TV toutes les dix secondes, ou une photo toutes les minutes en allant à son studio, fait quelque chose de tout à fait clair et net, a une démarche tout à fait systématique.

Bien entendu, si on me raconte ce qu'il a fait, ça m'intéresse; voir les photos, ça ne m'intéresse pas tellement. Dibbets, dans cet esprit-là, a su tirer un parti plus visuel de ce principe... Il y a des conceptuels qui ne "réalisent" pas comme Lawrence Weiner, mais, comme Dibbets ou Lewitt par exemple, j'ai besoin pour que mon système ou mon idée préconçue soit claire qu'elle soit réalisée."

Pour clore cet article, je voudrais dire qu'il me semble de plus en plus évident que nous sommes les victimes d'une histoire de l'art beaucoup trop polarisée. C'est le propre de l'histoire de l'art que de contribuer à construire des mythes, de dévoiler et d'occulter en même temps, car le mythe, "au sens exact du mot, n'est pas un mensonge ni une fiction... il sert avant tout à cacher ce qu'il désigne, à en interdire l'intelligence en voilant les déterminations concrètes, à simplifier le complexe jusqu'à lui donner la fausse clarté de l'évidence". L'historien d'art doit, en même temps qu'il contribue plus ou moins consciemment à bâtir ces mythes, les contredire simultanément et sans cesse arracher le voile qu'ils viennent poser inévitablement sur la réalité historique. L'apport de l'historien est de proposer de nouveaux systèmes d'analyse et d'établir des liens dans la matière historique. À cet égard l'une des tâches les plus urgentes en ce moment me semble être de révéler le progrès dans l'art du XXème siècle vers un art de plus en plus consciemment systématique ou génératif et qui libère l'"investissement" artistique de tout son côté mystique, de révéler le progrès

de l'idée de fonctionnement matériel de l'oeuvre d'art.

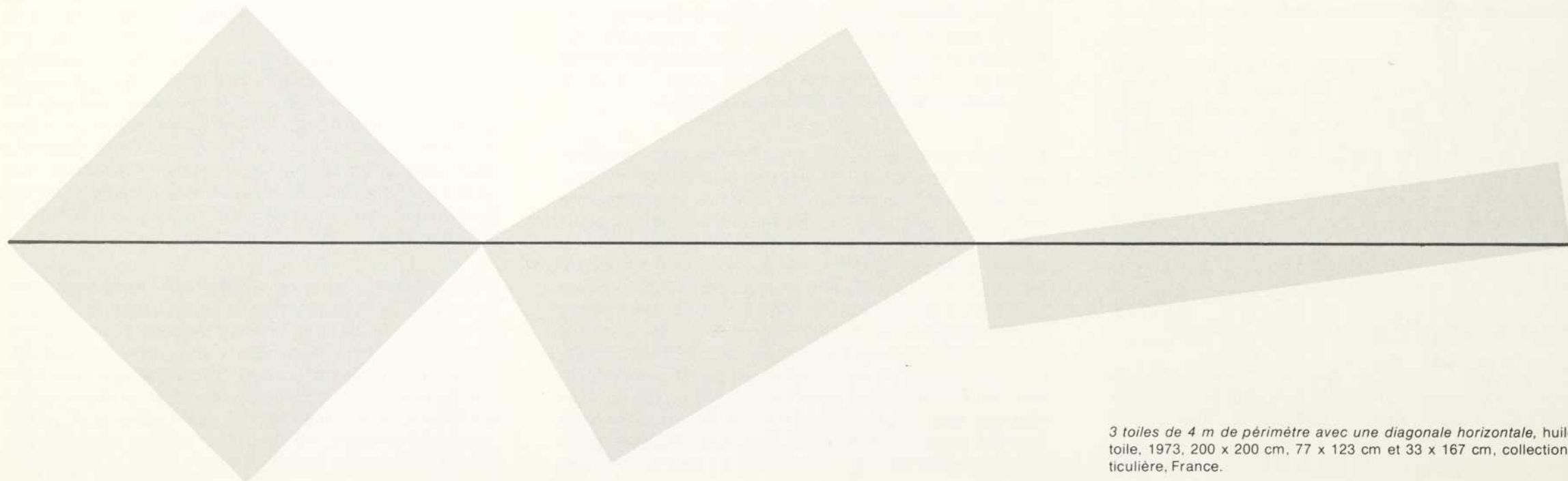
On mettra ainsi en évidence le développement d'un courant fondamental dans l'art et la théorie de l'art, courant dans lequel Morellet occupe une place de tout premier rang et qui passe par Rodtchenko et ses constructions modulaires en bois de l'hiver 1919-1920, certaines recherches et réflexions fondamentales dont témoignent les cahiers de Paul Klee, l'Unisme Polonais, première grande tentative de ré(un)ification de la forme et du contenu de la peinture, le manifeste de l'Art Concret de Theo van Doesburg en 1930, l'art concret suisse de Bill et Lohse, Morellet justement et puis aussi Kenneth Martin, Steele, Hughes et Lowe en Angleterre, Dekkers, Hilgemann, Struycken et de Vries aux Pays-Bas, Verhaegen en Belgique, Lewitt et dans une certaine mesure Judd et André à New York, Manfred Mohr à Paris et Palumbo à Montréal. ■

NOTES:

- (1) Manuscrit conservé dans les archives Rodtchenko à Moscou. Traduction dans le catalogue "2 Stenberg 2" par A.B. Nakov, édition de la galerie Chauvelin, Paris 1975.
- (2) Ce problème est traité de façon intéressante dans les premiers "shaped canvases" qui possèdent des structures simples et où le rapport entre la forme et le support est un rapport formatif élémentaire alors que, par la suite, il devient un rapport purement formel, et donc moins prégnant. Les "eccentric shaped canvases" (qui renvoient non plus à Morellet, mais aux oeuvres réalisées à Berlin entre 1921 et 1924 par l'artiste hongrois Lazlo Peri et aux caractéristiques stylistiques des vorticistes anglais) marquent une première régression dans l'oeuvre de Stella, car s'ils conservent un côté concret d'objets matériels, ils sont vraiment eccentricques et non systématiques.

- (3) Morellet découvre ces idées en 1951, par des reproductions et des coupures de presse qu'il ramène d'un voyage au Brésil où Bill venait d'avoir une importante exposition rétrospective au Musée de Sao Paulo.
- (4) On voit ici, d'emblée, une différence essentielle avec Sol Lewitt dont les "wall drawings" sont bien entendu systématiques, mais donnent une place importante à l'exécution sensorielle à la main, avec tout ce que cela peut comporter de tremblement et donc de charge poétique, même si ce n'est pas la main de l'artiste qui réalise, mais celle d'un ou de plusieurs assistants. Voir par exemple cette déclaration significative de Steve Reich sur les "wall drawings" de Lewitt (in Studio International, Nov. Dec. 1976, p. 301): "I think that he very often has other people making the marks, but the fact that it is realized by hand will create something which is not perfunctory because the people will take care in doing it. And the *net effect* is of seeing very beautiful modulated surface..." Il convient de remarquer que Morellet a lui-aussi réalisé des dessins sur des murs, des façades de musées, des parois de verre etc., mais les lignes que comportent ces dessins éphémères sont encore, de propos délibéré, des lignes neutres constituées d'adhésifs noirs. Morellet s'est amusé à en poser non seulement sur de belles parois lisses, mais aussi à l'occasion sur des plâtres baroques ornementaux, ou sur une sculpture (inamovible) qui se trouvait dans son aire d'exposition et qu'il a quadrillée, et neutralisée par la même occasion.

- (5) Entretien avec Jan Leering dans le catalogue de l'exposition Morellet au C.N.A.C. de Paris en 1971.
- (6) La clarté des titres de Morellet fait contraste avec certaines des explications/instructions de Lewitt qui ont l'air volontairement compliquées. Voir par exemple le texte de "Location of a Rectangle", 1974 (in Art in America, Sept. Oct. 1975, p. 48). Il s'agit de toute évidence d'un texte de description de procédure, mais il est tellement complexe, et à toute fin pratique illisible qu'on se demande à quoi il sert. D'ailleurs dans ce cas particulier le résultat est visuellement si peu intéressant qu'on n'a pas envie de faire l'effort de lire et de comprendre. Il y a là quelque chose de trouble et de profondément troublant.
- (7) Transcription d'une conversation avec l'auteur de cet article.



3 toiles de 4 m de périmètre avec une diagonale horizontale, huile sur toile, 1973, 200 x 200 cm, 77 x 123 cm et 33 x 167 cm, collection particulière, France.

SUZY LAKE — IMPOSITIONS

by Diana Nemiroff

Suzy Lake's exhibition «imPOSITIONS» at the Art Gallery of Ontario is without doubt the most intense and coherent manifestation of her preoccupation with the idea of identity and the correlative notions of vulnerability and powerlessness we've seen yet. Through four separate series of photographs it coherently articulates different aspects, emotional, psychological and physical, of the theme; this thematic coherence is underscored by the way each series relates to one another through changes in scale and the consistency of the medium, which is black and white photography throughout. The basic situation in each series — Lake's bound body — is subtly reinforced and symbolically enlarged by the settings so as to provoke intense identification on the part of the viewer, the result of what Les Levine has called, «The conceptual process of the artist, the conceptual process of the viewer (overlapping) in such a way that they «lock in», like a rangefinder on a camera.»¹

Levine says elsewhere in the same article for *Camerart*, the catalogue for the group show at Optica in 1974: "The camera artist has to respond to the underlying cultural anxiety of our society. And somehow he also has to shed light on that anxiety. He has to expose that anxiety in such a way that people can see it as an anxiety and not take it to be part of an equilibrium."²

Now this is a call for the artist to be more than a collector of images, whether his interest in these images is voyeuristic or even highly sympathetic. There has been a tendency among photographers to extrapolate from the apparent literalness of the camera image a journalistic pose of detachment, an attempt not to step between the viewer and the intrinsic force of the image. This is reckoning without the voracious capacity of the viewer for exotica from which he implicitly excludes himself. The images are consumed like so many chocolates in a candy box. On the other hand the explicitly self-referential imagery of much "body art" has often alienated the viewer, provoking in him an intense revulsion which he may then attribute to the "sickness" of the artist (from which he dissociates himself).

It seems to me that in the territory of self-referential art, Suzy Lake's work has occupied a kind of middle ground, being neither terribly confessional nor coolly detached. Although she uses herself as her subject, the fact that it is her is not that important in the final image (except perhaps in the early, more autobiographical "Transformation" series). Where it is significant is in the ongoing creative process where actually experiencing the situation is a crucial catalyst for her own understanding of what she is doing. The final image is usually one in which her identity is not insisted upon. Her face is frequently blurred or obscured and the clothing she wears is deliberately neutral. This tends to de-particularize the situation and facilitate the identification of the spectator with the figure in the photos.

Viewer empathy is also encouraged in Lake's work because it is not oriented toward performance, although some of the story-boards or the video tape in this AGO show could have been conceived as performances (though they were not). Performances have a tendency to set up a dramatic space which is charged with the performer's own energy and thus in a way keep the spectator out.

Nevertheless the nature of viewer identification in the work in the present show is very complex and deserves some close attention, which must begin with a thorough description of the works themselves.

The first series consists of ten untitled photographs which form a group because they are all of the same size and show Lake in the same setting, although they do not exactly form a sequence, nor reveal any definite progress in her movements. They are not mural-sized as are the second group of photos and the viewer is inclined to approach each one individually to examine it. The setting is undefined, ambiguous: a worn, bare floor, a shabby wall painted a dark colour that is now flaking and chipped. Lake, dressed neutrally in a light sweater, dark pants and light socks, stands against the wall, bound around the legs, hands and torso. Because of the slow shutter speed of the camera her movements are blurred and we see that she is twisting and turning, struggling against her bonds. All we can make out of her face is the occasional grimace.

In this open undefined space, her small vertical figure suggests her vulnerability. She is placed like a target in a shooting gallery against the wall. So the notion of ambivalence comes in. If she is the target, the victim, is the viewer then somehow the aggressor? We have been implicated in her powerlessness. Technically, the image emphasizes our ambiguous involvement. The low light and slow shutter speed of the hand-held camera have resulted in the blurring of the whole image which creates a sense of dizziness, of vertigo. The softness of focus and the richness of the blacks which have been chemically treated to warm them up convey an hallucinatory, somehow unreal dream-like world. Through the sequence of images time seems to pass yet stands still.

The total effect of this series is one of dislocation. The powerlessness and vulnerability that are indicated by the bands which bind Lake's body refer not so much to physical reality, despite the physical symbol, as emotional reality.

The second series consists of thirteen very large photos, nine on one side of the gallery and four on the other. In every way these are aggressive images. Even their being hung on opposite gallery walls, so that the space in between becomes charged for the spectator as he passes through it, contributes to his feeling of personal implication in their content. While the first series seem to communicate a vaguely sinister, slightly unreal world, these images present a pressingly real space which is fraught with meaning in the context of Lake's situation. Once again she stands bound and struggling, this time at the end of a corridor of storage lockers such as one finds in apartment house basements. Immediately the narrowness of the space in which she stands, bounded on either side by the tall slatted doors of the lockers, at the back by the masonry wall and in front by the position of the camera, sets up an intolerably claustrophobic atmosphere. The sense of prison-like confinement is reinforced by the locks on the lockers (the very fact they are *lockers*, of course, underlining her bondage).

Once again Lake is wearing non-descript clothing which, as well as contributing to a sense of anonymity, registers in the photographs as a medium grey which fits in with the overall grey tonality of the images. This evenness of tonality, and the lack of an apparent ex-

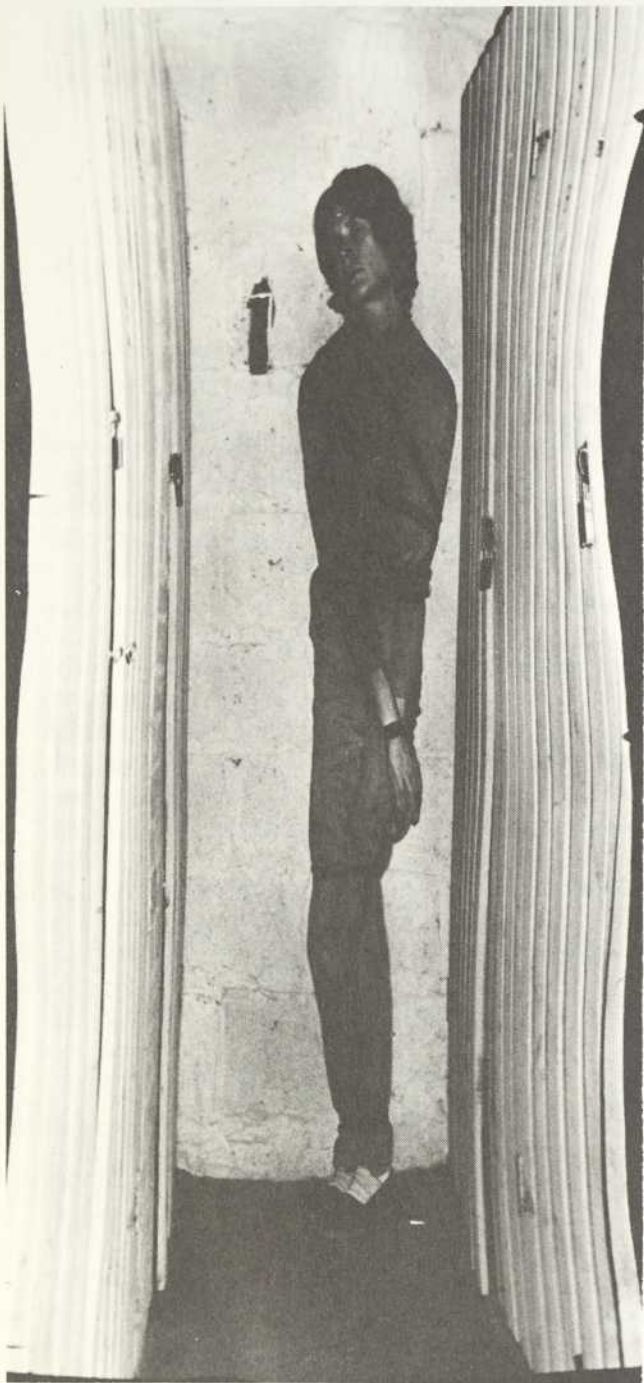
terior light source, suggesting captivity, no exist, is extremely effective in setting up the mood of the works. In other words, the visual aesthetic of these images is subservient to their content, without (and this I think is an important point) being a neutral or even negative quality. The light here eschews both romantic contrasts of dark and light and journalistic haphazardness.

While Lake's work has always been conceptual, in the sense of propositional, her photographs have seldom been merely documentary. She has usually manipulated the images somehow, and this ties in with her desire to represent as clearly and forcefully as possible her intentions. Her use of composite imagery and slow shutter speeds to reflect movement and convey a sense of process are familiar to those who know her "Transformation" series, or the "Choreographed Puppets" works. Here also she has intervened, this time manipulating the image by stretching the negative so that every other photo shows an elongated, attenuated image. As the pictures are hung, a rhythm is set up which itself serves to create a sense of temporal duration.

The problem this time, I think, was to deal with a fairly static situation, while still expressing the kinaesthetic sensations Lake experienced while being bound. The more active jerks and swings of the "Puppet" series lent themselves to the slow shutter technique whereas here it became important to find a visual equivalent for a manipulation almost more psychological than physical. So the tampering with the image, the tortuous elongation of her figure implies the constriction in which no independent movement of the arms and legs is possible as well as being a symbol for the psychological violence of the situation. Moreover, the stretching introduces an undulating twist into the vertical wood slats of the lockers, thus echoing Lake's movements and activating the environment.

The effect on the spectator is one of oppression. The images lined up on either wall, alternating the longer stretched photos with the shorter, untretched ones seem like so many mirrors in an amusement park hall of mirrors. Only we see reflected not ourselves but a grimacing, struggling, bound person. We feel both implicated, being apparently in the place where an aggressor would be, and sympathetic since the images fairly bombard us with information about the *feeling* of confinement.

The third series consists of six sets of four photos hung one beneath the other so as to form a continuous image broken into four segments. The setting is a narrow interior staircase at the top of which we see part of a door. Lake's body, bound in a crouched position to fit the confines of the staircase is seen bumping down the stairs. The slow shutter speed of the camera causes her image to be blurred and we know she is really falling, not just lying on the stairs. The vertical sequence of the photographs in each set suggests a corresponding sequence of movement in the images, although when scrutinized, we find this not to be the case. Her body, in fact, is now at the top, now at the bottom, or in the middle of the stairs in no particular order through the series. Also, the strong visual imagery of the stairs whose shiny metal edge stands out sharply from the murky background, creates an overwhelming sense of unity to the total picture. Nevertheless, the sequencing works to establish a virtual rather than literal passage of time, while the blurr-



IMPOSITIONS, 9 sections, photo mural, 1977 (détail)



ing of Lake's body extends the movement into the present.

This seems a good time to introduce a brief parenthesis regarding the relation of these images to Marey's photographs of the trajectory paths of moving bodies. Despite the different intentions of these and Lake's photographs, (Marey, whose interests were entirely scientific, developed the chronophotograph to advance his research into kinds of physiological movement) they start from similar philosophical positions. Marey's photographs reflect the position then being advanced as a challenge to the results of Muybridge's instantaneous photographs, that time is in reality not a succession of moments but a question of duration. Theories of the 'persistence of vision' came down on the side of the blurred image as the more truthfull one. With Lake's work these theories are, of course, assumed, with the additional reference to aesthetic theories of process. If a single photographic image is not adequate here, and as the serial nature of these images shows it clearly is not, this is not only because of the necessity of documenting movement, but also to make visible the processes behind the images.

But to return to the stair series... Essentially it relates visually to the first series, the rich contrasts of black and white in each being opposed to the even greyness of the locker room works. The variation in lighting in each is more than just the inevitable results of the choice of setting, although it is inherent in this, of course. Here the gorgeousness of the photographs serves, at least initially, to camouflage or rather to counterpoint the real scariness of Lake's situation. If

the other series conveyed the emotional and psychological aspects of powerlessness, this one exploits her sheer physical vulnerability. To a certain extent also, we were confronted before with more symbolical situations; now there has been a move towards a more literal embodiment of the anxiety Lake is dealing with. Here it's a question of pain and the image has to try to avoid alienating the viewer by arousing the defence mechanism of revulsion which I mentioned earlier. The image literally seduces us into an identification with Lake.

The fourth group consists of two sets of three photographs in which Lake lies on a floor bound in a fetal position. The white walls of the room, their bareness, seem to underline the vulnerability of the situation. Of all the pieces, however, this strikes me as the least situational and the most iconic. It communicates the yearning to return to a state prior to all conflict, while just as surely indicating how intolerable such confinement of movement both psychic and physical would be. But because of this iconic quality I believe it to be less successful in the present format than the others. Here in my opinion the sequential repetition of the image seems less necessary, and therefore slightly mechanical.

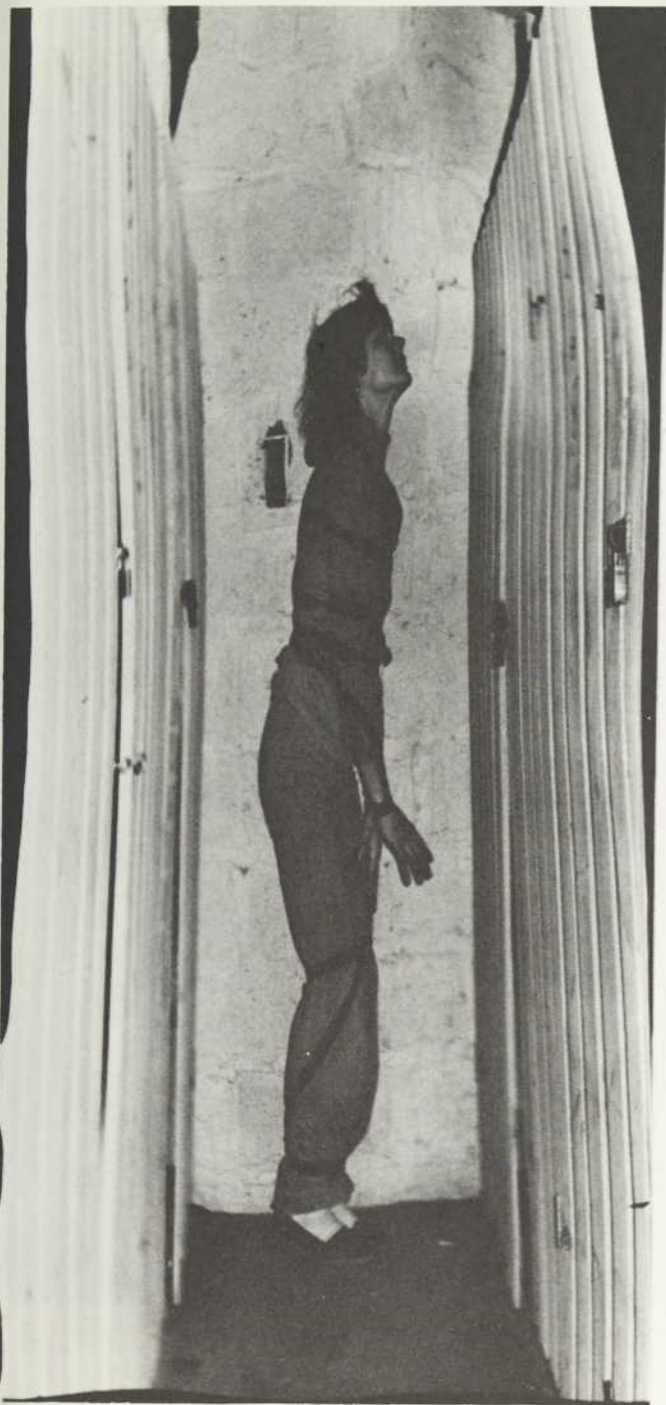
The final work in the show is a video tape from 1975, "Choreography on a Dotted Line". Although earlier, this tape fits into the present show as it explores similar notions of confinement and vulnerability. Thirteen minutes long, it very simply follows Lake as she, lying on the floor, first rools herself up in some one hundred feet of fabric and then unrolls. The situation is made more arduous for her and more mysterious

for the viewer because Lake has set herself the condition of keeping herself framed in the monitor so that her torso, wrapped in layers of material, is virtually all we see until the end. Through the sound track which consists of Lake's panting breathing as she performs her tiring task, an interesting aural dimension is added to the whole exhibition, somehow enlarging the visual struggle depicted.

Having tried as far as possible to describe the works in this show and also to suggest something of the dialogue in which they engage the spectator, I would like to put them into the context of Lake's earlier work and examine the sorts of questions they bring up. Looking over the "corpus", it is clear that while her central preoccupation with identity has remained consistent, the emphasis has shifted somewhat.

An early work like the "Natural Way to Draw" storyboard where Lake symbolically erases her features with white makeup such as the mime wears, and then proceeds to "draw" her face and finally apply ordinary makeup has a dual intention. On the one hand she is dealing with a sort of role-playing which is a universal cultural phenomenon: we must "put on our face" before we go out; we "put on different faces" for different people. On the other hand, she is attempting to find a plastic metaphor for the fundamental creative situation of bringing something out of nothing. The interesting thing is that by using the image of the mask she is poking around the notion of what is real, both in the art and the non-art sense.

But the whole thing has at the same time a tongue in cheek, witty aspect, as do the results of the permuta-



tion and combinations of Lake's features with those of her friends in the "Transformation" series. In the gamut from the witty to the oppressive image in Lake's work, the "Choreographed Puppets" seem to lie midway. In as much as the puppet is associated with the theatre and with playfulness, its connotations are light-hearted. Yet the puppet is also the controlled, the manipulated, and it is precisely the image of powerlessness and surrender it evokes that Lake is trying to get at. The surrender has two aspects: firstly, the voluntary surrender involved in her initiating the project and getting into the puppet's harness; secondly, the involuntary surrender as her body twitches and turns in response to the jerks of the straps.

That this series should be called "Choreographies" is significant, for what is dance, or art for that matter, but ritualized movement or gesture? That is, these are made meaningful by the imposition of a scheme, an intention that is distinguished from pure motor impulse by a directed awareness of passage through time or space. It is interesting that Degas who was often the observer of the ebb and flow of contemporary life, interested himself in the ballet precisely because of the constraints it placed on the body, its artificiality. Nevertheless, Lake's intentions are not formalist but didactic. Instead of choreography, or planned movement, we get information about movement that is literally in the hands of others.

Generally speaking, in the current work we find a move away from the more explicit theatricality of the puppet series. Yet we are clearly not dealing with a "real" situation, nor does Lake intend any such illusion, for she is not a journalist. But to get at the kind of

anxiety she is talking about, whose implicit terms are freedom and unfreedom, she has had to find an exaggerated activity which will manage to transcend the neutral state, to destroy the mundane equilibrium of everyday life which disguises that anxiety. At the same time the viewer must be able to accept the authenticity of the situation.

So we take the bonds and the settings in these photographs as symbolic. What is it then that validates them? Herbert Read once said that: "To the human person himself his own coherence is an organic coherence intuitively based on the real world of sensation."³ Thus Lake, by using her own body and attempting to make real her physical sensations through the camera's slow shutter speed, stretching the negatives, etc. communicates through the viewer's empathetic reaction via his own body. As Merleau-Ponty has observed: "It is through my body that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things'. The meaning of a gesture thus 'understood' is not behind it, it is intermingled with the structure of the world outlined by the gesture, and which I take up on my own account."⁴

The most recent work thus enjoys a more intensely empathetic relationship with the viewer. Though still didactic and quasi-narrative in structure, it tends, moreover, to implicate him as the other. In the "Puppet" or the "Transformation" series the other was given to us, being actually present in the image: now we can imagine ourselves in this role. Hence the ambiguity of the relationship, and our awareness that in some way, the bonds are self-imposed.

A colour work in the Sable-Castelli Gallery (Lake's Toronto dealer, who is showing some smaller works at the same time as the Art Gallery of Ontario show) provides an interesting contrast to the "Impositions" pieces. While the others are didactic, this one is lyrical. We see three views of Lake jumping in what appears to be a garden, and the camera has swung up in a movement that echoes her own, so that the whole image is blurred. There can be no doubt that, while the photos are undeniably attractive, they lack the tension of the pieces at the AGO, as if the psychological drama of the latter were indispensable for them to speak to us. One wonders if an actual image of transcendence is possible or whether it can only be implicitly present within the context of the work itself, through the conforming of the project to the possible and the constant attempt to extend the limits of the latter. ■

FOOTNOTES

1. Les Levine, "Camera Art", *Camerart*, exhibition catalogue of group show at Optica, 1974, p. 17.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3. Quoted by Harold Rosenberg, *The Tradition of the New*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), p. 135.
4. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 186.

Audio-visual installations, when they're effectively produced, can seem so simple.

The two new works installed January 15 — February 12 at the Vancouver Art Gallery, one each by Noel Harding and Eric Cameron, are examples. Each has a room to itself, at opposite ends of the gallery, bracketing as it were the other three exhibitions currently on display (Alex Katz, Adolph Gottlieb, and the National Gallery's ANOTHER DIMENSION II) and each involves video as well as other elements. Even though these pieces were produced under considerable pressures of time and distance, and incorporate some complex issues and perceptions, the works' cleanness of presentation, their insistence on quality and clarity on all levels, make them surprisingly accessible and yet intriguing for viewers. Technology has been made to serve the artists' needs and ends.

Eric Cameron's KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE — AND LAWN comprises three video monitors placed at eye level on sculpture stands, and one piece of garden-variety grass growing in a clay pot, on a similar stand. These objects are located carefully in an apparently empty room, each of the monitors facing outwards at an angle so that the screens of all three cannot be seen from any single point in the room. What is actually seen on each monitor screen seems to be the view "through" that screen... as if the picture tube were a window rather than an emitter of images. The images in question are all separate closed-circuit video loops, shot on location in the Vancouver gallery precisely from the spot in which they are now placed, and on first glance one can suppose that the views are "live", the result of some hidden closed-circuit camera recording them for simultaneous playback. This is not the case, however, for the images are not real-time at all, but instead are highly-edited assemblages showing a woman, elegant in dress and high heels, walking across the floor, through the doors, back and forth in front of the (once-present) camera. But as soon as the model (Marlene) reaches the camera's view, she is cleanly and promptly edited out of the picture. The sound for the images is coincident with the picture and much more "visible", in the sense that we can keep track of the sounds relevant to the series of actions even though we cannot see the different pictures in all of the monitors at once. It is only the fragments of sound that assure us that we really did see her, albeit fleetingly.

There are words, parts of sentences, between Marlene and the artist (Cameron) behind the camera, but these too are so fragmentary as to be mere signs of the conversation we are not permitted to overhear and the people we are not quite permitted to see. The tease is specific, and the viewer watches all the more closely in his attempt to sort out the activities, to see with his eyes as well as with his ears. In the end, however, the edits are quicker than the eye and the viewer is left to complete the information by guesswork.

The potted lawn is another kind of tease: a witness to the original action (we can see it in place in its recorded videotape, on the monitor matching up with its present location), and a remainder from the past more complete than the fragments of Marlene's image and sound. LAWN specifies location and duration, continuity, and also the sort of determined whimsy that would put a bit of live greenery on a sculpture stand in an art gallery. Perhaps the whimsy is in the mind of the viewer, but LAWN seems so curiously juxtaposed, so surprising in the otherwise greyed and austere surroundings, so silent and self-possessed in the face of fleeting glimpses of video image/sound, that it serves to underline the context and content of the rest of the piece.

The gallery is unremittingly grey: dark grey painted plywood floor, white walls, grey and white video images, grey sculpture stands. All the machinery and wires are hidden. Only the crack of heels on floor, the slam of door, and the daub of colour represented by clay pot and green LAWN, serve as punctuation. The punctuation livens up the text.



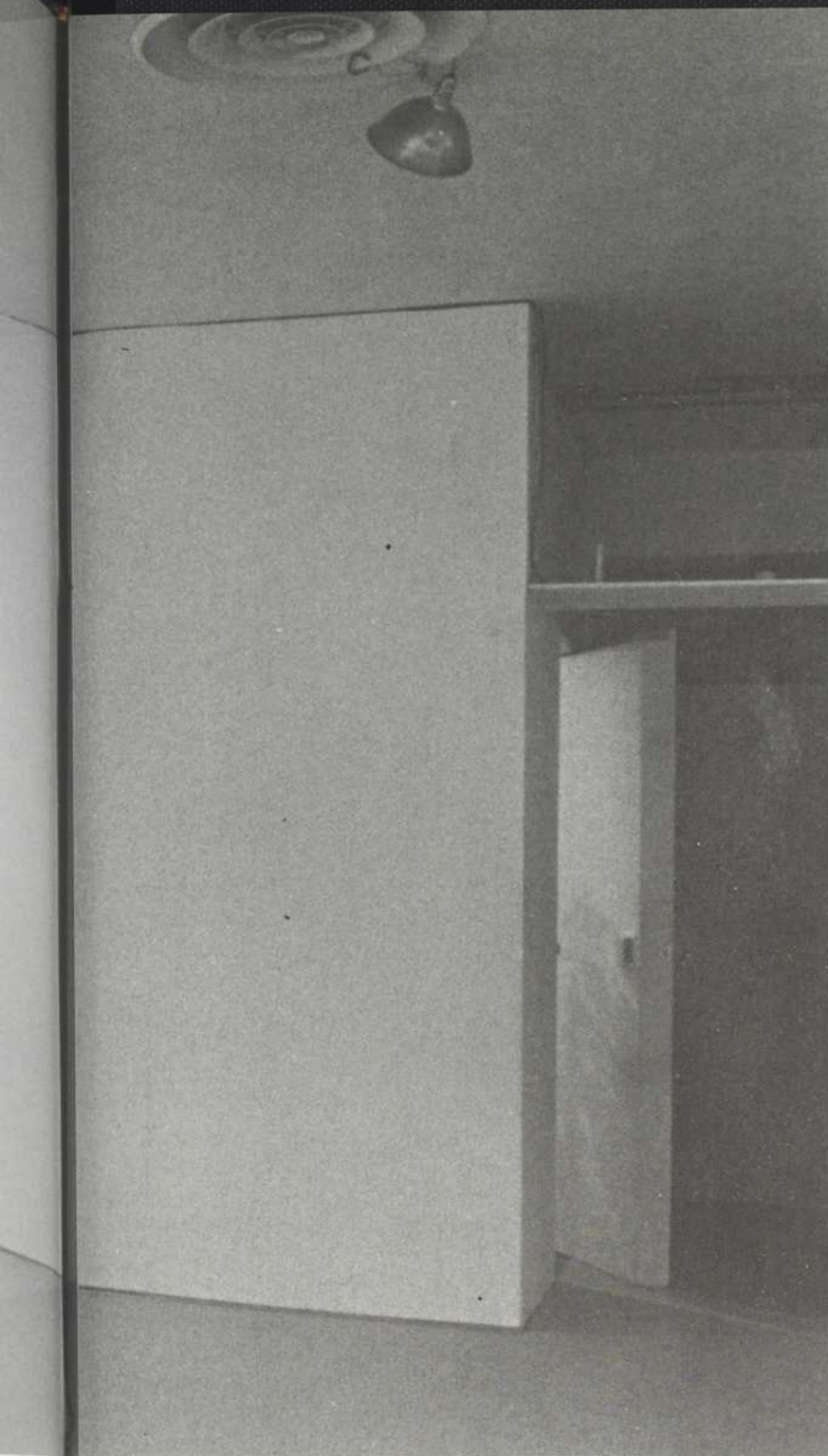
KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE-AND LAWN, by Eric Cameron, 1978, video installation at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Temporal Realities: ERIC CAMERON and NOEL

by Peggy Gale

KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE — AND LAWN, by Eric Cameron, 1978.





Noel Harding's ONCE UPON THE IDEA OF TWO has more variety of parts, and offers a different sort of complexity to the viewer. The piece is made up physically of a large paper screen (about 10 x 16 feet), with two hanging gauze panels to one side at the front; a wooden chair with blue pyjama top hanging on the outside corner is in place just off-centre, in front of the screen. A live video camera sits next to the film projector and connects with a playback monitor to the right of the large film projection screen. Behind the paper screen, out of sight to those watching the film, is a second video monitor playing a pre-recorded two-minute tape of Harding standing in front of the film installation and introducing the film contents:

I packed these pyjamas in my suitcase to bring them here. I also flew this chair on the airplane so you could sit on it.

Ron had come up to the studio to fix the pipes and he was quite busy but he was in a good mood. I asked him to rehearse being Barbara's portrait although he had never met Barbara. I asked him to pretend to sit on the chair.

Barbara had arrived late. She had to pay a traffic ticket and she wasn't in a particularly good mood. I asked her to pose as my portrait. I didn't tell her that Ron had pretended to be her. I asked her to sit on the chair.

There are three sources, then, of visual information apart from the real objects in the gallery space: the film on the large paper screen, the live video to the right of this screen, and the recorded video loop behind the film screen. And there are two sources of recorded sound: first, the (all non-verbal) noise of footsteps, rustling paper, moving objects in the film, coming from a speaker next to the film projector, and second, Harding's explanation of the events leading up to this installation, which seems to come from behind the film image and acts as a sort of voice-over for the film. The fact that the lengths of these two sound loops are different makes the sound mix asymmetrical and unpredictable, and adds richness and complexity to the image relationships.

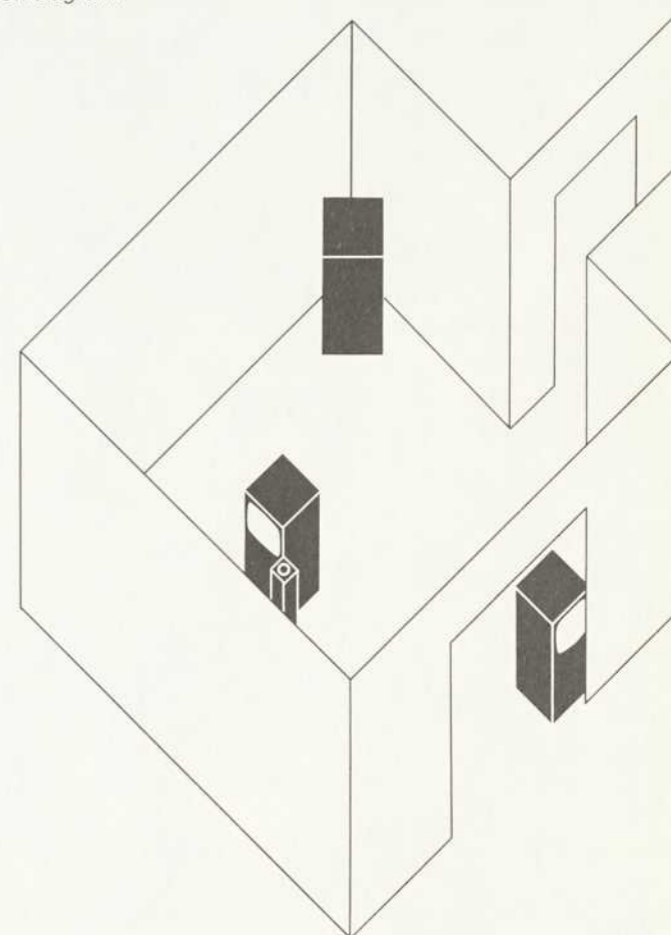
The wraparound sense of sound, coming from two distinct locations and bearing two separate types of information, gives the viewer a feeling that he is right in the middle of all this activity, and this feeling is intensified by the type of activity taking place in the film. A total of six people appear in the film, including Harding, and the action is quick, purposeful, rather humorous: striding back and forth, moving props, rolling up the paper screen (prefiguring the screen presently used for projection) which was the backdrop for the filming in Harding's studio. The gallery viewer finds himself in the same location he would have if the film were being shot *right then*, and the large paper screen, the gauze panels, the chair and pyjama top are all there as props in the gallery as well as being there on film. This undeniably enhances the three-dimensionality and sense of perceptual space being explored within the normally two-dimensional film situation. The interplay of scale set up by the film's life-size images is underlined by the action of shadows, both actual and filmed, as they grow and diminish with distance from the paper screen.

The reality/illusion interface is further explored if one sits on the chair placed as a prop in front of the paper screen, as Harding has suggested. One is aware of all the activity on the paper screen, as people seem to pass back and forth behind the chair, but one can also see portions of this activity on the gauze panels just in front and to one side of the chair and screen. And the entire picture — film, chair, gauze, and live viewer sitting on the chair — is shown live on the video monitor and can be seen clearly from the position on the chair. Getting up from that chair, and seeing the film image (on the video monitor) of Barbara still sitting on that chair, is a little uncanny: rather like seeing one's body depart from one's soul... and live on video! The scale and texture of film images, live people, filmed or real shadows, are disconcertingly similar when reported on the video tube.

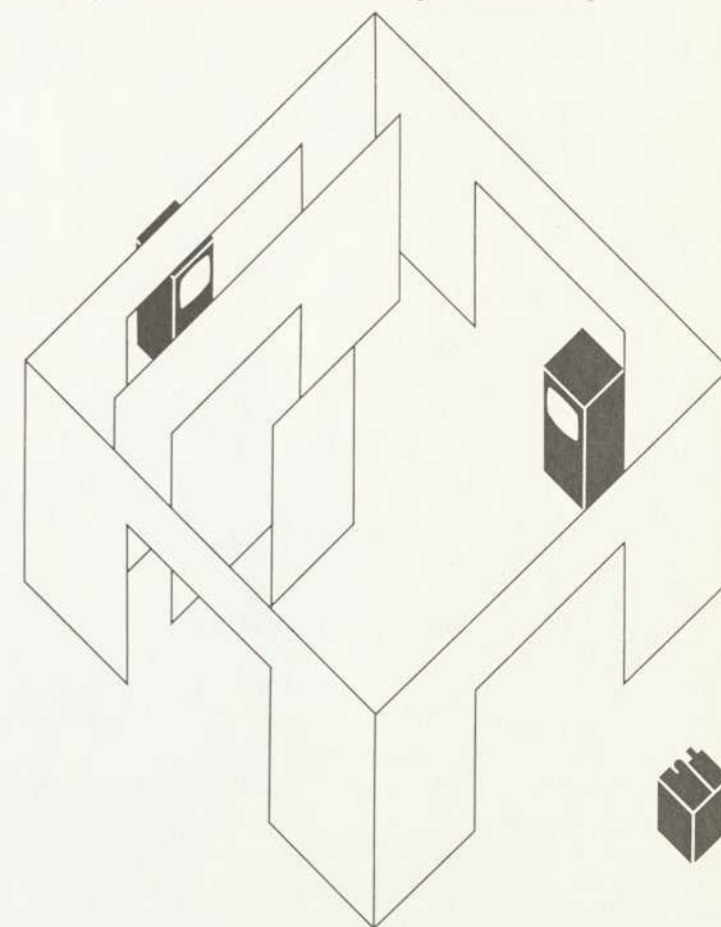
KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE — AND LAWN and ONCE UPON THE IDEA OF TWO were conceived separately, and at a distance. The works were not originally planned for concurrent exhibition. And yet their appearance together at Vancouver (and subsequent exhibition during 1978 at Winnipeg, Ottawa and Halifax) suggest a number of points of comparison, both in intention and in effect.

In both the Cameron and Harding pieces, pre-recorded loops are used; Cameron has three separate video loops, recorded on location in the space they presently occupy, and Harding has a two-minute tape loop, a seven-minute film loop, and a live video camera-monitor closed circuit. Both the installations are full of activity: purposeful, noisy, yet somehow arbitrary. The interaction of people and space is necessary to create the illusion of present and ongoing activity, and in both cases the illusion is highly successful. Cameron has re-presented the *area* of recording, and Harding has re-presented the *activity* of recording; both have employed props from the original situation to heighten the illusion of currency

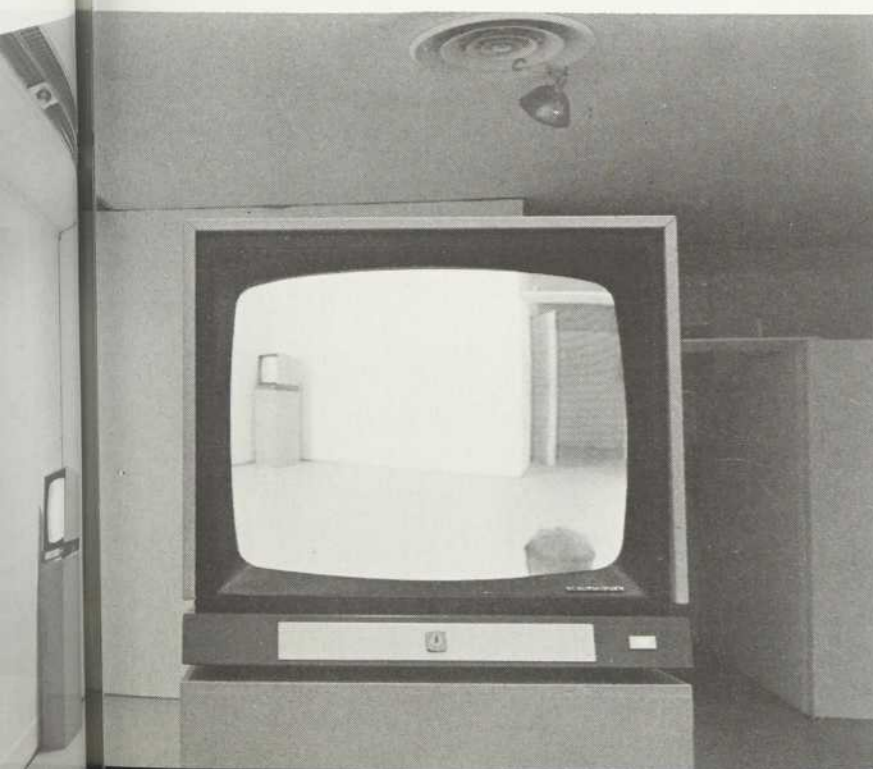
Keeping Marlene out of the Picture — and Lawn, Eric Cameron. Installation diagram.

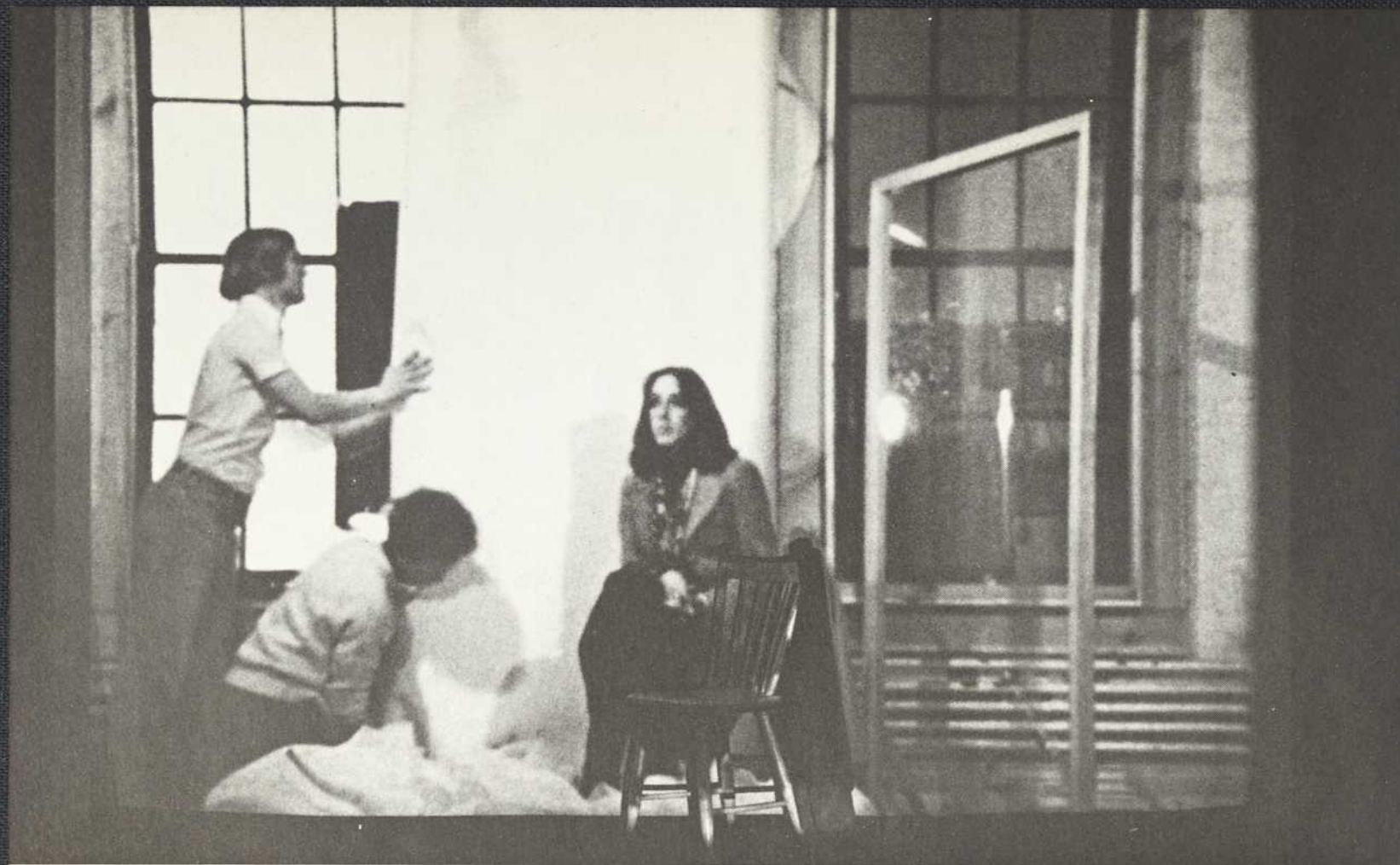


Once Upon the Idea of Two Noel Harding. Installation diagram.



es: and NOEL HARDING





ONCE UPON THE IDEA OF TWO, by Noel Harding, 1978, video installation at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Photo Jim Gorman/The Vancouver Art Gallery.

for this recording-activity. Traffic patterns are maintained, as a viewer is now placed naturally in the position he would have occupied if the filming and/or taping were taking place there at that moment; the physical reality suggests a temporal reality and coincidence that is quite disarming. In both cases, SOUND is used particularly effectively, to recreate the presence of people now departed; the gallery viewer is surrounded by sound, and the generators of that sound effect may be filled in by the imagination. One does not feel alone in the gallery. Moreover, the viewer feels his presence was planned from the outset; he finds himself playing the role assigned to him by the artist, and playing it naturally and without effort. There is a curious comfort attendant to this sense of care and correctness, this feeling of doing what is expected, naturally.

Yet the viewer's position in the two installations is quite different. In Harding's ONCE UPON THE IDEA OF TWO the viewer easily assumes a role as member of the audience, both in the gallery space and, implicitly, in the original recording as well. The studio environment of the making of the film, the ordinariness of the events enacted, the numbers of people involved, the colour presentation in life-size scale, all help to make the content of the piece seem very public. And the normal traffic patterns in the gallery, the location of doors and projector/camera relative to the body of the installation, further assert the logic of the viewer's presence. The use of props from the filming (chair, gauze panels etc, as discussed above) and Harding's spoken encouragement to sit on the chair, combine with the viewer's reappearance on closed-circuit video to emphasize the viewer as necessary participant in the completed whole.

With Cameron's KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE the sense is rather different. Rather than feel a welcome part of studio bustle, the feeling here is that one's proper place as viewer is on the outside of the activity, around the gallery perimeter, looking-but-not-touching. Marlene has kept out of the picture (unaware as well as out of sight, one might surmise) and the viewer is psychologically barred from interrupting what is essentially a private interaction between two people. To walk into the centre of the gallery where KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE was recorded would seem a violation of that space, an intrusion on territory occupied by Marlene as model and by Cameron as artist. The viewer is subtly aware of his role as voyeur, and finds his response including a singular sense of self-awareness as well.

Cameron's piece has less surface complexity, but one feels the dense inner core of the work. He is working with layers of time, splitting and juxtaposing occurrences in synthetic time sequences that are very controlled and sophisticated. He has removed himself from physical appearance in KEEPING MARLENE OUT OF THE PICTURE — AND LAWN, but his mental processes and visual/temporal perceptions give the piece its logic and its shape.

Harding on the other hand employs a manipulation of space. Time considerations are important in an assessment of ONCE UPON THE IDEA OF TWO, but the central ingredient is spatial juxtaposition: the studio ambient with its paper backdrop is revealed to be that of the gallery, and the juxtapositions of public and private spaces, film and video representations, differences in scale and texture and colour, are all discussed in this "reproduced reality".

The two works operate on several levels, and the artists are fully aware of their task and intentions. These are subtle and elegant pieces, and their simplicity of first appearance is only an invitation to a closer investigation. ■

cinéma

INDEPENDENT FILM, EXPERIMENTAL FILM, AVANT-GARDE FILM: A CLARIFICATION

by John W. Locke

I
The phrases "Independent Film," "Experimental Film" and "Avant-Garde Film" are often used interchangeably in English. I have tended to follow this practice of being somewhat sloppy when using these phrases: When someone asked me what is the difference between these types of film, I would respond that there are not three different types of films, rather there are three different phrases used to refer to one type of film. Recently I have begun to question my own thinking about these three phrases, and this essay is a consequence of that thinking.

Phrases in a language are used to talk about the world and often, but not always, thinking about the phrases we use to talk about the world can increase our understanding of the world. Language did not come into existence by fiat; new phrases come into use gradually to help us deal with the world and seemingly synonymous phrases can sometimes be discovered to have meanings differing in subtle and interesting ways. The related phrases may have come into use to make it possible to draw fine distinctions, and these distinctions can be valuable ones to understand. A surprising aspect of closely related phrases is that even though they may be seen to be subtly different in meaning when we think about them carefully, they may still be in general used without precision. There is a gap between the potential for precision built into language and the careless way in which it is used.

One of the methods I used to approach the independent — experimental — avant-garde distinction in film was to ask whether these distinctions were made in other arts. Is there independent music, experimental music, avant-garde music? Is there independent theatre, experimental theatre, avant-garde theatre? My method was the traditional one of armchair philosophy: I thought about these questions. I also discussed them with others and read criticism of the arts looking for uses of these phrases. This thinking left me with two questions which seemed so curious that I want to pursue them: Why is there no experimental painting? Experimental theatre and experimental music seem to exist, at least in the sense of being discussed, but experimental painting is not mentioned. The second question is why is there no independent music or theatre or painting? In fact why is the only "independent" art form independent film (and perhaps independent video)?

II

Why is there no experimental painting? Simply put,

the answer is that there is not enough non-experimental painting. To understand this, think about what the world of painting is like: Painters tend to struggle for years before they receive any income from their work. They see their work in relation to earlier painting in the history of art and in relation to work exhibited in galleries and museums. They know that they may be quite successful in terms of critical responses and gallery shows and yet still not be able to support themselves through the sale of their paintings. Success might include being able to make a living by painting, but unqualified success would be to become part of the history of the medium, to be in museum collections and ultimately to be in the art history books. Unqualified success would be to produce work which has consequences, which changes the direction of painting, which influences. Money is nice, even necessary, but to be an important figure in the history of the art of painting is the goal.

This sketch of the world of painting is idealized: It is of considerable importance to a painter not to starve. But the sketch contains a core of truth. Painters do see their success and their work in terms of the past and future of their medium. Painting is not something one decides to do as a career offering good prospects for future employment like accounting or engineering. To be a painter is to be an artist, unless of course one is a house painter.

Actually house painters cause no difficulties for the understanding of the world of painting which I have just offered. No one confuses house painters with artists. Similarly a billboard painter or a painter producing a representation of a product for an advertisement creates no confusion. We know that these workers are painting, but they are not painters in the sense I have sketched. These painters are commercial artists, rather than simply artists. Language reflects the world; our phrase for referring to these painters and their work comes equipped with the qualifier needed to make the needed distinction. My point is that these commercial painters are easily distinguished from the painters I have been discussing. A critic, or even a journalist, writing about the state of painting in Quebec does not need to explain that it is not house painting or advertising painting or billboard painting which will be discussed. The qualification would be superfluous, redundant. We know that painting as a fine art is to be discussed.

So much for the world of painting, but what about theatre, music and film? The world of theatre contrasts with that of painting in significant ways. Think about the Broadway theatre in New York. Most of this theatre

is explicitly commercial: It was written, produced and directed with an aim towards entertaining a large audience and making a profit. A play will be opened in a preview and then rewritten if the audience does not like it. There is a large audience for theatre, and this mass audience is seeking entertainment. A typical theatre audience in New York would consist largely of businessmen and their wives looking for a night's entertainment and tourists determined to experience the New York theatre with its stars and spectacle. This audience would not know what you were talking about if you mentioned art. They would not know the name of the director of the play they were seeing.

I am inclined to refer to this type of theatre as commercial theatre, but this is not a standard way of talking about it. The Broadway theatre is Theatre. This commercial theatre has a place in contemporary critical writing about performed theatre at least equal to the place given to historical works or contemporary non-commercial works. The front page of a newspaper's art and entertainment section — notice the title — will not distinguish between Neil Simon, Richard Foreman and Brecht. It is as if the latest Molinari show was critically considered side-by-side with the latest Labatt's billboard. It would never happen in dealing with painting; it is the ordinary situation in theatre.

If music is considered, the situation closely parallels that of theatre. There is certainly an entrenched classical music establishment, but there are also "pops" orchestras, rock and Muzak. We are surrounded by music, most of which has little to do with music as an art. Again it is commercial music, and it dominates in terms of critical writings and concert hall bookings. Turn on your radio and listen as you swing the dial from one end to the other. You will hear what I mean. The music world is like the world of theatre and unlike the world of painting.

If you begin to read contemporary criticism of theatre and music, you will notice that experimental theatre and experimental music are discussed. I understand this usage of "experimental" to be the critics' way of clarifying what they are talking about by specifying what they are not talking about. They are not discussing the commercial theatre and music which I just indicated dominated performance and critical writing in these areas. Experimental theatre and experimental music exist because non-experimental theatre and non-experimental music not only exist but dominate. At this point I have just given a reason why experimental theatre and experimental music exist, but I have not discussed what characterizes these forms in a positive

sense. They are not commercial forms, but what are they? One method of approaching this question is to return to the discussion of painting, remembering that the phrase "experimental painting" is not in use because it is not needed. It is not needed because compared to music and theatre, all painting is in effect experimental painting.

The aspect of painting on which I want to concentrate is its tendency to be about its own medium. By this I mean that paintings, whether representational or non-representational, are now seen to be about painting more than they are about the world. If we want to learn about the world, we look at the world, prod it with an experiment or read a book; if we look at a painting, our primary interest is in the painting's organized forms and its relation to other paintings. Of course we may get information about, and understanding of, the world from looking at a painting, but this information and understanding is not in itself sufficient to account for our interest in painting. Write an essay about what you learned about the world by looking at a painting. My prediction is that it will be a pretty flimsy essay. If your response is that you gained ineffable knowledge from looking at a painting, my only response is this: Ineffable knowledge has always seemed like a non-sense concept to me.

I have always thought that the extreme lack of content, this concentration on its own medium, was one of the reasons for the limited popularity of non-representational painting. When you stand in front of a non-representational painting, you either appreciate it as a painting or you will not appreciate it. There are no learning/understanding games to play to amuse yourself as there are in front of a representational painting. For example people with no sensibility for painting can amuse themselves in front of a Bruegel, the Elder, with no difficulty, but they would not be able to find anything to do in front of an Ellsworth Kelly.

But even representational paintings are primarily appreciated as objects which are about the medium of painting rather than about the world. Something has obviously gone wrong with a method of appreciating a painting which can equally well be based on seeing a black and white reproduction as it can on seeing the original painting. Most content based appreciation of representational paintings can be based on examining a reproduction and thus seem to be an enervated appreciation.

If I am correct and painting is in general appreciated as an art form which is about its own medium, so what? What does this have to do with experimental film? Actually when I think about other forms such as music and theatre I do find an interesting connection with painting. The music and theatre which are referred to as experimental music and experimental theatre are precisely those examples of music and theatre which are most explicitly about their own medium. To call music and theatre experimental is to claim that they share with painting the characteristic of being about their own mediums. Taking this one step further, the same thing can be said about film: Experimental films are those films which are primarily appreciated as being about their own medium, as being about film. Thus the final results of thinking about the question "Why is there no experimental painting?" is that I have reached an understanding of an essential characteristic of experimental film, and I have come to understand a particular way in which painting, experimental music, experimental theatre and experimental film are related.

III

Why is there no independent music or theatre? Why is the only independent art form film? One of the characteristics of independent film is that it is not associated with the major production companies. Paramount cannot make an independent film, nor can the National Film Board. Independent films are made by individuals or groups who raise their own

production money outside the financial channels normally used for commercial films. The funds may come from foundations, friends, or just working. A loan might be a possible source, but it would not likely be a bank loan. A bank would be looking for a good risk and collateral, neither of which can be offered by an independent film. Independent films are almost certain financial failures. Money is contributed to independent films rather than invested in them.

All of this sounds quite bleak, but the bleakness of their finances is of the central characteristics of independent films. There is no coherent style or aesthetic concern found in all independent films. There is however a concern not to be swallowed up by the major production companies; there is a concern to remain financially and aesthetically independent.

The control exercised by the large production companies is one of the central reasons for the existence of independent film as a distinct type of film. The large companies have the money, the equipment, the technicians and effectively control over the theatres where films are shown. It is amazing that independent film exists at all as an identifiable phenomenon. One would think that industrial films would have gained absolute dominance. There are no more independent automobile manufacturers, and independent supermarkets, electrical companies and railroads seem to be fast disappearing. But independent film survives.

Actually I think that the dominance of film by the big money companies is one of the reasons for there being something called independent film. If you consider arts such as music and theatre, you will see that powerful financial forces are involved. Even so there have always been active musical groups functioning on a much smaller scale. There are the major orchestras and record companies on the one hand, but there are a multitude of stable choral and chamber groups on the other hand. Similarly there is the Broadway Theatre, but there have always been active regional and local theatres. In music and theatre the major organizations may dominate, but they do not threaten to completely overwhelm. The individual artist can still exist without such great difficulty, and I think this possibility was why nothing equivalent to an independent film movement has existed in music or theatre. It was not necessary.

In film the major companies did threaten to completely overwhelm. It was extremely difficult for an individual to make a film and virtually impossible to get a theatrical showing for an independently produced film. It was in response to this situation that a movement referred to an independent film came into existence. The organizations which are associated with independent film make it possible for individuals and groups to have access to equipment, technical help, means of distribution and public screening facilities. Independent film came into existence to prevent the major film companies from succeeding in completely overwhelming the individual artist.

IV

Avant-Garde Art is somewhat of a misnomer: It is art which will initially be understood by many to be so much in advance of art that it is not art. A few, including those who have bestowed on it the name of avant-garde painting, film or whatever, have had the foresight to recognize it as art. At a later point in time, this Avant-Garde Art will likely become simply art. It will not need the adjective "avant-garde" to remind people that it is a type of art which they may have difficulty recognizing as art.

Avant-Garde Film is always a type of Experimental Film and Experimental Film consists of those works which can best be understood and appreciated as being about their own medium. Within experimental film there is a much smaller group of films which can hardly be understood and appreciated at all. Some of these films which are almost beyond our understanding and sensibility are avant-garde films.

Interestingly, "avant-garde" appears to be a title which is bestowed on works by someone other than their creator. For an artist to say that "I make experimental films" sounds perfectly all right to me, but "I make avant-garde films" sounds strange. It sounds strange in the way that saying "I make good films" sounds awkward. This awkwardness of claiming to make avant-garde works is consistent with my understanding of how works come to be called "avant-garde"; becoming an avant-garde work requires that someone other than its creator understands and appreciates the work.

Another characteristic of avant-garde works is that they are usually produced by persons who are already accepted as artists, but who are producing works which are difficult to appreciate. For example, a young unknown filmmaker producing a radically unusual and difficult work would probably not be thought of as producing an avant-garde work because no one would consider the work seriously enough to bestow the title. The work would be dismissed as simply bad. However if Michael Snow produces a work which no one initially seems to understand, appreciate or like, the work will not be dismissed so cavalierly. The work will exist in a respectable state of aesthetic limbo until our, or at least one critic's, sensibility or understanding catches up with the work.

V

At points in this essay I have discussed words and their usage in language as a means towards gaining an understanding of these words. I now want to be precise about my intention in doing this: My aim has been to clarify our understanding of these concepts and one of the ways I have gone about doing this is discussing the relations between language and the world. I chose this method because it happens to be one of the ways in which I think about this kind of problem and because I think it is an effective way of guiding you through a reasoning process. However, I want to be clear that I am not discussing the history of the use of language. If it should be discovered that a specific person first coined the phrase "Independent Film" and that it was first used on a specific date and that it was used to mean something other than what I have indicated, I say fine. This information would be historically interesting, but it does not affect what I am discussing. I am discussing a clarification of our understanding of the relation between Independent Film, Experimental Film and Avant-Garde Film that can be used now. I am not discussing history. I am not offering definitions. If necessary, I would say that I am proposing a new rational clarification of the three concepts rather than reporting on their past.

In summary form, these are some of the relations between the three concepts:

Independent Film is a broad grouping based on the economics of film production. It includes both fiction and non-fiction films, experimental films and completely conventional films. In theory, any type of film could be produced as an independent film, so long as it was made by an individual or group working outside the system of film production companies.

Experimental Film is a small subcategory of film. It includes those films which are primarily understood and appreciated as being about the film medium itself. Almost always these are also independent films, but there are exceptions. For example Norman McLaren makes non-independent experimental films at the National Film Board.

Avant-Garde Film is a small subcategory of experimental Film. It consists of experimental films which go beyond the ability that most of us have to understand and appreciate them, but nevertheless are understood and appreciated by some one other than their creators. Who can convey this status of being avant-garde is an unresolved issue, at least in this essay. Avant-Garde films are virtually always independent films but in theory there could be a non-independent avant-garde film. ■



CLAUDE CHAMBERLAND

Entrevue avec Claude Chamberland réalisée par France Morin et Chantal Pontbriand.

PARACHUTE: La Coopérative des cinéastes indépendants de Montréal est née à peu près en même temps que d'autres coopératives, comme celle de New York?

CLAUDE CHAMBERLAND: Non, celle de New York est née avant, je ne sais pas les dates exactes, vers 1964. On a été, je pense, la première au Canada, ensuite Toronto a suivi de près, en 1967 aussi. La Coopérative, c'est Dimitri Eipides qui l'a façonnée en 1967. Il y avait rassemblé une quinzaine de films. La mise-sur-pied s'est avérée un processus lent. Au début de la Coopérative, il y a eu une première salle de cinéma, le Centre du film underground située au Review Theatre, rue de Maisonneuve, coin Saint-Marc. Là, à toutes les semaines, pendant trois ans, on a montré des films, jusqu'en 1970... Le cinéma comme tel a ouvert en avril 1968 puis, il a fermé à l'été 1970. À toutes les semaines, toutes les fins de semaine, il y avait cinq projections, choisies dans un répertoire de tout ce qui se passait dans la production indépendante, surtout expérimentale, un peu socio-politique, nous avons invité une quarantaine de cinéastes: Adolphe Mekas, les frères Kuchar, Maurice Amar, les gars de la coopérative de Rome, du Japon, les différents groupes qui passaient par New York, nous les invitations à venir présenter leurs films.

PAR.: Dimitri était cinéaste, toi aussi?

C.C.: Non, moi j'étais dans la musique. J'étais chanteur dans un groupe, Les Soeurs de l'Opéra, un groupe assez anarchique. J'étais toujours dans des combines non commerciales, j'étais vraiment anti-commercial. J'ai rencontré dans un party deux Grecs, Dimitri Eipides et Dimitri Spentzos. Spentzos est resté six mois, il venait du cinéma commercial. Il a appris tout du cinéma non commercial à travers Eipides. Eipides, lui, venait de New York directement lors de son arrivée à Montréal en 1967, il a tout appris de Marie Menken à la coopérative de New York. Ensuite il a habité deux ans à San Francisco où il a côtoyé les différents noyaux qui ont débuté l'underground.

PAR.: Quand le cinéma a fermé sur la rue de Maisonneuve, comment vous êtes-vous réorientés?

C.C.: Cela a été très difficile. Il y avait des semaines où on avait des programmes plus faciles, il y avait plus de monde. Les programmes plus faciles finançaient les plus difficiles, l'expérimentation.

PAR.: C'était quoi, un programme facile?

C.C.: Par exemple, les frères Kuchar, plus narratifs qui avaient une ligne dramatique, kitsch, comparativement aux expériences structurales, formalistes. Aussi, on était plus couvert par la presse pour les programmes faciles.

PAR.: À ce moment-là, quelle était la conjoncture à Montréal pour le cinéma?

C.C.: Il n'y avait absolument rien comme film indépendant, il n'y avait rien eu à part quelques projections d'une société de films ou d'un particulier.

PAR.: Est-ce que vous aviez l'impression de développer un public?

C.C.: On a développé un public. Ce qui a été intéressant avec le Centre du film underground, c'est qu'à cause de la variété de films, on attirait toutes sortes de gens qui étaient ennuyés par le cinéma commercial. Il y a évidemment des gens qui ne revenaient pas à cause des programmations plus difficiles. La place était très ouverte. Finalement, on a été obligé de quitter, à cause du loyer, on avait énormément de dettes. C'est à ce moment que l'on a commencé une collaboration avec les musées, on a commencé à faire des programmes trois, quatre mois par année avec le Musée des beaux-arts. Aussi, presque en même temps, en 1971, on a ouvert le Cinéma parallèle, à l'Association des sculpteurs du Québec, ils avaient une galerie appelée la Galerie Espace.

PAR.: Mais vous aviez quand même, entre 1967 et 1971, assuré une programmation continue.

C.C.: Entre 1967 et 1970, à toutes les semaines, 52 fins de semaine pendant trois ans, et à partir de 1970 pendant trois, quatre mois, il y a toujours eu des présentations de films indépendants, à toutes les années.

PAR.: Est-ce que vous aviez établi un centre de distribution?

C.C.: À partir de 1968-69, on a fait un catalogue, avec environ une cinquantaine de films. On a maintenant environ 600 films. Aussi, en 1969 on a fait une tournée en Europe, on a couvert neuf pays en deux mois en visitant les cinémas de coopérative cinémathèques. En 1970, on a fait une autre tournée, beaucoup plus élargie, dans 14 pays.

PAR.: Vous ameniez quels films?

CC.: Nous avons fait une sélection de films qui nous étaient soumis à travers le Canada.

PAR.: Y avait-il des films québécois?

C.C.: Il n'y avait pas tellement de films québécois et ils n'étaient pas très bons. On aurait voulu faire une sorte de rétrospective des films québécois, mais ce n'était pas possible. Si on amenait douze films, on avait dix films canadiens et deux films québécois.

PAR.: Qui était vos têtes d'affiche?

C.C.: Le film indépendant québécois était un peu dans la lignée des films français, des films encore très narratifs, il y avait de très bons films dans cette lignée; au niveau des films strictement expérimentaux, il n'y avait pratiquement rien.

PAR.: Dans la lignée des films français, tu veux dire un peu à la Godard?

C.C.: Pas exactement, plutôt le cinéma direct, documentaire. Même encore aujourd'hui, il y a peu de films expérimentaux faits au Québec. Il y a Vincent Grenier, tu peux les nommer sur les doigts de la main, les cinéastes expérimentaux. De toute façon, il n'y a pas beaucoup de gens ici, et il y a tout l'héritage de ce que l'on a vécu comme culture cinématographique. Et même aujourd'hui, on ne peut pas dire qu'il y a un cinéma expérimental québécois qui s'est développé au Québec, ou ceux qui travaillent, travaillent ailleurs,

PAR.: Est-ce que tu mettrais ça sur le compte du manque de tradition dans le cinéma indépendant?

C.C.: Il n'y a pas que ça, c'est le manque d'imagination, il n'y a simplement pas eu ces forces créatives qu'on espérait.

PAR.: Mais généralement, s'il n'y a pas de modèles, on arrive difficilement à créer une succession, une suite.

C.C.: Nous étions là, et différents organismes ont fait d'autres projections de films, il y avait tout de même quelque chose qui se passait, c'est assez difficile de penser que de tout cela rien ne soit sorti. Nous espérons qu'avec une salle permanente *Le cinéma parallèle* et la vaste programmation que nous proposons nous aiderons à créer un public de plus en plus intéressé au cinéma indépendant et peut-être aussi de nouveaux cinéastes.

PAR.: Parce qu'au Canada anglais, c'est différent?

C.C.: Là, on ne parle pas de Toronto, Toronto non plus n'a jamais vraiment été vivée sur la question d'expérimentation dans le cinéma. C'est surtout ce qui s'est passé sur la côte ouest, peut-être à cause de la proximité de San Francisco, là il y a eu une multitude de cinéastes.

PAR.: Qu'est-ce qui vous a poussé dans vos dix années d'existence à ouvrir un cinéma qui vous appartient?

C.C.: Avoir un cinéma comme celui-ci a toujours été un de nos rêves, avoir nos propres outils de diffusion, de production, de distribution. Il y a beaucoup de cinéastes ici qui veulent que leurs films passent dans les cinémas commerciaux, qui veulent être reconnus dans des festivals internationaux qui normalement passent des films commerciaux, qui se battent pour qu'il y ait une section de films indépendants. Ça donne ce que ça donne. Moi, je n'y crois pas parce que c'est un échappatoire, une goutte dans l'océan. Si tout le monde, dans tous les domaines artistiques, se mettait à s'occuper de diffusion, ouvrirait non seulement un endroit mais plusieurs, cela nous permettrait d'avoir nos propres moyens de diffusion parallèles.

PAR.: Vous avez toujours assuré une certaine distribution, soit par des présentations dans des théâtres ou par la distribution dans les Cégeps, les universités ou les musées; côté production, quel est votre rôle?

C.C.: Ça, c'est une autre paire de manches, c'est la seule chose à laquelle on n'a pas touché encore car cela représente tout un investissement d'argent et d'énergie. Je me souviens de l'époque où l'Association coopérative des productions visuelles avait soumis un projet qui tombait un peu sous les politiques industrielles du film, semi-industrielles: le script choisi était financé et l'Association coopérative des productions visuelles maintenaient des droits comme toute maison de production. Moi, ce que je proposais, c'était l'inverse: avoir un atelier de production avec l'équipement sur place et que le cinéaste, premier arrivé, premier servi sans regard au contenu du film — film de droite, de gauche, expérimental, sexuel, bilingue — apprenne toutes les phases de la production.

PAR.: Avec les moyens que tu as finalement réussi à avoir pour ouvrir le Cinéma parallèle, tu peux proposer quoi? Que comprend le Cinéma parallèle?

C.C.: Le Cinéma parallèle comprend la Coopérative qui est le coeur de l'affaire: c'est la Coopérative qui distribue les films des cinéastes à travers les Cégeps, les universités, les musées, etc. On veut avoir une librairie sur tout ce qui concerne le film indépendant, tout ce qui a été écrit, à partir de la naissance du cinéma à aujourd'hui. La Coopérative aura aussi un programme mensuel et de plus la salle pourra être utilisée par d'autres groupes ou individus qui veulent faire de l'animation autour de certaines productions de films.

PAR.: Cela, sans aucun critère qui favorise une forme de films plutôt qu'une autre?

C.C.: La grande différence entre ici et l'Anthology Film Archives de New York est au niveau de la sélection des films; il y a une grande pluralité, nous programmons des films de différentes tendances.

PAR.: Comment faites-vous votre programmation?

C.C.: Tous les films qui sont dans le répertoire de la Coopérative seront programmés. J'ai établi ainsi 110 programmes de différentes orientations plus variées qu'avant car à l'époque je n'avais que trois ou quatre mois de programmation, j'étais restreint. Maintenant la salle est permanente, il y a des programmes sept jours par semaine, donc je peux tout présenter, un mélange, un heureux mélange qui doit se faire, c'est une recette intuitive. Il y a un type de production que les gens aiment moins: le film structural. Si on ne présente que Grenier ou Snow, on est assuré de perdre des gens.

PAR.: Pour en revenir aux films que vous possédez ou que vous distribuez, vous ne refusez aucun film. Comment expliques-tu, à ce moment-là, que dans un milieu comme Montréal où il y a peu de productions en cinéma indépendant, il y a peu de cinéastes, qu'à part votre Coopérative, il existe, entre autres, une association comme les Films du Crépuscule. Elle fait aussi de la distribution. Ne trouves-tu pas qu'il y a une sorte de dédoublement pour un milieu si restreint?

C.C.: Premièrement, les Films du Crépuscule n'existent que depuis un an. Ils se éclament du cinéma "artisanal", appellation que nous n'utilisons pas, nous avons toujours utilisé cinéma indépendant. Artisanal, on juge ça trop folklorique. Au niveau de l'appellation, en fait on a voulu différencier le produit québécois par un mot: artisanal. Le Crépuscule fait partie du Service d'animation socio-culturelle de l'Université du Québec; maintenant, ils ont décidé de faire de la distribution. En fait, on distribue les mêmes films, mais ils ont seulement des films québécois. Maintenant, ils ont commencé à faire signer des contrats d'exclusivité avec environ quarante salles, une entente selon laquelle on passe seulement des films du Crépuscule, des films artisanaux, des films indépendants. Ce qui n'est pas du tout dans l'esprit d'une coopérative. Ils distribuent également beaucoup de films de l'Association des cinéastes amateurs du Québec.

PAR.: N'y a-t-il pas eu une scission à l'intérieur de la Coopérative en 1969-70?

C.C.: En 1970 une autre Coopérative s'est formée à Montréal du nom de la Coopérative du film du Québec car les cinéastes ne voulaient que des films québécois dans la Coopérative des cinéastes indépendants. Mais notre Coopérative a toujours été ouverte à toutes les possibilités afin que les gens voient tous les genres de films. Les cinéastes indépendants sont tous placés dans la même situation au niveau de la distribution et de la diffusion de leurs films, c'est une famille internationale, il faut s'en occuper. Certains groupes voulaient que l'on ne s'occupe que de films socio-politiques, d'autres voulaient que les films ne représentent que la réalité québécoise.

PAR.: La Coopérative du film du Québec existe-t-elle encore?

C.C.: Non, elle n'a existé qu'un mois. La plupart des cinéastes sont revenus à la Coopérative des cinéastes indépendants. Nous avons toujours eu des difficultés avec différents groupes au Québec.

PAR.: Vous étiez accusé d'être internationalistes?

C.C.: Oui, de présenter des films américains, mais pour nous cela n'avait aucun rapport, on présentait ce qu'il y avait en cinéma indépendant. Il n'y en avait pas au Québec, alors!

PAR.: Quelle différence fais-tu, au Québec, entre cinéma amateur, cinéma étudiant, cinéma indépendant, cinéma expérimental, cinéma artisanal? Qu'est-ce que tu entends par cinéma indépendant, toi?

C.C.: Ce qui est produit en dehors des circuits commerciaux, tout ce qui maintient des idées progressistes soit au niveau formel, au niveau de l'approche documentaire etc. Là-dedans, il y a beaucoup de films qui n'ont aucune approche nouvelle au niveau de l'expérimentation, mais c'est une chose normale comme c'est normal dans la production commerciale d'avoir de très mauvais films aussi. Dans le film indépendant, il y a peut-être 20% de bons films, le même pourcentage que dans la production commerciale.

PAR.: Mais est-ce que tu t'attends quand même à ce qu'il y ait un clivage qui se fasse avec le temps?

C.C.: Oui, le temps est un facteur déterminant; il faut que les gens aient la possibilité de voir différentes productions.

PAR.: Vous offrez vos films à des Cégeps, à divers niveaux scolaires. Est-ce que le cinéma indépendant arrive à être diffusé vraiment dans les écoles? Est-ce que les écoles profitent de cette offre que vous leur faites?

C.C.: C'est un travail continu. La plupart des Cégeps sont rivés sur le cinéma commercial. On se perd dans un océan. Avant, il y avait certains ciné-clubs auto-financés de peine et de misère par des étudiants, mais maintenant cela fait partie du programme éducatif d'avoir ces ciné-clubs. J'ai fait beaucoup de recherches là-dessus. Il y a des agents distributeurs qui en fait n'ont pas de films. Ils font affaires avec des compagnies comme Columbia et font faire des copies 16mm. de films commerciaux. Les grosses compagnies comme Columbia ne sont pas intéressées à la distribution dans les Cégeps, ça ne rapporte pas autant que les "running theatres". Alors, elles laissent ça à ces agents, à ces "middle-men" qui souvent ont été de connivence avec les responsables des ciné-clubs pour la location des films commerciaux. Cela, jusqu'à ce que le scandale éclate.

PAR.: Le principe de toute l'affaire finalement, c'est que c'est encore très difficile pour le cinéma indépendant de percer ce réseau-là.

C.C.: C'est vrai, et de plus, il faut considérer le fait qu'il n'y a qu'une seule copie de chaque film dans la Coopérative. C'est une réalité ce ne sont pas des films connus et plusieurs sont des courts-métrages. Qui va présenter des séries de courts-métrages? Personne ne le fait. La Cinémathèque ne présente presque pas de cinéma indépendant non plus, ou si elle présente une série de courts films ce sera des films d'animation.

PAR.: Comment fonctionnez-vous quand vous louez les films des cinéastes: est-ce qu'ils gardent leurs droits et vous leur donnez un pourcentage ou est-ce que vous vous prenez un très petit pourcentage?

C.C.: Premièrement, le cinéaste garde tous les droits s'il le veut. C'est fait sur une base de confiance. Par exemple, si un cinéaste veut louer un film pour \$20.00, il reçoit 70% de chaque location; dans le cas de ventes à la télévision, il reçoit 80%. De plus, pour ce qui est des ventes à la télévision, on offre au cinéaste de négocier pour lui mais s'il veut négocier lui-même, il peut avoir 100% du montant. Nous avons aussi des

politiques envers la Cinémathèque québécoise, on ne lui passe aucun film, parce que la Cinémathèque ne veut pas prévoir de budgets pour la location des films des cinéastes indépendants. C'est inconcevable pour nous. On sait qu'elle a des troubles monétaires, elle devrait tout de même faire un effort pour au moins payer les cinéastes indépendants.

PAR.: Elle ne loue aucun film? Quand elle fait venir des films de l'étranger, c'est gratuitement?

C.C.: Des ententes entre la F.I.A.F. (Fédération Internationale des Archives du Film) leur permettent de se prêter des films. Au niveau du film commercial, il n'y a pas de problèmes, il y a de 300 à 400 copies. Pour le film indépendant, c'est bien difficile. Par contre, nous, avec nos maigres moyens, nous réussissons à payer les cinéastes. Mais si un cinéaste veut absolument présenter son film à la Cinémathèque, bien que comme politique, on ne lui passe aucun film, c'est un non pour un oui; finalement, c'est bien flexible.

PAR.: Possédez-vous plus d'une copie de chaque film?

C.C.: Il y a certains films dont on a une copie pour la cinémathèque et une pour nos archives. C'est aussi un autre de nos projets en cours, de faire un peu ce que fait Anthology. La différence entre elle et nous, c'est que l'Anthology est très sélective dans le choix de son programme de préservation et de diffusion. Nous on présentera le même type de programmation, mais on présentera aussi une plus grande variété de films.

PAR.: Il y a aussi beaucoup d'autres endroits à New York où tu peux réussir à voir du film expérimental.

C.C.: Oui, et qui ne s'occupent strictement que de productions contemporaines comme Millenium, Film Forum, Collective For Living Cinema, etc.

PAR.: Donc vous gardez une copie pour les archives et une copie pour la diffusion. Mais quelle est votre politique concernant la conservation? Est-ce que vous en avez une?

C.C.: On en a une, mais ce sont les moyens qui nous manquent. On fait ce que l'on peut.

PAR.: Comment est réparti le budget que vous avez maintenant?

C.C.: C'est bien difficile. On a fait plusieurs choses. On a fait des tournées qui sont maintenant terminées. On va au plus pressant. On n'a pas le choix. On n'a pas de stabilité budgétaire. Mais, tous comptes faits, en regardant tout ce qu'on a réalisé depuis dix ans, malgré toutes les difficultés, je pense que nous sommes en train d'atteindre la plupart de nos objectifs. Ce n'est pas l'excellence même, mais c'est un travail à long terme et continu.

PAR.: Quand tu dis que c'est difficile d'avoir une politique de stabilité au point de vue financier, comment pensez-vous rencontrer vos frais fixes en étant ouvert sept jours par semaine?

C.C.: Avec un tiers de la capacité de la salle assuré, on paie les frais généraux de location, d'électricité, location de films.

PAR.: Est-ce que l'aménagement du cinéma a été entièrement subventionné?

C.C.: Non. En partie. En fait, on a demandé un budget de \$237,000.00 avec une ristourne annuelle de \$117,000.00. On demandait \$120,000.00 ce qui comprenait la filmothèque, une librairie, avec toute l'excellence des moyens que tu peux avoir, salaires, etc. Cela comprenait de plus le Cinéma parallèle (rénovation, immobilisation) la Coopérative, et ses différents projets de diffusion, de conservation, etc. On a reçu \$30,000.00 dont \$10,000.00 de l'Institut québécois du cinéma, et \$20,000.00 de la Direction générale du cinéma. Il y a eu aussi les Publications Québecor et de l'aide de différents individus.

PAR.: À l'heure actuelle, est-ce que vous recevez des subventions du gouvernement fédéral?

C.C.: Depuis trois ans, on n'a jamais reçu de subventions, malgré le fait que l'on en ait demandées à plusieurs reprises.

PAR.: Quels ont été les débuts du Festival international du cinéma en 16 mm de Montréal?

C.C.: En 1971, on a commencé ce Festival; financièrement c'est une autre entreprise difficile car on n'a jamais eu l'argent équitable pour le réaliser adéquatement. À Ottawa, le Bureau des festivals, qui nous donnait un peu d'argent, a toujours voulu subventionner un festival commercial comme celui de New York ou celui de Chicago. Ils n'attendaient que cela quand c'est arrivé tout d'un coup en 1977 avec les trois festivals de Montréal que l'on connaît.

PAR.: Mais comment votre Festival se situe-t-il par rapport à d'autres festivals?

C.C.: Ce n'est pas du tout la même chose. Premièrement, c'est un festival qui s'occupe strictement de la production en 16 mm de nouvelles productions indépendantes, mais aussi nous touchons à la production institutionnelle, comme les films de l'American Film Institute, et la production commerciale aussi (certains films). La plupart des participants sont des cinéastes indépendants. Mais le mélange est bon parce qu'il donne une vue générale de ce qui se passe en 16 mm et les gens se font une idée de ce qui se fait avec ou sans moyens.

PAR.: C'est un festival non compétitif?

C.C.: C'est un festival non compétitif qui ne décerne pas de prix mais par contre, s'il y a des groupes autonomes qui veulent en décerner, nous n'avons pas d'objections.

PAR.: Qu'est-ce que tu entends par groupe "autonome"?

C.C.: Une fondation peut donner un certain prix ou bien une compagnie comme Du Maurier.

PAR.: Elles pourraient vous aider aussi finalement à financer la manifestation...

C.C.: Aussi, oui, mais malheureusement cela ne s'est jamais encore produit sinon des pourboires!

PAR.: Votre Festival peut être mis en parallèle avec celui de Knokke et puis quel autre?

C.C.: La seule différence, c'est que le nôtre se limite au 16 mm; il n'y en a pas d'autres au monde. Il peut être mis en parallèle avec tout festival qui s'occupe de productions indépendantes ou de films progressistes que ce soit en 35 mm ou en 16 mm. On peut nommer le Festival de Mannheim, de Rotterdam, celui de Berlin, en ce qui concerne la section du jeune cinéma. Il y a le Hamburg Film Festival aussi.

PAR.: Pour donner plus de diffusion à votre Festival, ne serait-il pas possible de le greffer à un des festivals plus commerciaux de Montréal? Ou cela vous semblerait-il une antithèse?

C.C.: Non, c'est hors de question. Vous voulez dire comme à Cannes, la Quinzaine des réalisateurs? Je crois beaucoup à ce que l'on s'organise pour que ce soit indépendant, pour avoir en main les outils de production, de diffusion, de distribution dans l'espoir de donner naissance à des groupes. C'est une sorte de magie qu'il faut créer. D'ailleurs, ça se passe actuellement au Québec; ça prend du temps. Parce qu'une ville comme Montréal n'est pas tellement un centre nerveux, en tout cas au niveau des arts, on dirait que ça ne regarde personne. On peut seulement se servir de New York comme référence, puis à New York, on sait combien c'est encore plus difficile, d'une certaine façon. Plus difficile dans le sens de l'argent.

Mais la grosse différence, c'est qu'à New York, il y a cette magie là. Il y a une espèce d'auto-stimulation, qui passe par tout le monde, tandis qu'ici, c'est le néant.

PAR.: Mais un lien physique comme un théâtre peut te permettre de cristalliser un milieu, peut créer une habitude pour un certain nombre de gens et arriver à développer finalement un milieu pour le cinéma indépendant.

C.C.: Oui, et j'aurais aimé le faire avant. Parce que c'est vraiment ça... créer un noyau, et aussi le bâtir avec tes mains, avec beauté.

PAR.: Pour quelqu'un qui s'occupe de cinéma indépendant depuis dix ans, tu disais que dans le fond, il y avait peu de films intéressants à l'époque et au Québec et qu'il n'y en a pas plus aujourd'hui. Alors comment peux-tu dire que les choses s'améliorent?

C.C.: Il y a un déblocage, mais il est encore dans la lignée du film documentaire. Il y a plus de films, il y a des documents intéressants et j'encourage cette tendance. Mais au strict niveau de l'expérimentation, il n'y a rien encore.

PAR.: Est-ce que tu as vu ce qui se fait dans les différentes régions québécoises?

C.C.: Oui. C'est surtout des films dramatiques, narratifs, puis des films socio-politiques. C'est un des aspects intéressants du Québec, mais, moi, cela m'inquiète beaucoup qu'il n'y ait pas une sorte de production équitable dans le film purement expérimental. Et surtout le fait que ceux qui travaillent dans cette direction sont obligés d'aller travailler ailleurs parce qu'ici, ils n'ont pas de support.

PAR.: Qu'est-ce que cela signifie pour toi que Godard vienne donner un atelier de travail ici.

C.C.: Si cela correspond à un besoin, j'ose espérer qu'il y aura des suites positives. Mais j'espère qu'il y aura aussi des gars comme Werner Nekes, Brakhage ou Ken Jacobs qui viendront car ce sont des gens comme Ken Jacobs qui apportent vraiment une nouvelle orientation au niveau de l'imagination et qui éliminent toutes idées préconçues au niveau formel et font respirer notre perception visuelle et sensorielle.

PAR.: Les sources d'inspiration que tu nommes sont beaucoup plus américaines qu'européennes.

C.C.: Werner Nekes est allemand et j'aurais pu nommer aussi d'autres cinéastes comme Klaus Wyborny qui a fait *Birth of a Nation*, Shuji Terayama, Peter Kubelka, etc.

PAR.: Quant tu invites un cinéaste pour qu'il présente ses films, j'imagine que tu essaies d'intéresser tous les milieux universitaires.

C.C.: J'essaie d'intéresser les gens à tous les niveaux. S'il y a un workshop, il sera ouvert à tout le monde. Avec les cinéastes que nous avons invités de différents pays, de différents milieux, nous avons toujours eu un public très diversifié.

PAR.: Mais, la question que nous posions tout à l'heure par rapport à Godard, c'est que nous trouvons assez significatif que l'événement de l'année à Montréal soit la venue de Godard, dans un milieu où justement on privilégie un peu les suites du cinéma direct, du cinéma-vérité, alors que, finalement, Jonas Mekas, qui est aussi venu à Montréal cette année, est venu pour trente personnes! Il est passé complètement inaperçu, et pourtant, dans l'histoire du cinéma expérimental, il est certainement aussi important que Godard peut l'être.

C.C.: C'est comme Ken Jacobs. C'est la même chose. C'est comme la présentation des films ici à tous les jours. Il y aura des représentations absolument extraordinaires, pour vingt personnes. Il n'y aura que vingt personnes pour Jacobs aussi.

PAR.: Mais tu parlais tantôt que dans le fond, tu n'as pas beaucoup d'argent pour faire de la publicité. Si tu fais venir Ken Jacobs, de quels moyens vas-tu te servir?

C.C.: De nos moyens habituels, (horaires de cinéma, programmes, annonces gratuites à la Radio). J'ai présenté du film indépendant à l'Outremont en 1974. L'Outremont diffuse 100 à 120,000 programmes, et j'ai eu en moyenne 55 personnes par projection. C'est très bien pour le film indépendant mais pour une salle comme l'Outremont, c'est désastreux. Pourtant les gens étaient informés. Au niveau de la publicité, dans le domaine du cinéma indépendant, je crois au contact humain; ça porte beaucoup plus de fruits.

PAR.: Alors, le problème, est toujours le même: celui de l'éducation. S'il y avait une éducation qui se faisait au niveau secondaire, collégiale, s'il y avait un intérêt manifesté pour ce genre de cinéma...

C.C.: Non, je crois que ce n'est pas une question d'école, rien de ça. C'est une question de créer des lieux, puis de créer une atmosphère.

PAR.: Oui, mais il faut au moins que tu saches que ce genre de cinéma indépendant existe.

C.C.: Même si les gens étaient informés de l'existence de ce genre de cinéma, tu aurais quand même un petit noyau de gens intéressés. C'est la réalité. Il ne faut pas se faire d'illusions, c'est un travail continu. Avant, il n'y avait même pas de salles. Il n'existe pas d'autres salles comme celle-ci, ouverte sept jours par semaine dans le monde. Cela arrive ici, au Québec. Normalement, une salle ouverte sept jours par semaine devrait se trouver à New York.

PAR.: Est-ce que tu crois qu'un travail de création, comme le cinéma indépendant, arrive vraiment à percer?

C.C.: Moi, je pense que oui. Tout dépend de comment tu te donnes à ton travail. Plusieurs coopératives ne font rien. Elles sont là, avec leurs catalogues. Nous à priori, on devait être une coopérative de distribution, puis on a canalisé nos efforts pour faire des tournées à travers les Cégeps. En plus, on a toujours fait beaucoup d'autres projets de promotion: le Festival international, des tournées européennes, etc. Ici, il a fallu tout faire. Dans le système de distribution, le catalogue est strictement une source d'information. C'est un mandat beaucoup plus élargi qu'une coopérative ordinaire qu'on se donne finalement. La seule chose qui nous manque, c'est un atelier de production. En ce qui concerne la distribution, elle fonctionne selon l'énergie que tu mets dedans. Elle pourrait être plus élargie encore si on avait des gens sur la route pour contacter différents organismes. C'est difficile parce que tu rencontres des responsables de ciné-clubs, des professeurs de cinéma... et ce n'est pas toujours rose... Le cinéma indépendant va contre toute une machine qui entretient et perpétue l'ignorance et la médiocrité. C'est un leurre de la part de plusieurs cinéastes de vouloir être largement diffusés. En tout cas, je respecte leur point de vue, de vouloir ce genre de diffusion là, mais moi, je crois beaucoup plus à la concentration de ces énergies. Je crois qu'il faut s'organiser avec notre distribution, notre diffusion et notre propre production afin qu'il n'y ait pas seulement un cinéma mais plusieurs, et que cela touche non seulement le cinéma, mais toutes les formes d'art. Cette idée d'avoir nos propres moyens ne veut pas dire en tant que Québécois, mais en tant qu'humains désirant créer et communiquer ce que nous vivons ensemble. ■

JONAS MEKAS

an interview by Yana Sterbak

The following interview was taped at Optica Gallery, Montreal, on December 12, 1977.

YANA STERBAK: In the fifties and the sixties, you spent lot of time and energy in supporting and promoting the independent film.

JONAS MEKAS: Yes, certain kinds of film — those kinds that were neglected...

YS: How did you get into it?

JM: I don't know... by necessity... difficult to tell... any attempt to explain how one does something, why one does it... you need more perspective... I've tried... I've made attempts to understand why I did what I did. One explanation is that after the war, the last war, I found myself in the West, far from the place where I was born and grew up and I was very upset by the political situation — that is that some of the countries that were independent before the war, because of that war, lost their independence and nobody did anything about it. I wanted to communicate my anger to others but there I was speaking in Lithuanian to Germans, to French, to Americans. They didn't speak Lithuanian and I didn't speak any other language to express myself properly... I reason that's why I gravitated to cinema as an international language, so to speak, as a language I could speak to express my anger and to shout. That's what my first film is: loud shouting...

(What I didn't know at the time was that cinema is also a language and that it was not a question of language but of content; that no matter what language you speak, people won't hear a certain content or they aren't interested to listen...)

Once I went to cinema to say what I really wanted to say, I had to choose, I had to gravitate to the non-commercial language... to the more condensed forms of cinema and that is the avant-garde film. When I began speaking that language, 99.9 percent of the people did not understand me. It was the same, even worse, that if I'd been speaking Lithuanian. The avant-garde cinema community is still a minority, that language is the minority's language — the majority's language is the Hollywood language, no matter which Hollywood we speak about, Moscow Hollywood, Paris Hollywood or Quebec Hollywood. So I gravitated towards it and discovered that it is as difficult to reach, to communicate what I wanted to communicate, in this language as in any other language.

YS: When you came to America, had you any contact with cinema before then?

JM: I had some contact in this so-called displaced persons camp, in Germany, after the war, when the army used to show some films.

YS: What did they show?

JM: Commercial films, whatever they showed to the army, they showed to us but immediately after the war, there were some imaginative, commercial German filmmakers (Liebenheimer, Helmut Koldtner). They had not seen any Rossellini, but they had heard, no

doubt, about *Open City* and the other films that later established Neo-realism... they used the actual location because the studios were destroyed during the war and the films they made had a reality and an authenticity that you cannot create in the studio. There were some films made that were quite inspiring compared to what we saw through the Army channels... when we saw those films, that made me think about the other possibilities of cinema. Then, immediately after the war other films started coming from France; there was Cocteau for example... that was the first contact. But we had to wait because there was no means... we were at the mercy of the United Nations refugee organizations. There was no money to buy film or camera. We could not make films, we had to wait till we got to the United States to put it into practice.

YS: *Film Culture* came out only five years after your arrival to the States... Did you start it with P. Adams Sitney?

JM: No, P. Adams Sitney appeared six years later from New Haven, in 1961. I met him for the first time in 1972.

YS: So *Film Culture* was your effort alone?

JM: Myself and my brother; then we got some people to help us. If you look at what existed in film publications at that time you would find *Sight and Sound*, there was casual publication from Edimburg called *Cycles*, (actually they may have ended by this time) in France, *Cahiers du Cinema* and in the United States, the University of California published a film quarterly; I am not sure what it was called, but it too closed around that time. So there was only one film journal in the United States, *Film in Review*, published in New York City by the Board of Education and it was so miserable that we decided to bring out a journal of our own. That's how it started, simply because there was nothing else. You could not read anything... not only was the avant-garde film not covered but the commercial film also was not covered properly. That is why the early years of *Film Culture* are split between the commercial and the non-commercial cinema; because there was no other choice and no other publication. That went on until 1960-61 until a new film quarterly appeared from California and other publications as well as more coverage by weeklies. So by that time we could devote ourselves exclusively to the independent film.

YS: Did you feel it a compromise — publishing material on the commercial cinema at first?

JM: No, we did not feel any compromise because there was not that much activity and talent; there was not that much in the air in the independent film; there was no one writing about it therefore what were we to publish. There was no material and no interest yet. That developed gradually around 1959-60; there was more and more material, films and interest in film making and discussion.

The avant-garde cinema community is still a minority, that language is the minority's language — the majority's language is the Hollywood language, no matter which Hollywood we speak about, Moscow Hollywood, Paris Hollywood or Quebec Hollywood.

YS: How did you raise the money it took to publish *Film Culture*?

JM: By working eight hours a day, six days a week, in a place called Graphic Studios. My brother worked in various factories in Brooklyn, so there was no problem...

YS: You did the graphic design for *Film Culture*?

JM: All of it; I always did it myself and I am still doing it now, except for a few issues which were done by the man who is in charge of *Fluxus*. It was done this way because we never had any money nor time to explain, so the cheapest simplest way was to do it myself.

YS: The *New American Cinema Group* came to being in 1960...

JM: There was already a lot going on, many people were involved. The early movement that started around 1943 in New York and San Francisco with Maya Deren, Sidney Peterson, James Broughton and Willard Maas remained of very limited appeal — the screenings were attended by small audiences. Around 1955 then we begin to look at what had been made from 1943 to 1955. A lot was done by the members of the early film movement and around 1953-54 Brakhage began to work and new people began to come in like a second grade, Markopoulos, Kenneth Anger. Though their work was seen, they did not establish themselves until a few years later. One of the reasons was that at the same time, around 1968-69, another movement gained force; through the New York School of filmmaking, people like Lionel Robertson and Sidney Meyers did films like *On the Bowery*, *The Quiet One*; Helen Livit and James Agee did *In the Street* and Casavetes did *Shadows* and then Robert Frank did *Pull my Daisy*. — They used documentary style; those who made documentaries or fiction films (*Little Fugitive* by Morris Anger) shot in actual reality with portable cameras to save money and to gain a certain style.

YS: When you mention those characteristics, how close is the relationship to Neo-realism?

JM: They were influenced. I have no doubt that Neo-realism influenced Morris Anger. Exactly around that time, New York began seeing Neo-realist films. *Bicycle Thieves* and *Open City* opened around 1950-55 and no doubt influenced that approach. It went like this: Neo-realism, The New York Film School and then, of course the Cinéma-vérité (1965-68). At that stage, some interesting publicity about the different kinds of filmmaking helped to create more enthusiasm and that's where we come to the New American Film Group. They all got together, all the varieties of filmmakers, the independent of New York and created an organization to do something to strengthen ties between themselves and to look into sponsorship, finances as well as explore screening possibilities. It's from that organization that the Filmmakers' Cooperative was created in the summer of 1961. That

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added special impetus to the whole movement.

YS: Was any of this a reaction to the censorship problem which you mention in the *Movie Journal*? (1)

JM: No, that problem did not exist, not yet. If it existed, it was a minor problem; let's face it, the work, for the most part, was innocent. Censorship was not the biggest obstacle. The obstacle was that the films were not even considered cinema. They were too short; they exploited strange techniques —; they were not shown, very few people and places were interested in showing them. There was, in the New American Film Group, one little committee that was devoted to censorship but it had nothing to do until around 1964 and a few years later.

YS: What about the European independent cinema?

JM: It started around 1960. I think maybe it helped some of the people that were working with us then: their dream was to make feature length films of commercial nature but the only thing they could do at that time was to make short semi-narrative films or various little independent projects on low budget. As soon as they had a chance, Casavetes, Bob Downey and a few others jumped to the next stage.

YS: Around 1961, you started collaborating with P. Adams Sitney — did he seek you out?

JM: Yes, he came to the Filmmakers Cooperative where I was working at the time. I was planning to send some travelling programmes to Europe(2) then, and I invited him to join us to do that. He took films to France, Germany and England.

YS: His position was mostly as a critic?

JM: Well, he was very passionately interested in film and could talk about it as a critic; he could explain it to strangers, he could defend it and argue with conviction and knowledge...

YS: Was he a filmmaker as well?

JM: He made a couple of little films at the time but he refuses to show them. His wife didn't like the way she looked in one of them... it's a double screen film made in 1964.

YS: It was P. Adams Sitney who coined the word "structural" in describing film?

JM: Yes, that comes from his essay in 1967...

YS: Was that any type of revelation at the time?

JM: No, just summing up for the first time what many people were talking about; it was the first time that the title was used.

YS: What were the differences in objectives between The New American Film Group and the Filmmakers Co-op?

JM: It was a very mixed group. With the establishment of the Filmmakers' Co-op, that mixed group began splitting... when I say mixed, I mean people like Markopoulos and Brakhage who were making and intended to make very personal films of limited commercial interest; others like Antonioni who were making political films, documentaries, who wanted to reach the widest possible audiences. When we established the Co-op as an outlet for films, then some of the people gravitated somewhere else. They made films they refused to put into the Co-op because they were afraid it wouldn't give them enough exposure. (Like Shirley Clark; she finished the *Collection* and said: "I'm not going to put it into the Co-op because it won't give me enough outlets, I want to have it in a known commercial agency"). So she went and Antonioni went and several others went... of course some got burned... years later Shirley Clark came back, Robertson came back. Because on one hand they wanted to reach the widest possible audiences and be successful and on the other hand the work that they were doing was not suitable for that. Those who stuck with the Cooperative were not always those who chose the Co-op willingly and knowingly but rather out of desperation for lack of something else. Nobody else would take them at the time and it proved to be very good for them. That way, the Co-op became established, grew and became an exciting place... so useful that today in New York or the United States, nobody can really say that the Co-op is less important than other distributors.

The Co-op went on to prove that the policies established there were sound and they still are even today, 15 or 16 years later. I would really still term them revolutionary. The 5 points on which the Co-op was based remain even today and that is 1) that no film is rejected; in other words: no matter what it is the film will survive on its own merit; if the film is good, it will grow by itself, if the film is not good, nothing can establish it; 2) the Co-op is run by the filmmakers themselves; 3) no film is pushed above the others — they are all treated equally; 4) no advertising; 5) all income from the rentals goes to the filmmakers except for the percentage assigned by the directors/filmmakers to cover the running costs which in New York is 25%.

YS: Is there a screening facility?

JM: No, the Cooperative is totally detached from promotion; it is just a distribution centre. (For showing, there are from 10 to 15 places you can go to in New-York.) It has to be so: detached from influence, judgement... and it's enough work just to handle the servicing and the distribution aspect. For screening, as soon as the Co-op was established, we created something we called the Filmmakers Cinematheque — it was never confused; the two functions remained separate.

YS: So, was the Filmmakers Cinematheque the first sort of sketch for The Anthology Film Archives?

JM: Yes, that's where it started. First it was just called

Censorship was not the biggest obstacle. The obstacle was that the films were not even considered cinema.

"Filmmakers Showcase" and went until 1963; then it was re-named "Filmmakers Cinematheque" which went until 1970 and then after that "The Anthology Film Archives".

YS: How did the Anthology start?

JM: Late in 1967, we had the opportunity to get two buildings in SoHo under very good conditions. I wanted to make "Cinematheque 1" on the ground floor of one of the buildings to be open to any new work to anybody who wanted to screen and "Cinematheque 2" which would be like an academy and which would show very selected works for those who have no time to see everything. So plans were made and then we lost one of the buildings, the academy, and got stuck with only the "Cinematheque 1". At that time, Jerome Hill, the filmmaker, came to us and said: "My friend who has influence on Joe Pab says we could use space in Pab's building, The Shakespeare Theatre, and we could maybe establish the academy there, but not," he said, "anything that would just show everything, something selective like the academy." At this point I should interject my policy at the Cinematheque" which was very open. It was not yet right to preselect, the sixties were a very productive period, there was very little as far as guidelines to what was good and what was bad; that was my attitude. So we used to show whatever, whoever wanted to show. Of course, some people did not like that but I would never accept pre-selection in the sixties. It would have been very damaging because when things are just happening, you really should not preselect — I was right in it and I couldn't do it so who could. But in 1969, I saw that there was some perspective: the busiest period was practically over. There was already concrete necessity for some pre-selection. The universities started establishing film departments (there were already by 1969, 500 to 600 colleges and universities teaching film — today there are 900), and people kept coming to me saying: "Here I am starting a film department, far from New York, far from San Francisco, could you advise me on what to show?" I couldn't cope with all the requests. Instead of presenting every individual with films, there was a need to work out a list of recommendable films from all that's been done; and that is how we came to the Anthology idea. Since there were accusations that I was using dictatorship, that I was imposing my own taste, I did not feel like making all the selections just by myself. We created a committee of live people with different tastes and backgrounds: James Broughton, Peter Kubelka, P. Adams Sitney, Tellerman and myself and it was always by five votes that we decided what went into the repertory, the Anthology. It was this repertory that began serving universities and colleges. We had to reduce film to practical packages because we got requests such as: "We have money for only 3 programmes, please tell us who — the Co-op catalogue lists 500 filmmakers and 2000 films; we can only show 10 filmmakers and 30 films". If we said nothing, they would show nothing... so we had to do this evil, so to speak, to pre-select in order to help them, so that the movement would spread instead of

If nothing were done, the whole history of American avant-garde film would be lost. That's how we came to preservation about five years ago and to this day we've preserved about 150 films.

Our real material had to do with light, color, movement.

stopping. In Germany and Italy this did not happen, they did not do that and as a result, the film education in universities and colleges died out. (The independent film movement is now completely dead in Italy and Germany — only one or two people are working now).

Whatever we select, there is always a lot of arguing and discussion between us, it's never final. We consider the Anthology Film Archives repertory collection as a critical tool. That is, we keep polishing as time goes, we keep adding new titles, reviewing; it is very open-ended. If we had decided to make this library, this collection, consist of only the avant-garde films, that would be one thing, but we decided that we should really abandon all the names that have been given to us: experimental, personal, independent, New American cinema, avant-garde, etc. and consider in the first place that we are producing cinema; that we are filmmakers; that we are making films, and films constitute cinema, therefore we are speaking of cinema and this repertory should reflect the best that the five of us consider cinema. If one is coming to cinema for the first time and wants to have some indication of what has been achieved, the different directions, the different genres, forms — then this collection should indicate it. That is why we decided to review the whole of cinema, not only the avant-garde film. We consider people like Brakhage to be creating cinema, not experimental avant-garde film. That's for those who need a label in order to understand. Sometimes I use those terms but under different circumstances, when I need to indicate approximately which area of cinema I'm talking about. Cinema is big, various directions here as in literature... we know that, say, Whitman is part of literature and Melville and Thoreau but there we talk of poetry — same with birds, we don't talk of birds in general we talk of various kinds of birds. It's legitimate to label as long as we know we are speaking of cinema. Otherwise, the tendency would be to push the avant-garde filmmaker somewhere else, some strange bird there, anomaly, an exception but not the basis, not the essence... (The essence being Hollywood.) So we try to fight that, that is why the Anthology repertory collection is also manifest of that: We do not separate Brakhage from, say, Renoir. On the other hand, we are against this idea that a film made in 1977 is of course better than a film made in 1967. That is expressed by the order in which films are presented — we present them alphabetically under the name of the filmmaker. Kenneth Anger starts the cycle and Warhol ends it.

YS: It is like a museum, the collection?

JM: No, our function IS very museum like, but no matter how people hate the word "academy" our function as far as the repertory is concerned is more like an academy... the Anthology itself what it does is like a museum but the selectivity aspect refers to academy, like Académie Française. A museum is a non-selective place, a preservation place. That, we do also, the repertory collection is only one function of The Anthology Film Archives. The other functions include

a very large collection of reference materials; another function is the preservation. We try to preserve every film in the collection — that's where the museum aspect comes in. The preservation aspect in independent film is a new development, we've only come to that in the past few years because all the 16mm films lasted only that long. The movement in the United States started in or around 1940. Films could survive in fairly presentable conditions until fairly recently and nobody panicked but now they have all reached a point when they suddenly started crumbling and shrinking. If nothing were done, the whole history of American avant-garde film would be lost. That's how we came to preservation about five years ago and to this day we've preserved about 150 films.

YS: That is an expensive undertaking...

JM: Very expensive, luckily many of these films of the early period were black and white. Kodak stock, all the new products, have an average life of about ten years. So all the films made in the early sixties are fading and need desperate reparation already.

YS: Is the Anthology a distributor as well?

JM: No, the Co-op does that. We keep the functions separated very clearly since there are only very few of us, people and institutions dealing with independent film. We try not to duplicate anything that does not need to be duplicated.

YS: In all of these efforts, The Filmmakers Co-op, The Anthology Film Archives, *Film Culture*, you are the prime mover...

JM: We know, I know that it's an illusion that the avant-garde film is now very strong and established, that nothing can happen to it... I know how strong the other forces are, the commerce — they respect you only as long as you exist in some institutional form. Being a prime mover... that was one of the problems... the filmmakers consider it too much me, so whenever something is established that I helped establish, I try to pull out as much as I can. The Cooperative for instance is going by itself, I'm not needed there, but *Film Culture* and Anthology, there I'm stuck (laughter)...

YS: How does the repertory part of Anthology function?

JM: The programmes are usually a combination of what is known as repertory and information programmes; this means that we show what has been voted in: the classics of cinema and then the new works, with a ratio of 2: 1. (Even if we did not show any new work, it would not be that tragic, now we have The Millennium, they show every week and have visiting filmmakers; The Collective for Living Cinema, showing every three to four days, Film Forum showing every week and The Museum of Modern Art does at least three or four showings a month and there are others.) Where we're needed and what we do is this: once a new filmmaker

shows a new film at one of those places then usually none of these places wants to bring it back. They all go for one showing and they all want it to be preferably the first one. We avoid the first screenings; we bring back the best of what is shown, which is still very much needed, because otherwise where else can you screen again. The Anthology provides a place for repeated screenings. For example, Yvonne Rainer — each of her films was shown here or there and that's it; but at the Anthology, we bring it back every six months. So people can see it again and make up their minds about it: Is it growing? Is it falling to pieces? There are some screenings which we abandon; they really fall to pieces.

YS: How do you judge?

JM: You see it again and again, then there is a change. A film is not some blank impenetrable thing. We react, compare our reactions with those of a year ago, two years ago; we compare with other peoples' reactions, with other work we see. Sometimes it happens that a film is attractive not because of the film but because of the personality of the filmmaker. A year later, the person is still there but the film is viewed with different eyes, with more detachment from the person. There are different ways to gain more perspective from the work: first we have to separate it from the filmmaker and that is not always possible at the first screening or from the subject matter which may be very topical at the time. It takes time. We know that some of the films done in the sixties were very successful and since then have faded into the background because they just couldn't stand the test of time. Maybe they brought some technical innovation which is very exciting at the time but if that was their only merit... Although, no matter how many times we've seen *Dogstarman*, and it comes from the same period, we can still see it again and again and each time it is still as vibrant as it was then, even better, even fresher.

YS: There is still the selection by the five man jury, what is the procedure?

JM: Before the selection session begins, (once a year — they last from two to three weeks) we all contribute our suggestions, what we think should be added or considered. When we get all those films, we look at them once or twice and after each film we simply vote. When we're just not sure, sometimes we postpone it and wait until the next year.

YS: Now talking about your own work; how did the diary format evolve?

JM: From desperation, from not having time for longer stretches of time to script a narrative form film based on an idea. I did not have that time because of all my involvements so I shot a little bit whenever I had some time. At first I was not aware of what I was doing. I just wanted to be close to my camera, not to loose touch with it... and then years later when I was looking at the material I had collected that way, I realized that I was making daily notes like a notebook. I began to be

Looking at the films of the last ten years you can see that they are all children of *Tom, Tom, and Wavelength*.

more conscious of the form of the diary, I was already doing it more consciously. From 1950, the year of my arrival in the United States until about 1960, I was doing it unconsciously. I have edited the material that begins in 1950, that is another five hours of work. There is a scrupulous process of elimination at some point.

YS: You shoot a great deal?

JM: Yes, I manage, every week, at least two rolls.

YS: You've said that cinema belongs to the domain of poetry.*

JM: No, I would never have said that: I know literature and other arts enough to be aware that poetry is a quality, that there is poetic feeling in every art. You can speak of poetry in painting, in life... Dovzenko's films have great feelings of poetry but the films themselves are not poems they are epic works... and there are some avant-garde films that are almost pure poems — it does not mean that cinema is poetry. In literature you can write an essay, a short story, a play, a poem, a journalistic piece, a textbook or advertising, it is the same in cinema. That has been my contention right from the beginning. Cinema is almost like any art; it is as ridden with possibilities and non reducible to Hollywood or certain kind of documentary — it should be allowed in all its forms. That was where cinema suffered until the fifties. In the fifties and the sixties, it opened and reached for the same variety as literature. A two-minute film like "Bruce Baillie's" *All my Life*, which would be the equivalent of a Haiku poem... that did not come to cinema immediately.

YS: In your own films you tend to be lyrical?

JM: Yes, maybe I have that weakness but I consider *Notes*, *Sketches* and *Diaries* as an epic narrative because it has a protagonist, me... epic I would put in the first place, lyrical in the second place.

YS: In *The Movie Journal* you have said that certain literary works approximate films. I'm thinking of Truman Capote and Maysles Brothers, is there anyone you feel kinship with in literature?

JM: Maybe. I very often use excerpts from Thoreau and of course the second title for *Notes* is *Walden*, as a tribute, because he means a lot to me.

YS: You were interested in poetry long before you started making films?

JM: Yes, I've read a lot, the classics and the modern.

YS: You've said in reference to Warhol that one can walk out of his films and come back again. Is that possible with your films?

JM: Yes, with a diary film it's possible to walk out and miss a few days because the footage of one day does not relate directly to the footage of the next day. So if you miss a part of it, it does not matter that much.

That's how some of Warhol's films are constructed, in any epic film you can miss a part.

YS: Was the term "film-translation" yours?

JM: *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* by Ken Jacobs?

YS: Was he the first to do that?

JM: Yes, as far as I know, the first and most influential... many people are working in that fashion now.*

YS: In *The Movie Journal* you said in the sixties that the "Establishment" embraced the independent film, that it became fashionable and there were only three choices left in your eyes" 1) sink into the Establishment, 2) retreat deeper into the underground or 3) smash through the lines of the establishment to the other side or above it"

JM: (Laughter) Before we decided what to do, before we chose any of the three choices the Establishment vomited us out. The Establishment thought that we looked very appealing and very sweet but they discovered that we were like those little creatures with needles... we had those needles all around us and they couldn't digest us. The theatres that were after our work for two or three years, thinking they could capitalize on us, realised that our essence was not really what they thought it to be: sex and drugs. That was very marginal; we did not have enough such material for them. Our real material had to do with light, color, movement; that was not of such wide appeal, it was not suitable for large theatres and mass public. Same with the press; they soon found out that the source of headlines had run out. As the censorship opened, we weren't providing them with clashes with the censors, there were no scandals, there was nothing in us for them. So then some of the filmmakers who had great illusions of fast fame and money realized that it was an illusion... some changed direction, but others just proceeded with doing what they were doing and left the rest to the Co-op and the Anthology. We didn't have to retreat to protect ourselves, we remained where we were.

What happened around 1966-67 was that we settled into something I call the "Classical period". Brakhage was making what he was good at already and was improving; others were doing the same. Very soon after that though some new direction came with Michael Snow's *Wavelength* and *Tom, Tom the Piper's Son* by Ken Jacobs. Those two were of great importance; their influence is much greater than Brakhage's. Looking at the films of the last ten years you can see that they are all children of *Tom, Tom, and Wavelength*.

YS: Where do you think the new film is going?

JM: I don't know where the new film is going; I know some of the characteristics of some of the younger American avant-garde filmmaking of the seventies: they are all children of *Wavelength* and *Tom, Tom the Piper's son*.

YS: What are some of those characteristics?

JM: You find a lot of manipulators, explorers of the single frame permutations. That applies to most of the American filmmakers but also to Werner Nekes from Germany... single frame variations, orchestrations by means of optical printers. They don't even use motion picture cameras, they use still cameras and then work with those images... Or, taking a movie camera but then by means of printers, slowing down of projectors, re-filming, completely restructuring the image (like James Herbert, David Rimmer). The basis is single frame — maybe it's Kubelka's influence, that pointing down... and then from there to various directions: neither Kubelka nor Sharits are being imitated.

Diego Cortez alters the film in projection and puts a cinescope lens to distort the images; it's all part of restructuring, re-organizing the material; the footage is never finished. I could name around thirty people who work this way, between 1969 and now. The other direction would be the plastically interested people (like Barry Gerson); the whole frame plays a part where the image goes through the frame, the way the line of the frame fits on the screen. Not only frame by frame but also considering the screen — the screen gains importance.

And then of course you have the vast legions of artists making films (and I detest them)! (Laughter). ■

FOOTNOTES

*1 Jonas Mekas: *MOVIE JOURNAL, THE RISE OF THE NEW AMERICAN CINEMA (1959-1971)* The MacMillan Company: New York, N.Y. 1972. On censorship: p. 234, p. 283, pp. 329-332.

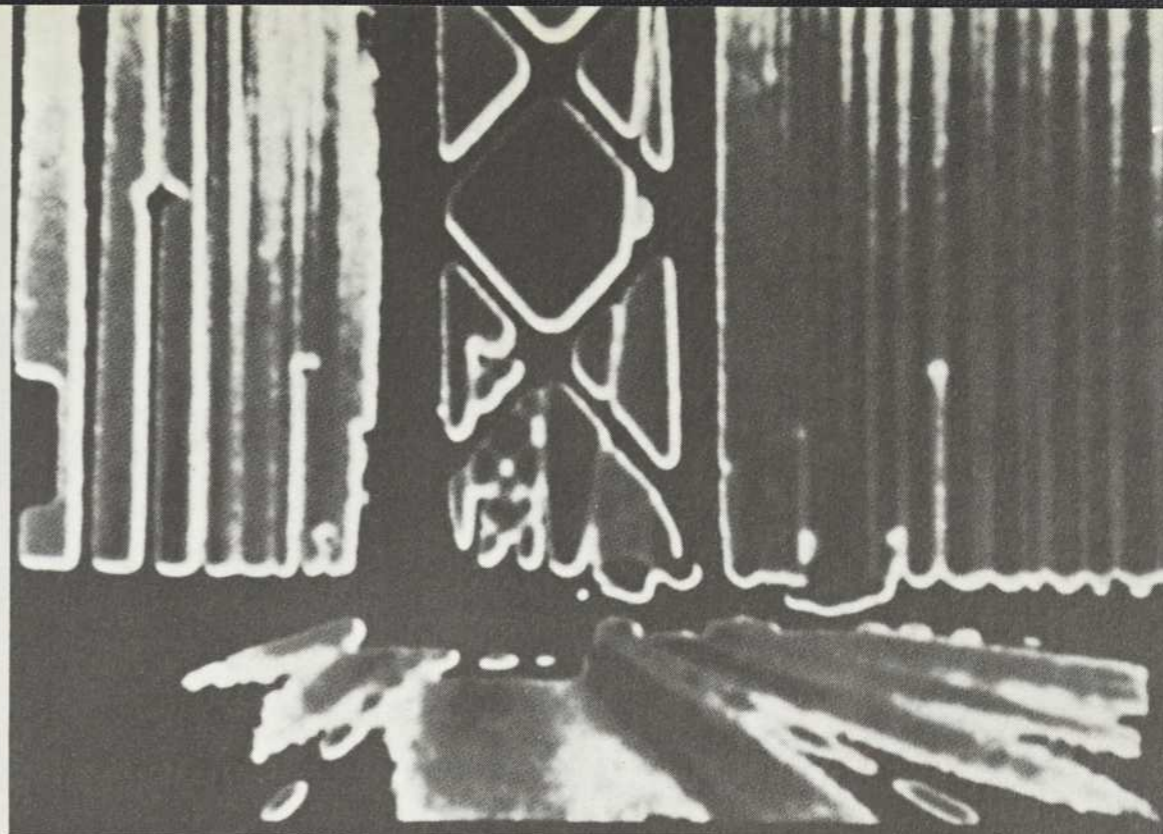
*2 *FILM TRAVELLING LIBRARY* established by the Filmmakers Cinematheque.

JONAS MEKAS

Born in Lithuania in 1922. After time in a concentration camp and then a displaced persons camp, arrives in America in 1950 and settles in New York. Begins making a film diary from the time of his arrival and maintains this over the years. First public film in 1953 *Grand Street* a documentary about Brooklyn; followed by the avant-garde feature *Guns in the Trees* (1960-62) a film of protest. In 1955 becomes publisher for *Film Culture*. From 1965 begins to film Salvador Dali: *Glimpses of Salvador Dali*. In 1960 helps to establish The New American Cinema Group. In 1962 establishes the Filmmakers Cooperative. In 1963 assists his brother Adolfo in making the feature *Hallelujah the hills* and goes on to make *The Brig* (1964) from Kenneth Brown's play about a penal military camp. In 1966 makes the *Milbrook Report* — raid on the headquarters of Timothy Leary, followed by *Notes, Sketches and Diaries* and his latest film *Lost Lost Lost*. Establishes the Film Anthology Archives in 1970.

Visionary Experiments

by George Csaba Koller



Bridge at Electrical Storm by Al Razutis, 1966-73.

Human beings have always had visions. The more sensitive of them have been able to perceive the world on a visionary plane. Great artists as well as seers throughout the ages have certainly been able to do this. An Indian holy man*, writing over thirty years ago, describes an early visionary experience this way:

"All objects within my panoramic gaze trembled and vibrated like quick motion pictures. My body... the pillared courtyard, the furniture and floor, the trees and sunshine, occasionally became violently agitated, until all melted into a luminescent sea..."

Most people who have experienced some form of cosmic consciousness, talk of an all pervading light. Light is the essence of creation. "The essence of film is light and time," Michael Snow once told me. So it is not coincidental that one should refer to the analogy of "quick motion pictures" when talking about a visionary experience.

Nor is it unusual to refer to visions when writing about film. It is only a matter of time before science discovers a way to attach an electrode to your brain which will pick up all your dreams, for instance, and design a recording device which will play them back to you in living colour the next morning. Until then, in order to view man's subconscious, we'll just have to rely on our film and video artists to interpret their own visions for us on celluloid or magnetic tape.

I've spent the past year travelling from B.C. to Cape Breton, doing research on experimental filmmakers in Canada, with a possible book in mind. Eighty-five interviews and hundreds of hours of films later, I have come to the conclusion that film as art is alive and well in Canada, despite the big push for a commercial film industry in recent years. Next to Toronto, Vancouver yielded the greatest number of experimental filmmakers, most notably David Rimmer, Al Sens, Byron Black, Tom Braidwood, Ken Wallace, Rick Patton, Bix Milanich, Kalle Lasn, and the most prolific of them all, Al Razutis. /*Paramahansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*, p. 167.

Al Razutis is perhaps Canada's most intriguing film artist. He refuses to talk about his background, saying only that he comes from Lithuanian-American stock and that he moved up to Vancouver in 1968. His formal education was in physics, math and chemistry, and he began making films in San Francisco in the late sixties. After moving to B.C., he supported himself by running an underground cinema with his wife. It was a place called the Intermedia Co-op, set up to distribute and exhibit the works of the experimental filmmakers working on the West Coast at the time: David Rimmer, Keith Roadan, Gary Lee Nova and Razutis.

Until recently, Razutis lived and worked in a small studio under a Vancouver Bridge. He called the place Visual Alchemy, which is also the title of one of his films, and used it not only for experimental film work, but holography, video and sound experiments as well. Its main features included a home-made optical

printer, a home-made laser projector, a video synthesizer and a Moog synthesizer. When the building was torn down, Razutis decided to terminate this chapter in his life. He decided to leave everything behind and move to an island in the South Pacific. His last communiqué was a post card from Pago Pago.

Luckily, I still caught him in his studio for an interview and spent a very pleasant Saturday night with this elusive artist, drinking vodka and orange juice and tripping on some excellent magic mushrooms. Running his fingers through his short cropped blonde hair and pushing his shades back up the bridge of his nose, Razutis explained the creative chemistry that gives birth to his films:

"Basically I'm a writer and a painter, before being a filmmaker. Literature and filmmaking inhabit opposite ends of the brain. If you connect them into a common language, there usually ensues a very strange struggle. This means that images have to be materialized in a certain kind of light, to go beyond just the immediate effect of the image. The metaphoric content of the image has to be brought out. So you begin to try to discover ways of articulating the metaphoric process as being a singular phenomenon. In other words, a dynamic process would be the same as a dynamic metaphor. Consequently, the image making process became a great concern of mine. That development, which was embodied in a machine called the optical printer, resulted in the kind of film language used in my films like *The Moon at Evernight*. When you become aware of the effects of an image, then you're much more sensitive to the way that image can manipulate emotions."

"In *The Moon at Evernight* there are a lot of horrendous actions going on that had been abstracted to the point that they're only suggestions of the action, and they're not even overt suggestions. There's a throat cutting sequence, for instance. When I read a book about subliminal advertising, *Subliminal Seduction*, I realized that some of the techniques it was talking about seemed to be analogous to the process I had been exploring as an art form, rather than an advertising technique. *Aaeon* has a lot of the same technique, probably less premeditated. It has numerous image overlays, things that are intended to slip in and slip out. The metaphors were allowed to develop as freely, as directly as possible."

Razutis is a wizard on the optical printer, and he also has a thorough knowledge of film chemistry, enabling him to create vividly colourful visuals by the manipulation of film printing stocks. Utilizing images from his extensive stock footage library, he patiently rephotographs them frame by frame, to create marvelous superimpositions and often abstract, dancing shapes and colours. He often uses video synthesized images as well, most successfully in 98.3 KHz: *Bridge at Electrical Storm* and *Runway Queen*, both from the *Amerika* series.

This includes thirteen of his most recent films, which

may be screened as a two hour package or individually. *O Kanada!* is a six minute rendition of our national anthem juxtaposed with scenes of violence in Quebec. *Cities of Eden* depicts the great metropolises that grew out of the industrial revolution, seen in Razutis' vision as optically doctored and coloured documentary footage from the turn of the century. *Runway Queen* shows a series of strippers bumping and grinding in synthetic video colour, to the point of pleasant abstraction. *Bridge at Electrical Storm*, his most popular film, was originally shot on super 8mm in San Francisco, crossing the Bay bridge over and over again. He later decided to blow it up, add video images and optical printing, but keeping the cyclical repetition of the image intact. The sound track is a static filled "Best of Fifty Years of Radio" record, featuring subliminally such voices as F.D.R., Hitler, and Kukla, Fran, and Ollie.

Razutis describes some of his work in occult terms, referring to the Arcanums of the Initiative Tarot, and using poetic phrases such as "spherical alchemy of creation," "regeneration by polarity," and "rainbow aural sky waterfalls of fyre & flow." *Aaeon* is his personal favourite of this genre, a definitive statement in a filmic language developed during long hours on the optical printer. His visual essays on the origin of film feature basic images by the masters Melies and Lumiere, doctored by Razutis in loving homage. His attempt to capture the holographic process on film, *Visual Alchemy*, is less successful.

His total output, however, of twenty five films is so impressive, that we can only hope that this great visual artist will some day return from his island paradise and pick up where he left off. My next area of research was Ontario, where I discovered the increasingly popular Michael Snow school of filmmaking.

Michael does not have to be introduced to the readers of this magazine, but perhaps some of the students in his unofficial "school" ought to be. Snow has been lauded by critics for founding a totally new film language, which is post-Warhol, post-Minimalist. Well, if that's the case, then he is certainly getting some answers in his new language to his cinematically posed questions.

His most gifted "pupils" are Keith Lock and Jim Anderson, who started making 8mm movies together in high school and continued in 16mm throughout their years at York University. *Base Tranquillity* won the best animation prize at the 1970 Amateur Film Festival, and it was scratched directly on to film, including the soundtrack. It's a very imaginative rocket story, embracing all of man's technological achievements, including the landing on the moon. *Touched* is a very sensitively done documentary about children, using some cameraless animation techniques as well. *Arnold and Work, Bike, and Eat* are experiments in the dramatic genre, utilizing a certain amount of "underground" camerawork.

Jim Anderson made some films on his own as well,

and is continuing to do so now that the creative pair have split. *Scream of a Butterfly* is another award winning cameraless animation film, *Yonge Street* and *Royal Ontario Museum* capture these two Toronto landmarks in a dizzying barrage of images, *Ontario Land* and *Sun Movie* are painted and scratched "experiments with colour, time intervals and sound." But his magnum opus is a 90 minute three-reeler entitled *Gravity is Not Sad, But Glad*.

Gravity is one of the most imaginative films ever made. It seems to be an homage to Snow's *Rameau's Nephew...* film, not only because of its length, but also for its seemingly unrelated sequences which add up to a complete whole at the end. The flip book sequence is sure to become a classic: Anderson utilizes every imaginable material to paste onto the pages of his flip books, including lighted candles and party favours. The "yes," "no" sequence was shot in the basement of the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre and features a string of celebrated film people, including this writer. Since some of us are in *Rameau's Nephew* as well, there is a further connection. The sequence with Jim reading random sentences out of a chain of books in his library, is brilliant. As is the media overload sequence, and the final "gravity" scene, where the earth's magnetic pull is thrown to the winds and our couple start uncontrollably whirling according to the cyclical nature of things.

Keith Lock's major work so far is *Everything Everywhere Again Alive*, a more than an hour long loving look at a rural Ontario commune. Keith's background is Chinese, and the oriental philosophy contained in this film is ample enough proof that he hasn't lost touch with his roots. Crisp, simple images capture the tools needed to build a barn: an axe, a saw, a hammer. Frame lines around certain scenes indicate precision, exactness. Subjective camerawork of barn being built, maple trees being sapped, or a communal swim, gently emphasizes the elements of this alternate lifestyle, which is in harmony with nature, but is considered revolutionary by the society which produced these young people.

An extremely calm yet quietly assertive Lock recalls the circumstances: "I actually took three years to make that film. I moved up north to the farm commune. It took about eighteen months to build the barn, the same length of time to cut the film. I wasn't in a rush to finish it. I worded on it all the time, but I had no deadline to meet. Because I knew I could live on the farm and not have to worry about money or anything. I had already paid for the stock and the workprint and I had a Canada Council grant to finish it."

"The film is about human construction, human nourishment, and natural processes. It requires common sense and mysterious uncommon sense at the same time. When the film was being put together, I must have screened the material, which was basically documentary in nature, hundreds of times trying to decide what to do with it. I noticed that whenever certain parts came up, I "heard" sounds from the picture in what was probably some kind of sensory cross-over. These sounds were duplicated as nearly as possible with a sound synthesizer and then added to the picture in the places they belonged. Initially, shot followed shot followed shot, but I didn't want this to happen, because I didn't want to be tied to presenting reality in the documentary sense and also because the shots themselves did not follow each other continuously as they were being exposed."

Other Ontario film artists working in the Snow vein include his wife Joyce Wieland, Raphael Bendahan, Frieder Hochheim, and to a certain extent Rick Hancox and Lorne Marin. Hancox' *House Movie* and Marin's *Rhapsody on a Theme from a House Movie* betray a further connection with each other's work, while Hochheim's *Plurality of Vibratory Circumstances* is a dadaist dialogue between the filmmaker and himself. Bendahan's latest *Kitchen Sink* certainly emulates Snow in concept, and whereas *La Région Centrale* is a three hour cyclical landscape, Wieland's

Reason Over Passion is an 80 minute horizontal or linear one, although it actually predates her husband's film.

The last leg of my journey turned out to be the most adventuresome. After spending a fair amount of time in Montreal interviewing both independent filmmakers and those at the Film Board, I headed East with a friend in a Toyota. Drove through magnificent old Quebec City, where Mario Bolduc attempted to explain why quebecois filmmakers aren't interested in the experimental genre. Picked up a hitch-hiking young lady from the south of France, and drove through torrential rainfall to St. John, New Brunswick, where we were welcomed by Richard Davis, who had made a magnificent four minute film about a swan in a pond, called *Watercolor*. He shot it in Super 8mm back in Toronto, then blew it up frame by frame, adding filters to create layer upon layer of rainbow coloured images.

After visiting some friends near Amherst, Nova Scotia, we drove on to magnificent Cape Breton. There, in the small village of Mabou, live Robert Frank, Walter and Ellis Delorey, and Neal Livingston. Four experimental film artists in such a small place! Frank moved to Cape Breton in the early seventies for solitude and isolation. He is an internationally known still photographer. Equally known are his "underground" films, such as *Pull My Daisy* made in 1959, featuring Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, et al., with Jack Kerouac reading his own narration. It's a typical or I should say atypical beatnik film complete with be-bop jazz and poetry. More recently, Frank did the photography on a Rolling Stones album cover, and subsequently he was asked by them to film their North American tour. The resulting *Cocksucker Blues* is so explicit in its depiction of backstage antics such as balling groupies and shooting heroin, that the Stones sued Frank in court barring the film's release. A sheriff even visited Frank's Mabou home trying to seize his personal copy of the film, but luckily he didn't. Now the Stones have settled out of court, and Frank is able once again to show the film on the art gallery circuit, provided the provincial censor boards allow it.

Frank also shot an experimental drama on an island off the coast of Cape Breton. The screenplay was co-authored with Rudi Wurlitzer, and features local idioms mouthed by an experimental theatre group from New York. The fantastic local scenery is made to look bleak in black and white and the film is somewhat of a puzzle. Now Wurlitzer and Frank are again working on a script, this time a western, to be shot this summer in British Columbia. Frank says he is too overwhelmed by the magnificence of the scenery near Mabou, where rolling hills touch lovely beaches. He cannot shoot another film there, it is enough to live and be a part of it all.

Down the road a few miles Walter and Ellis Delorey decided to build an unusual house, after moving to Nova Scotia from Toronto two years ago. It is a circular wooden structure with a geodesic dome on top, which will house a studio. Walter and Ellis started working on films together after meeting at Ryerson in Toronto. They went up to the Yukon several summers in a row, being dropped off by helicopter each time to shoot nature footage in the wilderness. *Great Rain Mountain*, *Cold August Wind*, *Deep Blue Sleep*, and *Green Feathered Sea* are some of the films that resulted from these trips, mostly artistically composed shots of flora and fauna, cut to synthesized music.

When not putting the finishing touches on the house, chopping wood, or tending the garden, Walter and Ellis are hard at work on *Silver*, a nature fantasy inspired by a dream and Walter's fascination with comic book heroes. Walter roams the woods with his Bolex picking up shots of deer, rabbits, ants and caterpillars, while Ellis makes beautifully elaborate costumes for the half man, half naimal characters in the film. The bear costume is especially powerful: it is made of blue fur with a real bear's head painted blue. Walter plays all the characters while Ellis films him. The bear meets death (symbolic of the leg — hold trap) and must go

through the sub-atomic world and be saved by the Silver Shaman, who lives in a bubble. The fox, the moose, the dragonfly, and all the other animal characters help the bear in his plight. An ambitious project, and one worth waiting for, to be sure.

Neal Livingston went to school in Toronto and made *Aura-Gone* while still a student. It is one long continuous shot of a car pulling up to Mount Sinai hospital and then the glass doors of the hospital are shown at length, with people going in and out and the reflections on the glass moving around. "Reminiscent of being left in a car waiting as a child," commented Natalie Edwards in Cinema Canada. "His less than successful *One Side, Left Corner* is about a Halifax couple who have communication problems. Neal is abandoning the experimental and concentrating on the documentary end of things these days. His *Interim Sketches of a Year of Austerity* is about young, unemployed Nova Scotians, while his new film is about the insecticide spraying controversy on Cape Breton.

It is not unusual seeing young filmmakers like Neal Livingston sitting at a Steebeck in the Film Board's Halifax offices. It seems that the regional production offices of the Board are more than eager to help film co-operatives in their area with free stock and processing, camera equipment and editing facilities. Even in Montreal, young filmmakers are sometimes helped by the Board. Only in Toronto is the Board unresponsive to the needs of filmmakers just starting out.

The Halifax Film Co-op was founded by Chuck Lapp and others after he returned from his experiences with the Toronto Filmmakers Co-op. While the latter has gone commercial and is at present in deep financial trouble, the former has managed to become what every co-op should be: a loosely structured production group, where people work on each other's films and generally help each other out in a communally productive spirit. The ownership of the films is split with the co-op according to a formula. Lionel Simons has produced *Masterpiece* about a sterile, futuristic society, where everything is painted white, with black numbers on the wall differentiating the various cells. There is no place for humour or art in such surroundings, but our protagonist cannot stop laughing or painting, for that matter, until he escapes through a window he paints on the wall. The special effects are beautifully done.

Chuck Lapp has gone on to direct an ambitious, big budget half hour drama for the National Film Board, but others are still carrying on producing shorts in the co-op tradition, with a lot of help from the Board. But where are today's experimenters in the organization that gave us Norman McLaren and Arthur Lipsett? Mostly in the animation department, with Caroline Leaf, Ishu Patel, Ryan Larkin and Jacques Drouin producing excellent experimental animation on a regular basis.

Visions? Drouin's *Mindscape* is an outstanding example of pin screen animation depicting inner states of mind, while Ryan Larkin's *Street Musique* is an excellent use of colour pixilation and drawing/painting to stimulate the imagination. Ishu Patel manages to capture the power of nuclear energy using thousands of beads, and Caroline Leaf's sand animation certainly captures form and movement in a unique vision. It is up to us to see and applaud these films which enrich our collective consciousness with moments of aesthetic enjoyment and some deep insights into the human condition. ■

Note: most of the independently made films are available for sale or rental from the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, 406 Jarvis St. Toronto. The NFB films are of course obtainable through the Board.

George Csaba Koller is a university trained filmmaker, who was editor/publisher of Cinema Canada magazine for three years. He spent the past year researching a book on experimental filmmakers in Canada.

LE CINÉMA EXPÉRIMENTAL

— 1978: New York/Montréal

par John W. Locke

Le texte original suit la traduction française.

J'ai récemment passé plusieurs jours à New York pour visionner des films expérimentaux réalisés par des jeunes cinéastes qui luttent pour se faire une réputation. Il faut se rappeler que même si le nombre de cinéastes du cinéma expérimental à New York est minuscule comparé au nombre d'artistes qui travaillent dans d'autres média, il y a un groupe représentant l'ordre établi du cinéma expérimental: ces cinéastes étaient les Exclus.

Je suis revenu de mon séjour saturé de films, heureux des espérances qu'ils donnaient et songeur quant à la raison pour laquelle je devais aller à New York pour les voir. Pourquoi n'y a-t-il pas un groupe représentant l'ordre établi du cinéma expérimental à Montréal avec des jeunes cinéastes qui ne sont pas de la partie luttant pour se faire accepter? Il y a certainement un groupe représentant l'ordre établi de la peinture. Où sont les cinéastes? Afin d'aborder ces questions, je ferai quelques observations d'ordre général sur les cinéastes Newyorkais et leurs films. Il est évident que ces observations représentent mon impression globale et ne s'appliquent pas uniformément à tous les cinéastes ou leurs films. Elles sont toutefois fondamentalement exactes et je crois maintenant que cette vue d'ensemble du groupe Newyorkais est instructive quant à la situation à Montréal.

NEW YORK

Les cinéastes sont souvent gênés lorsque l'on parle d'eux comme des artistes. Les cinéastes commerciaux surtout ne se voient pas comme des artistes. Ceux qui font du documentaire parlent de leur travail comme s'ils étaient des journalistes plutôt que des artistes des arts visuels et les cinéastes qui font des films de fiction semblent avoir plus en commun avec les romanciers à succès qu'avec les artistes des arts visuels. Les cinéastes Newyorkais que j'ai rencontrés n'éprouvaient aucune hésitation: ils se voyaient comme des artistes des arts visuels. Il n'était pas nécessaire d'aborder avec eux ce sujet, tout comme il ne le serait pas nécessaire avec un peintre. Ces cinéastes se situaient sans ambiguïté dans le monde de l'art. Ils étaient des artistes et des cinéastes et non des cinéastes qui avaient trébuché de façon maladroite sur le mot "artiste". Leur milieu était So Ho et non le centre de production du cinéma commercial situé à l'ouest des avenues 50 de New York.

Ces cinéastes ont aussi pris position en ce qui concerne les films des cinéastes du cinéma expérimental qui les précédèrent. Comme d'autres jeunes artistes des arts visuels, ils semblaient plus préoccupés par leurs prédécesseurs immédiats et leurs contemporains qu'orientés explicitement vers la tradition historique de leur médium. Ils connaissent mieux Hollis Frampton que Maya Deren et Deren mieux que Hans Richter ou Oskar Fischinger. Ils semblent toutefois réaliser qu'ils font partie d'un mouvement du cinéma expérimental qui tient une place dans l'histoire du cinéma. Cette notion de faire partie d'une tradition historique ne s'est pas manifestée dans leurs conversations comme une surestimation de leur propre importance mais plutôt comme la manifestation du courage de continuer leur travail.

Une autre caractéristique frappante chez ces cinéastes est le fait qu'aucun d'entre eux ne gagne sa

vie de ses films pour ne pas dire plus. En fait, aucun de ces cinéastes ne reçoit plus qu'un montant insignifiant pour la vente ou la location de ses films. Ils peuvent à l'occasion se voir octroyer une bourse mais ils vivent essentiellement d'autre chose que du cinéma. Ils ne s'attendent pas non plus à jamais vivre de leurs films dans le futur. Les jeunes peintres newyorkais peuvent aspirer à la réussite et aux rémunérations en espèces qui l'accompagnent. Les jeunes cinéastes du cinéma expérimental peuvent rêver de réussite mais ils savent qu'ils seront toujours pauvres à moins qu'ils ne décident d'enseigner ou de monter un spectacle ambulant pour montrer leurs films et en discuter. D'après moi, cela signifie qu'il faut plus de courage pour être un cinéaste du cinéma expérimental à New York que pour être un peintre à New York. Cela exige un engagement constant à l'art.

Même si ces cinéastes ne s'attendaient pas à être directement rémunérés pour leur travail, ils s'attendaient à ce que leurs films soient montrés. Il existe plusieurs endroits à New York où on montre les oeuvres du cinéma expérimental: The Collective for Living Cinema, Film Forum, Millennium, Anthology Film Archives, The Whitney Museum, The Museum of Modern Art. Plusieurs de ces organisations mettent l'accent sur les travaux des jeunes cinéastes du cinéma expérimental alors que d'autres ont plutôt une orientation dans le sens du documentaire social ou une orientation historique; ils présentent cependant tous, à l'occasion, des films expérimentaux. Une des principales préoccupations des cinéastes que j'ai rencontrés était la difficulté de faire visionner leurs films. Ceci faisait partie de leur lutte contre le groupe représentant l'ordre établi ou, si vous voulez, leur lutte pour y entrer. Il existe néanmoins des salles de cinéma à New York où ces cinéastes peuvent aspirer à faire visionner leurs films et lorsqu'ils y parviendront, il y aura un public. Leur lutte leur est pénible mais elle a un but et c'est une lutte réaliste. Ils obtiendront leurs visionnements.

Ce serait vous induire en erreur que de suggérer que ces jeunes expérimentateurs forment un groupe organisé. Ce n'est pas le cas. Ils ont cependant plus en commun qu'ils ne le réalisent. Ils sont après tout unis par le fait d'être les Exclus. Ils font plus spécifiquement partie du public du cinéma expérimental et parce qu'ils sont témoins des développements en cours, ils peuvent réagir à ceux-ci. Ils ont un bon sentiment de ce qui se passe couramment dans le cinéma expérimental. Cette connaissance de l'oeuvre de leurs contemporains est un aspect important du développement d'un art ayant une tradition historique comme le cinéma expérimental. Je ne serais pas particulièrement impressionné par un jeune cinéaste solitaire qui aurait décidé de fuir dans un lieu sauvage en 1967 après avoir vu *Wavelength* de Michael Snow et en sortirait en 1977 avec le résultat de dix ans de réflexion et de travail sous la forme d'un film de trois heures nous montrant une vue panoramique d'un paysage sauvage, ne réalisant pas que Snow avait terminé *La région centrale* en 1971.

Les artistes doivent se tenir au courant du travail de leurs contemporains. L'acte individuel de réaliser un film est peut être l'oeuvre d'une seule personne dans certains cas, mais chaque film expérimental sera comparé aux autres films. Le travail devrait tenir com-

pte du milieu ne serait-ce que pour le rejeter. Même Stan Brakhage descend des montagnes occasionnellement pour voir ce qui se passe.

On retrouve un autre lien entre ces cinéastes dans le type de film qu'ils désirent réaliser dans le futur. Au cours de nos discussions, ils n'ont jamais laissé entendre qu'ils désiraient faire un documentaire conventionnel ou un film narratif. Ils ne font pas du cinéma expérimental temporairement en attendant l'opportunité de faire un documentaire ou un long métrage. Ce sont des cinéastes du cinéma expérimental engagés et ils n'ont pas l'ambition de faire des films industriels.

Les caractéristiques techniques de leurs films constituent le lien final entre ces cinéastes. À peu d'exception près, leurs films sont muets, en 16 mm. et ont 18 images par seconde. L'usage du 16 mm. est maintenant très courant et cela ne fait qu'empêcher les salles de cinéma commerciales conçues pour le 35 mm., de les présenter. Leur décision d'utiliser la vitesse de 18 images par seconde ne détermine toutefois pas qui verra leurs films. Par exemple, la plupart des projecteurs 16 mm. au Xénon ou à arc installés en permanence fonctionnent uniquement à 24 images par seconde. Les fabricants présumant que tous les films en 16 mm. sont munis d'une trame sonore et qu'ils doivent être montrés à une vitesse sonore de 24 images par seconde. Cette présomption signifie que ces films expérimentaux de 18 images par seconde ne peuvent être montrés dans les salles de projection les mieux équipées parce que les meilleurs projecteurs ne fonctionnent généralement qu'à 24 images par seconde. Les membres de ce groupe de cinéastes du cinéma expérimental sont arrivés à la décision d'utiliser la vitesse de 18 images par seconde indépendamment pour un certain nombre de raisons: C'était moins dispendieux car on utilise une quantité moindre de film vierge pour arriver à un film achevé de même durée. Ils ont choisi de réaliser des films muets par souci d'esthétique et en conséquence, la raison habituelle pour tourner à la vitesse sonore courante (24 images par seconde) n'était pas pertinente. Il était entendu que les salles de visionnement ouvertes aux jeunes cinéastes du cinéma expérimental auraient probablement des projecteurs portatifs qui fonctionnent à 18 images par seconde ainsi qu'à 24 images par seconde.

Après ma rencontre avec ces jeunes cinéastes Newyorkais, je suis revenu à Montréal très encouragé par la situation du cinéma expérimental. Les membres de ce groupe ont beaucoup en commun en tant que cinéastes du cinéma expérimental mais j'hésite à dire qu'ils forment un mouvement stylistique. J'hésiterais aussi à me prononcer sur la nécessité ou la désirabilité des mouvements stylistiques; ceci n'est donc pas un problème. Ce qui m'intéresse surtout chez ces cinéastes, en dehors de leurs films bien entendu, c'est le simple fait qu'ils existent: leur existence implique que la tradition du cinéma expérimental se perpétue.

MONTRÉAL

Je me suis posé une sérieuse question au moment où de retour à Montréal, je me suis mis à réfléchir sur l'expérience newyorkaise: pourquoi ai-je dû aller à

New York pour voir du cinéma expérimental? La première partie de cette réponse est évidente: la pénurie de cinéastes du cinéma expérimental à Montréal. Cette réponse nous mène cependant à un autre "pourquoi?". Pourquoi y a-t-il un manque de cinéastes du cinéma expérimental à Montréal? Il me semblerait excessif de prétendre pouvoir fournir une réponse simple à cette question mais je crois que nous pouvons comprendre la lacune dans le cinéma expérimental montréalais en examinant les contrastes entre le milieu des jeunes cinéastes du cinéma expérimental dont je parlais et le milieu montréalais.

Montréal est un véritable centre du cinéma. De grandes productions internationales sont tournées ici; l'Office national du film est située ici; il y a un centre actif de films d'exploitation; et il y a eu un mouvement prolifique de films de fiction au Québec. L'industrie du cinéma est très active et c'est très bien ainsi. L'activité de l'industrie du cinéma ne semble malheureusement avoir aucun effet positif en ce qui concerne la situation du cinéma expérimental. Les professionnels de l'industrie du cinéma dominant le milieu du cinéma à Montréal et ces professionnels sont précisément ces gens qui ne savent que faire du mot "art". Ils sont peut-être en fait des artistes mais le mot les gêne. Ils sont après tout dans les affaires, dans l'industrie. Je spécule, et je ne peux guère faire plus, sur le fait que la domination de l'industrie dans le milieu du cinéma pourrait bien être un facteur dans l'absence de communauté active de cinéma expérimental à Montréal. La distance psychologique entre So Ho et le centre du cinéma newyorkais situé dans les avenues 50, à l'ouest, est beaucoup plus considérable que la distance entre la pensée de quelque cinéaste montréalais et l'Office national du film. C'est comme si Montréal n'était pas assez grand pour permettre aux cinéastes du cinéma expérimental de se soustraire à l'influence de l'industrie: il se trouve toujours un ami qui a besoin d'aide pour un grand tournage ou bien il y a toujours la possibilité d'obtenir l'appui de l'O.N.F. pour un petit documentaire émouvant mais à portée sociale. Parce qu'il est facile de faire des films industriels à Montréal, il devient très difficile de continuer à réaliser ces films muets de 18 images par seconde, surtout lorsqu'il n'y a pas de public ou d'endroits pour les montrer.

Il n'est pas nécessaire qu'une communauté de cinéma expérimental soit très grande. La communauté de New York est minuscule comparée au nombre d'artistes autres que les artistes du cinéma, mais c'est une communauté. Elle a ses salles de cinéma, ses publications, ses critiques et une situation reconnue dans le monde de l'art. Ce réseau de relations permet aux cinéastes d'exister sans être engloutis par l'industrie cinématographique. Ce sens de la communauté est une des choses qui manquent à Montréal. Non seulement un cinéaste du cinéma expérimental travaillant à Montréal travaillerait contre le courant, mais il le ferait seul, sans encouragement, sans appui. Les Exclus de New York savent où se trouve le groupe représentant l'ordre établi mais à Montréal, il n'y a pas de groupe représentant l'ordre établi.

L'absence de ce groupe est aussi liée à l'absence de tradition historique. En art, les concepts ne sortent pas du vide. Ils se développent par rapport à ce qui a déjà existé. Il n'y a pas eu de cinéastes du cinéma expérimental importants à Montréal au cours des années '40, '50 ou '60 à qui les jeunes cinéastes pourraient s'identifier. Les cinéastes du cinéma expérimental montréalais attendent toujours leur Borduas, leur Maya Deren. Cette absence de tradition dans le cinéma expérimental devient apparente lorsque je visionne les films des jeunes cinéastes indépendants montréalais. Je suis étonné de retrouver dans ces films des versions miniatures des films conventionnels de fiction ou de non-fiction. Ils sont souvent plus audacieux, et certainement meilleurs, que les films commerciaux, mais il est évident qu'ils sont modelés sur les films de l'industrie plutôt que sur les films du cinéma expérimental. Les films expérimentaux qui sont montrés localement me semblent faire partie du genre film d'étudiants. Ce genre inclut des

films tels ceux basés sur la pixilation ou l'imagerie surréaliste et ceux sur des sujets tels que les difficultés de faire du cinéma ou des imitations de classiques du cinéma. C'est un genre merveilleux mais ce n'est pas du cinéma expérimental. Il est intéressant de noter que la plupart des étudiants se détournent en ce moment de leur propre genre; ils font des documentaires miniatures style O.N.F. et des mélodrammes pour la télévision. Les cinéastes du cinéma expérimental font des films d'étudiants et les étudiants font des films industriels.

Mon argument final sur la situation du cinéma expérimental concerne les salles de cinéma. Il est essentiel pour les cinéastes du cinéma expérimental d'avoir une salle de cinéma et un public. Il n'est pas nécessaire que ni l'un, ni l'autre ne soit très grand, mais ces cinéastes doivent savoir qu'il sera possible de montrer leurs films à un public intéressé. Ce qui caractérise le milieu newyorkais c'est qu'il existe plusieurs endroits où pour ces cinéastes, peuvent faire visionner leurs films. Ils montrent leurs films et voient ceux des autres. Ils tirent leur sentiment de communauté du fait d'être près des cinéastes, des critiques et d'un public intéressé. Cette situation est l'une des composantes essentielles pour qu'une communauté de cinéma expérimentale soit viable. J'espère sincèrement que Le Cinéma parallèle, la nouvelle salle de cinéma à Montréal, jouera ce rôle, mais il sera impossible de savoir avant au moins un an.

J'hésite à faire des généralisations colossales mais je crois qu'une généralisation s'impose ici: mes observations concernant Montréal ne s'appliquent pas seulement à Montréal mais à tout le Canada. J'aimerais bien avoir tort au sujet de ma généralisation mais je crois que j'ai plutôt raison. Il y a quelques excellents cinéastes du cinéma expérimental canadiens et québécois mais il n'y a pas de communauté, pas de mouvement, pas de tradition.

LES CINÉASTES NEWYORKAIS

Maintenant que j'ai parlé du milieu montréalais par rapport à celui de New York, je serai plus spécifique sur les films de ces Exclus de New York. Je traiterai de leurs films brièvement avec l'intention de donner un aperçu du type et de la qualité de leur travail; les paragraphes qui suivent devront être considérés comme l'introduction de l'approche critique avec laquelle ces films devront être considérés plus tard. Dans un autre article, je traiterai plus en profondeur de deux des cinéastes rencontrés à New York, Vincent Grenier et J. J. Murphy.

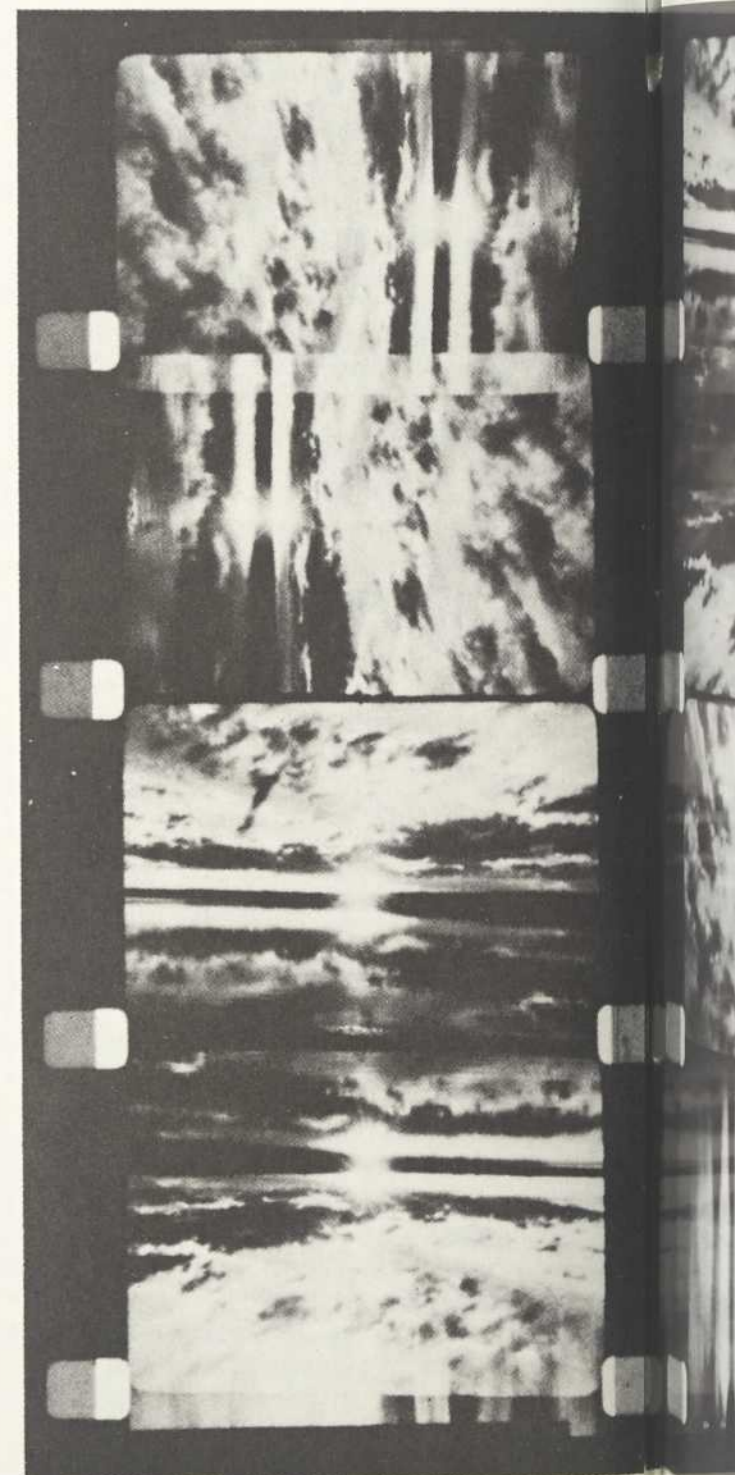
AILINE MAYER: À première vue, le film intitulé XX apparaît comme une abstraction géométrique en mouvement mais on reconnaît graduellement dans l'image, des parties d'un corps humain, vues d'en bas. À ce stade, le film apparaît toujours comme un dessin géométrique mais il devient lisible. Il s'agit d'une personne sautant sur un tremplin, filmée par en-dessous du tremplin, celui-ci dominant dans l'image. Pendant que ce processus d'interprétation se produisait, une autre caractéristique de l'image devenait apparente. À cause du rebondissement rythmé et très peu varié, le spectateur a le temps de regarder le film attentivement. Par cet examen minutieux, on découvre des taches d'eau sur la pellicule, comme si le film avait été endommagé en laboratoire. Au moment où on réalise ceci, le film se termine sur une vue de l'eau de la piscine et de la personne plongeant.

Ceci peut paraître simpliste, mais lorsque l'on comprend le style de Mayer, le film prend alors d'autres dimensions plus complexes. Ce cinéaste fait elle-même son travail de laboratoire et ses films reflètent ce contrôle additionnel des images. Puisque la plupart des cinéastes du cinéma expérimental, à peu d'exceptions près, envoient leurs films à des laboratoires commerciaux, Mayer a profité de cette voie inexplorée du cinéma et en a tiré son propre style. Sachant qu'elle contrôle sa copie, les taches d'eau n'apparaissent plus comme étant accidentelles. Elles sont un élément

essentiel de son film, sinon la clé. Il faut se rappeler que XX a été tourné avec une caméra montée sous un tremplin, presque dans l'eau, et l'action du film mène à un plongeur qui, bien entendu, éclaboussera la caméra. XX est le nom d'un type de film en même temps que le titre du film. En regardant le film de cette manière, on accorde aux taches d'eau une signification narrative parce qu'elles présagent ce qui va se passer. Les taches d'eau réfèrent en plus d'une manière fascinante au processus du tournage et au processus du développement. Le style de Mayer est extrêmement intelligent et XX est un film d'une qualité étonnante.

MARK GRAFF: En regardant plusieurs parties d'un film en huit parties et un film appelé X, plusieurs des préoccupations de Graff me sont devenues évidentes. Il utilise parfois une image au point mais il s'intéresse surtout aux images obscurcies ou initialement méconnaissables. L'image claire de l'intérieur d'un appartement devient une masse de points tourbillonnant accompagnés d'éclats de lumière; il s'agit d'une vue panoramique d'un appartement mais elle est masquée de sorte qu'une petite partie de l'écran, en bas à droite, nous laisse entrevoir la pièce; on reconnaît un corps nu mais l'image de ce corps n'est pas au point. Le but de ses films est de frustrer le spectateur dans son désir de tout voir et de tout comprendre ce qu'il voit. Ce sont des films explicitement antiréalistes. La séquence probablement la plus énergique est basée sur une série d'images abstraites en mouvement que nous comprenons graduellement lorsqu'elles se précisent au fur et à mesure que la lumière est admise entre deux corps humains en mouvement.

From *The Rainbow Bridge*, 1975 by Vicki Peterson.



JIM JENNINGS: Ce cinéaste est un paysagiste représentant le monde comme seul le cinéma peut le faire. Il balaye le paysage, caméra en main, pointant souvent vers le ciel et les branches couvertes de feuilles. En fait, existe-t-il des paysages sans terre? Je ne crois pas, je devrais peut-être l'appeler un paysagiste céleste. L'image est tordue et apparaît souvent en plusieurs impressions. Il y a des variations dans le temps de pose, la mise au point et le travelling optique. Ses films s'apparentent à ceux de Brakhage et de Snow mais ils n'ont le style ni de l'un, ni de l'autre de ces cinéastes.

TIM KENNEDY: Peter Kubelka a élaboré une théorie selon laquelle les images d'un film sont formées de lumière et d'absence de lumière. Le film de Kennedy, *Revision*, réalisé en 1974, débute sans lumière et se développe au fur et à mesure que la lumière entre dans l'image. La lumière apparaît périodiquement sans rythme défini, comme si elle était admise par l'action du vent soulevant un rideau dans une pièce sombre. Lorsque la lumière apparaît, le spectateur voit dans la profondeur, encore plus loin que la noirceur, comme si le rideau cachait le monde. À la fin de ce film de quatre minutes, il devient évident que le spectateur voyait la lumière qui s'infiltrait entre les corps sombres de deux amants. Les rideaux sont des corps humains. Kennedy a réalisé un film abstrait sur l'acte sexuel en le filmant de sorte que le spectateur n'en saisisse le sens qu'à la toute fin du film. C'est un film dont il est intéressant de faire l'expérience.

Un autre film, *The Body*, a été réalisé en utilisant une caméra sans objectif. C'est une célébration de la

lumière très semblable à celle du film de Brakhage *A Text of Light*, à une échelle toutefois beaucoup plus modeste. La lumière est aussi le sujet du film *Hush*, un film réalisé en 1976, utilisant un temps de pose très long et dont le grain et une certaine image d'un pont rappellent Turner. Kennedy pourrait bien devenir un cinéaste dont la principale préoccupation est la possibilité infinie de variations de lumière.

RICHARD LEVINE: Un film peut être vu comme un système élaboré des ombres des taches qui se trouvent sur un bout de film projeté sur un écran. Ce cinéaste utilise son ombre dans ses films et ceci nous amène à un enchaînement d'idées complexe. Le film lui-même est un système d'ombres et Levine a filmé sa propre ombre qui est ensuite projetée sur un écran à l'aide d'un système basé sur les ombres. Ses films sont des exemples d'un type de film qui amène le spectateur à réfléchir sur la théorie cinématographique. Il a aussi fait un film très réussi qui utilise aussi son ombre mais où il s'agit d'une boucle de pellicule qui se détruit en passant à plusieurs reprises dans un projecteur.

CHARLIE AHEARN: Ce cinéaste travaille dans un style associé à *Zorns Lemma* de Hollis Frampton. D'une part, le film de Ahearn *KVYKMIND FILM* est un film éducatif mais son style est sans contredit celui d'un film expérimental. L'aspect éducatif du film a trait à la langue islandaise alors que le style est un montage rapide de mots et d'images.

PETER HUTTON: Tout comme le film de Ahearn possède un contenu éducatif dominé cependant par un style expérimental, les films de Hutton pourraient être décrits comme des documentaires de voyage où domine le style expérimental. Un de ses films porte sur l'Orient et fait l'usage du fondu au noir pour lier les images en douceur. On y retrouve des images telles un feu d'artifice la nuit, une petite fille s'amusant avec un python et un combat de coqs que nous pourrions retrouver dans un documentaire de voyage mais qui cependant deviennent quelque chose de très différent dans un film muet sans la narration habituelle. Un de ses films en cours est un documentaire de voyage mais cette fois sur New York avec de jolies images telles une silhouette de la ligne d'horizon de la ville, un orage et des pigeons en vol sur un fond de ciel nuageux où la lumière perce occasionnellement.

VICKI PETERSON: Le plus beau film que j'ai vu au cours de ma visite est *The Rainbow Bridge*, parties I et II. Dans ce film, le montage est poussé à son extrême car chacune des images "frame" est différente de la précédente et de la suivante. Il s'agit d'un film entièrement monté mais le montage n'est pas du type conventionnel fait sur un appareil à montage. Tout le montage s'est fait dans la caméra en exposant une image à la fois.

Les meilleures effets du film sont des motifs géométriques formés par une succession d'images et la persistance de notre vision. Un motif en forme de X est formé par l'alternance d'une image de la mer rencontrant le ciel, prise à un angle de 45° et d'une autre image du même sujet avec la caméra inclinée dans l'autre direction. La ligne d'horizon qui divise la mer et le ciel forme une des lignes du X lorsque la caméra est inclinée dans une direction et l'autre ligne du X lorsque la caméra est inclinée dans l'autre direction. Ces images alternées sont répétées pendant suffisamment de temps pour permettre au spectateur de percevoir la forme géométrique du X ainsi que les couleurs de la mer. L'effet est très réussi mais dans ce film, les effets sont meilleurs que le film pris dans son entier.

ROBERT ATTANASIO: *Lensound* est le seul film réalisé en Super 8 que j'ai vu au cours de ma visite et c'était le film le plus intelligent de tout le groupe. La synchronisation du son et de l'image est utilisée en 16 mm. surtout pour permettre au public d'entendre le dialogue et il est rarement utilisé avec succès dans le cinéma expérimental.

La synchronisation du son et de l'image des films en Super 8 tend à imiter les films en 16 mm. les plus ordinaires avec des résultats très peu intéressants com-

me on pourrait s'y attendre. Attanasio a réalisé un film en Super 8 avec synchronisation du son et de l'image sans que l'on y voit une seule bouche; il n'y a pas de personnage parlant dans ce film.

Le film comprend des images d'une rue et plus tard, d'une chambre, qui montrent à quel point le cinéaste est emballé par le fait d'utiliser une caméra syncro en nous laissant voir le microphone frappant légèrement l'objectif de façon rythmée. Le spectateur voit le microphone frappant légèrement sur l'objectif et sait que le film utilise la synchronisation du son et de l'image mais personne ne dit un mot et on n'y voit pas le cinéaste. Le cinéaste communique sa joie par des variations dans le rythme des petits coups accompagnés de mouvements de caméra s'apparentant à des mouvements de danse. Même s'il n'y a pas de raison technique pour laquelle ce film n'aurait pu être réalisé par une équipe utilisant un équipement Arriflex-Nagra-Sennheiser-Steenbeck de \$30,000., il n'aurait pas été réalisé avec un système de son synchronisé 16 mm. très dispendieux. C'est de façon très distincte un film tourné en Super 8, tourné avec une caméra robuste de quelques centaines de dollars. Le film n'est pas entièrement réussi en tant que film pris dans son entier, mais l'idée est une solution brillante à un problème du cinéma: comment la synchronisation peut-elle être incorporée au film expérimental.

ÉPILOGUE

En terminant, j'aimerais vous rappeler la structure et le but de cet essai. J'ai rencontré onze jeunes cinéastes du cinéma expérimental à New York, visionné leurs films et je me suis fait une idée du milieu qui les a encouragés dans leur travail. Ma façon de voir la situation newyorkaise m'a amené à réfléchir sur la pénurie de cinéastes du cinéma expérimental à Montréal; c'est pourquoi dans la partie suivante j'ai fait ressortir les contrastes entre Montréal et New York. J'espère que le fait de comprendre le milieu montréalais et ses difficultés aura pour effet d'encourager les cinéastes du cinéma expérimental en puissance à commencer à travailler. Montréal est sûrement assez grand pour l'industrie et le cinéma expérimental. Le Paul-Émile Borduas du cinéma expérimental serait-il en train de lire cet essai? Pour terminer, j'ai brièvement parlé des films que j'ai vus à New York afin de donner un aperçu de la diversité dans le cinéma expérimental. ■

Traduction: Nicole Morin-McCallum.

EXPERIMENTAL FILM 1978: New York/Montreal

by John W. Locke

Recently I spent several days in New York looking at experimental films by young filmmakers who were struggling to establish themselves. Bear in mind that even though the number of experimental filmmakers in New York is minuscule compared to the number of artists working in other mediums there is an experimental film establishment: These filmmakers were the Outsiders.

I came away from the visit saturated with films, pleased with the promise they showed, and thinking about why I had to go to New York to see them. Why is there not a Montreal experimental film establishment with young outsiders struggling to gain acceptance? There is certainly a Montreal painting establishment. Where are the filmmakers? In order to approach these



questions, I will make some general observations about the New York filmmakers and their films. Of course these observations represent my overall impressions and are not uniformly applicable to all the filmmakers or their films. However they are fundamentally accurate, and I now think that this overall view of the New York group is instructive in relation to the Montreal situation.

NEW YORK

Filmmakers are often uncomfortable when referred to as artists. Commercial filmmakers in particular do not usually think of themselves as artists. Documentary filmmakers will discuss their work as if they were journalists rather than visual artists, and fiction filmmakers often sound as if they have more in common with «best seller» novelists than with visual artists. The New York filmmakers I visited felt no hesitation: They saw themselves as visual artists. This topic did not need to be discussed, just as it would not be discussed with a painter. These filmmakers were unambiguously situated in the art world. They were artists and filmmakers, not filmmakers who stumbled awkwardly over the word «artist». Their milieu was So Ho, not the commercial film production centre in New York's West 50's.

These filmmakers also positioned themselves with respect to the work of earlier experimental filmmakers. Like other young visual artists, they seemed most aware of their immediate predecessors and contemporaries, rather than being explicitly oriented to the historical traditions of their medium. They knew Hollis Frampton better than Maya Deren and Deren better than Hans Richter or Oskar Fischinger. Even so they understood that they were part of an experimental film movement which has a place in the history of cinema. This sense of being a part of a historical tradition did not surface in their conversation as an inflated estimation of their own importance, rather it surfaced as the courage to continue their work.

Another salient characteristic of these filmmakers was that not one of them made their living from their films, and this is putting it mildly. Actually none of these filmmakers received more than trivial incomes from the sale and rental of their films. Occasionally they might receive a grant, but basically they supported themselves in some way other than making films. Also when they looked towards the future, they did not ever expect to make their living from their films. Young New York painters can dream of making it with the accompanying financial rewards. Young experimental filmmakers may dream of making it, but they know that they will still be impoverished, unless they teach or become a popular performer putting on a traveling lecture show with their films. To me this means being an experimental filmmaker is a more courageous act than being a painter in New York. It requires an unwavering commitment to the art.

Even though these filmmakers did not expect direct financial rewards from their work, they did expect for their films to be seen. There are a number of places in New York showing the work of experimental filmmakers: The Collective for Living Cinema, Film Forum, Millennium, Anthology Film Archives, The Whitney Museum, The Museum of Modern Art. Several of these organizations emphasize the work of young experimental filmmakers while others have social documentary or historical orientations, but they all on occasion show new experimental films. One of the major concerns of the filmmakers I visited was the difficulty of getting their work shown. This was their struggle against, or to enter if you prefer, the establishment. Nevertheless there are theatres in New York where these filmmakers can aspire to show their work and when they succeed there will be an audience. Their struggle is painful to them, but it has direction and it is a realistic struggle. They will get their screenings.

It would be misleading to suggest that these young experimentalists form an organized group. They do not.



From *Beast of Nazareth* by Richard Levine. Photo R. Levine.

From *Images of Asian Music (A diary from Life 1974)* by Peter Hutton, 1973-74.



But I do think they are more related to each other than they realize. After all they are united by being the Outsider. More specifically they are part of the audience at the theatres showing experimental films, and because they see these current developments, they can react to them. They have a good sense of the current state of experimental films. This awareness of their contemporaries' work is a very important aspect of the development of an art such as experimental film which has a historical tradition. I would not be particularly impressed with a young filmmaking hermit who took to the wilderness in 1967 after seeing Michael Snow's *Wavelength* and emerged in 1977 with the consequence of ten years' thought and work in the form of a three hour film shot by a camera moving over a wilderness landscape, not realizing that Snow had finished *La Région Centrale* in 1971. Artists have an obligation to be aware of their contemporaries' work. The individual act of making a film may be one person operation in some cases, but each experimental film will be seen in relation to other films. The work should take the milieu into account, if only to reject the milieu. Even Stan Brakhage comes down from the mountains occasionally to see what is happening.

Another relation between these filmmakers has to do with the type of films they want to make in the future. During our discussions, they gave no indication of wanting to make a conventional documentary or narrative film. They are not temporarily making experimental films while waiting for an opportunity to make a documentary or feature. They are committed experimental filmmakers and have no ambition to make industrial films.

A final connection between these filmmakers concerns technical characteristics of their films. With a few exceptions, their films are silent, 16mm and 18 frames per second. Using 16 mm is now quite ordinary, and it only prevents their films from being shown at the commercial theatres designed for 35 mm features. However their decision to use the 18 frames per second speed does determine who will see their films. For example most permanently installed Xenon or arc light source 16 mm projectors only run at 24 frames per second. The assumption of the manufacturers is that all contemporary 16 mm films have sound tracks and are to be shown at sound speed, 24 frames per second. This assumption means that these 18 frames per second experimental films cannot be shown in the theatres with the best projection facilities because the best projectors generally only run at 24 frames per second. The members of this group of experimental filmmakers independently arrived at the decision to use 18 frames per second for a number of reasons: it was cheaper, using less raw film stock to produce the same running time of finished film. It was their aesthetic choice to make silent films and thus the usual reason for shooting at sound speed was not relevant. And it was understood that the screening facilities available to young experimental filmmakers would probably have portable projectors which do have both 18 frames per second and 24 frames per second.

After visiting with these young New York filmmakers, I returned to Montreal greatly encouraged about the state of experimental film. The members of this group have much in common as experimental filmmakers, but I am hesitant to say that they form a stylistic movement. I would also be hesitant to say whether stylistic movements are necessary or even desirable, so that is not a problem. The thing which interests me most about these filmmakers, in addition to their films of course, is that they exist: Their existence implies that experimental film continues as a tradition.

MONTREAL

A very serious question I asked myself when I began thinking about the New York experience in Montreal was this: Why did I have to go to New York to see experimental film? The obvious first part of an answer to this question is the lack of experimental filmmakers in Montreal. But this answer still leads to another

«why?». Why is there a lack of experimental filmmakers in Montreal? It would seem excessive for me to claim that I could give a simple answer to this question, but I do think that an understanding of the Montreal experimental film lacuna can be based on the contrasts between the milieu of the young experimental filmmakers I described and the Montreal milieu.

Montreal is a real film centre. Big international productions are shot here; the National Film Board is here; there is an active exploitation film production business; and there was a prolific Quebec fiction film movement. The film industry is very active, and that is good. But regrettably the activity of the film industry has no positive effect on the situation regarding experimental film. The professionals — note the word — in the film industry dominate the Montreal film milieu, and these professionals are precisely the people who do not know what to do with the word «art». They may actually be artists, but the word embarrasses them. After all they are in business, an industry. They are professionals. By the way, what would a professional painter be? a house painter perhaps?

I speculate, and I cannot do more, than one of the factors in the lack of an active Montreal experimental community is the domination of the film milieu by the industry. Psychologically speaking, it is much further from So Ho to New York's West 50's film centre than it is from the thinking of any Montreal filmmaker to the National Film Board. It is as if Montreal is not large enough to allow the experimental filmmakers to get away from the industry: There is always a friend needing help on a big shoot or a possibility of getting N.F.B. support for a moving, but socially significant, little documentary. The possibilities for making industrial films in Montreal make it very difficult to continue producing those 18 frames per second, silent films, particularly when there is no audience and no place to screen them.

Experimental film communities do not need to be large. The New York community is tiny compared to the number of non-filmmaking artists, but it is a community. It has its theatres, its publications, its critics and an acknowledged position in the art world. This network of relations allows the filmmakers to exist without being engulfed by the film industry.

This sense of community is one of the things lacking in Montreal. An experimental filmmaker working in Montreal would not only be working against the current but would be doing it alone, without encouragement and support. The New York Outsiders know where the establishment lives, but in Montreal there is no experimental film establishment.

The lack of this establishment is also connected to the lack of a historical tradition. Art ideas do not come out of a void. They are developed in relation to what has already existed. In Montreal there are no major experimental filmmakers from the 40's, 50's or 60's for a young filmmaker to respond to. An experimental filmmaker working now has to work without a tradition. Montreal experimental filmmakers are waiting for their Borduas, for their Maya Deren.

This lack of an experimental film tradition becomes apparent when I see films by young Montreal independent filmmakers. I am surprised to find that these films tend to be miniature versions of conventional fiction or non-fiction films. They are often more adventurous, and indeed better, than the commercial films, but it is clear that their models come from the film industry rather than from experimental film. The film which are actually shown as local experimental films seem to me to be part of the student film genre. This genre includes films such as those based on pixilation comedy or surrealist imagery and those on topics such as the difficulties of filmmaking or a spoof of a film classic. It is a wonderful genre, but these films are not experimental films. Interestingly students in Montreal are now largely turning away from their own genre; they are making miniature N.F.B. documentaries and

T.V. melodramas. The experimental filmmakers are making student films, and the students are making industrial films.

My final point about the state of experimental film in Montreal concerns theatres. It is essential for experimental filmmakers to have a theatre and an audience. Neither needs to be large, but these filmmakers have to know that there is a possibility of showing their work to an interested audience. One of the characteristics of the New York milieu is the multiplicity of the screening possibilities. The filmmakers show their work, see the films of others and derive a sense of community from being in the same space with filmmakers, critics and an interested public. This experience is an essential component of a viable experimental film community. It is my sincere hope that the new Montreal theatre, Le Cinéma parallèle, will serve this function, but it may be a year before this judgement can be made.

I am reluctant to make enormous generalizations, but I feel one is called for here: my comments about Montreal are not just about Montreal, but about all of Canada. I would like to be mistaken about generalizing my comments, but I think I am not. There are a few excellent Canadian experimental filmmakers, but there is not a community, a movement or a tradition.

NEW YORK FILMMAKERS

Now that I have discussed the Montreal milieu in relation to that of New York, I will be more specific about the films of the New York Outsiders. Their films will be treated briefly with the intention of conveying a sense of the type and quality of their work; these paragraphs should be considered as opening sections of the critical treatment the films should be given at a later time. Elsewhere in this issue two of the filmmakers visited in New York, Vincent Grenier and J.J. Murphy, are considered at greater length.

ALINE MAYER: The film called XX initially looks like a geometric abstraction in motion, but gradually parts of a human figure viewed from below are recognized in the frame. At this point the film continues to look like a geometric design, but it becomes readable. It is a person bouncing on a diving board viewed from beneath the board with the moving board dominating the frame. While this process of interpretation was taking place, another characteristic of the image became apparent. Because the bouncing was rhythmical and not greatly varied, the viewer has time to look at the film very closely. This careful viewing reveals that the print has water spots on it, as if the laboratory had made a mess while making the print. As this is being realized, the film comes to an end with shots of the swimming pool's water and the person diving.

This sounds very simple, but when Mayer's style is understood, the film takes on additional levels of complexity. This filmmaker does her own lab work and her films reflect the additional control over the images. Since even experimental filmmakers send their films to commercial labs with a very few exceptions, Mayer has seized on an unexplored possibility of film and created her style from it. Knowing that she controls her print, the water spots no longer appear accidental. They are an essential element in her film, if not its key. Remember XX is a film made with a camera under a diving board, almost in the water and the action of the film is leading up to a dive, which will of course splash water towards the camera. And XX is the name of a type of film stock as well as the title of the film. Understanding the film in this way gives the water spots narrative significance because they foreshadow what is going to happen. In addition to this the water spots refer in a fascinating way to the filming process and the process of making the print. Mayer's is an extremely intelligent style, and XX is a surprisingly good film.

MARK GRAFF: While viewing several parts of an eight part film called *film in 8 parts* and a film called *X*, a number of Graff's con-focused image, but his primary interest is in images which were obscured or initially unrecognizable. A clear image of an apartment's interior becomes a mass of swirling grain with flashes of light; a camera pans over an apartment, but it is masked, so only a small portion of the screen in the lower right corner reveals the room; a nude body is recognized but it is out of focus. His films have to do with frustrating the viewer's desire to see everything and to understand all that is seen. They are explicitly anti-realistic films. Perhaps his strongest sequence was based on a series of moving abstract images which gradually came to be understood to be formed by light admitted between moving human bodies.

JIM JENNINGS: This filmmaker is a landscape artist representing the world in the ways unique to film. His camera is usually hand held and sweeps over the landscape, often pointing up at the sky and leaf covered branches. Actually are there any landscape paintings without land in them? I think not, so perhaps I should call him a «skyscape» artist. The image twists and is frequently seen in multiple exposures. There are variations in exposure and the sharpness of focus, along with zooms. His films are related to films of Brakhage and Snow, but are not in the style of either of these filmmakers.

TIM KENNEDY: Peter Kubelka has articulated a theory emphasizing that film images are formed from light and the absence of light. Kennedy's 1974 film *Revision* begins with no light and develops as areas of light enter the frame. The light enters periodically without a definite rhythm, as if admitted by the wind blowing open a curtain in a darkened room. When the light appears, the viewer sees into depth, past the darkness again as if a curtain is hiding the world. At the end of this four minute film it becomes clear that the viewer has been seeing light admitted between the darkened bodies of lovers. The curtains are human bodies. Kennedy has made an abstract film of the sexual act by filming it in such a way that the viewer does not recognize it until the very end of the film. It is an interesting film to experience.

Another film, *The Body*, was made by using a camera body without a lens. It is a celebration of light in much the same way as Brakhage's *A Text of Light*, except on a much more modest scale. Light is also the subject of *Hush*, a 1976 film using overexposure, the film grain and a bridge image which recalls Turner. Kennedy may well become a filmmaker concentrating on the possibilities of variations with light.

RICHARD LEVINE: Film can be discussed as an elaborate system of shadows of the markings on strip of film projected on a screen. This filmmaker uses his own shadow in his films, and this can lead to a complicated train of thought. Film is itself a system of shadows, and Levine has filmed his own shadow which is then projected onto a screen by means of a system based on shadows. His films are examples of a type of film that leads the viewer into thinking about film theory. He also has made a quite successful work which uses his shadow, but which is a film of a film loop destroying itself as it runs repeatedly through a projector.

CHARLIE AHEARN: This filmmaker works in a style associated with Hollis Frampton's *Zorns Lemma*. On one level Ahearn's *KUIKMIND FILM* is an educational film, but its style is unquestionably that of an experimental film. The educational aspect of the film concerns the Icelandic language, while the style is a rapid montage of words and images.

PETER HUTTON: Just as Ahearn's film has an educational content but is dominated by its experimental style, Hutton's films could be described as travel films dominated by their experimental style. One of his films is about the Orient, and uses fades to black to link images smoothly. It has images such as fireworks at night, a little girl playing with a python and

a cock fight which might be found in a travelogue, but which become something quite different in a silent film without the usual voice-over narration. A work-in-progress was a travel film, but this time about New York with lovely images such as a silhouette of the city's skyline, a rain storm and pigeons flying against a cloudy sky with light breaking through occasionally.

VICKI Z. PETERSON: *The Rainbow Bridge, Parts I and II*, was the most beautiful film I saw during my visit. In this film montage is taken to one of its extremes because each frame is a different shot from the preceding frame and the following frame. It is a totally edited film, but the editing is not the conventional type done on an editing machine. All of the editing was done in the camera by exposing a single frame at a time.

The best effects of the film are geometric patterns formed by the succession of images and our persistence of vision. An X like pattern is formed by alternating a single frame of the sea meeting the sky, taken with the horizon at a 45° angle, with another single frame of the same subject taken with the camera tilted in the other direction. The horizon line dividing the sea and the sky form one line of the X when the camera is tilted in one direction and the other line of the X when the camera is tilted in the other direction. These alternating frames are repeated long enough to let the viewer perceive both the geometric X and the colours of the seascape. It is a very beautiful effect, but in this film the effects are better than the film taken as a whole.

ROBERT ATTANASIO: *Lensound* was the only Super 8 film I saw during my visit, and it was the most brilliant film of the entire group. Lip-sync sound tends to be used in 16 mm primarily to allow the audience to hear lines being spoken and has only rarely been used successfully in experimental films. Super 8 lip-sync sound films tend to mimic the most ordinary 16 mm sound films with the results being predictably uninteresting. Attanasio has made a lip-sync sound Super 8 film with no lips present; there are no talking characters in the film.

The film consists of shots in the street, and later in a room, which express the filmmaker's excitement at having a sync sound camera by showing a microphone rhythmically tapping on the lens. The viewer sees the microphone tap the lens and knows that the film is using sync sound, but not a word is spoken and the filmmaker is not seen. The filmmaker's joy is communicated by variation in the rhythm of the tapping combined with dance-like camera movements. Although there is no technical reason why this film could not have been made by a crew using a \$30,000. Arriflex-Nagra-Sennheiser-Steenbeck rig, it would not have been made with an expensive 16 mm sync sound system. It is distinctively a Super 8 film, made with a sturdy camera costing a few hundred dollars. The film is not completely successful as a total film, but the idea is a brilliant solution to a filmic problem: How can lip-sync sound be incorporated into an experimental film?

EPILOGUE

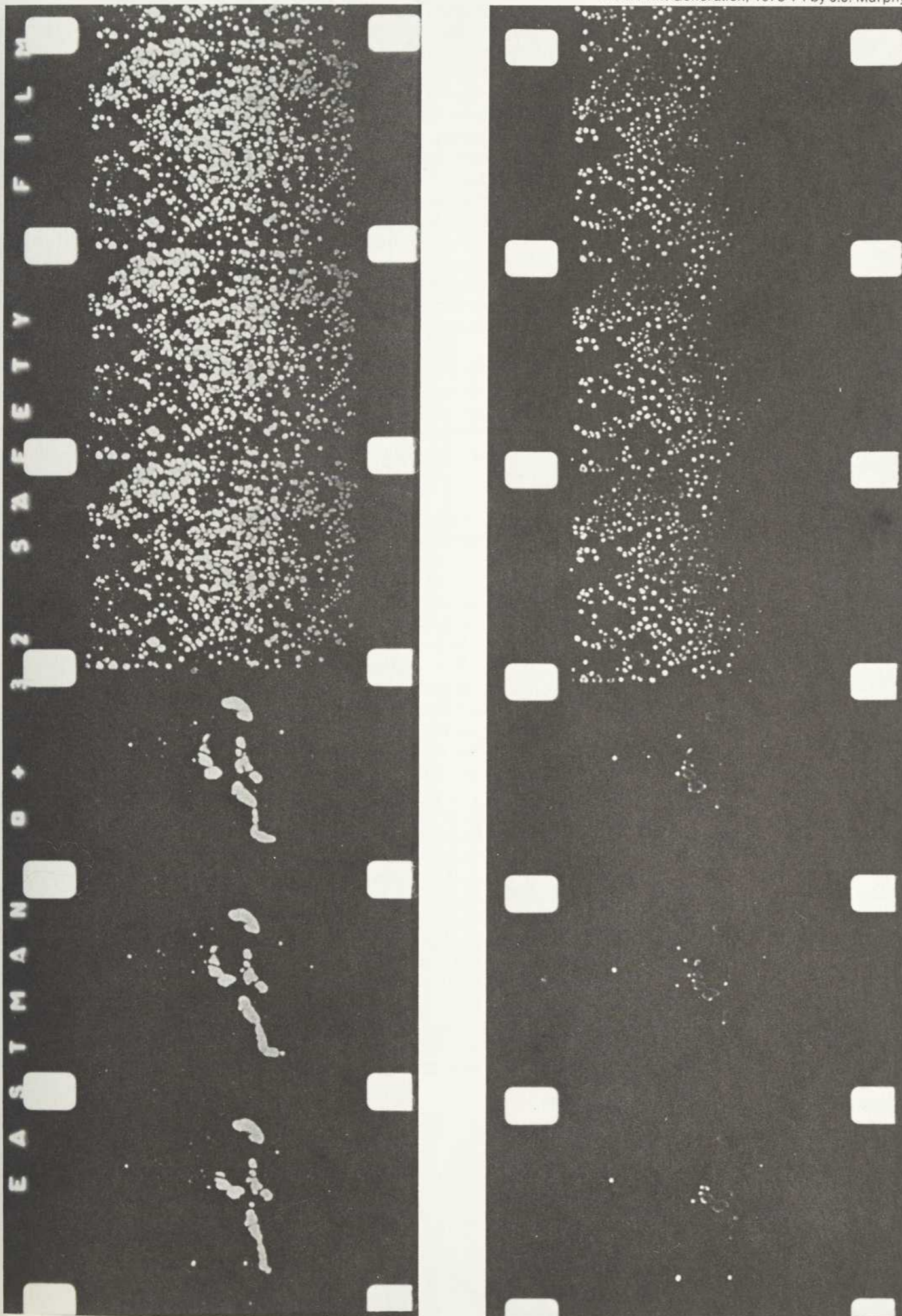
In closing I would like to remind you of the structure and intent of this essay. I visited eleven young experimental filmmakers in New York, viewed their films and formed ideas about the milieu which encouraged their work. My understanding of the New York situation led me to think about Montreal and its lack of experimental filmmakers, so in the next section I brought out contrasts between Montreal and New York. It is my hope that understanding the Montreal milieu and its difficulties can have the effect of encouraging potential Montreal experimental filmmakers to begin their work. Montreal should be large enough for the industry and the experimental filmmakers. Is the Paul-Emile Borduas of experimental film reading this essay? Finally I briefly discussed the films I saw in New York to convey a sense of the diversity within experimental film. ■



Two Films, Two Filmmakers: VINCENT GRENIER AND J.J. MURPHY

by John W. Locke

From *Print Generation*, 1973-74 by J.J. Murphy



A new generation of filmmakers is beginning to make their presence felt. There was a time when filmmaking was learned from a friend or through an apprenticeship. Now extremely good filmmakers are beginning to come out of the plethora of college and university film schools. In commercial film this new generation is represented by Coppola, Lucas and Scorsese. Vincent Grenier and J.J. Murphy are two of experimental film's representatives of the new generation because each of them holds a masters degree in film.

It is too early to predict whether film education will affect the directions of film in the long run, but I cannot help but recall Jean-Luc Godard's statement about himself and the other New Wave film directors: "We are the first filmmakers to know that Griffith exists." (*Cahiers du Cinéma*), December 1962). The New Wave directors may have been the first, but they are not the last. This new generation of experimental filmmakers not only knows that Griffith existed, but they also know about Fernand Léger and Maya Deren. The future of experimental filmmaking looks promising to me.

Actually the two films being considered, Grenier's *World in Focus* and Murphy's *Print Generation* do have more in common than their creators' education. They are both about the relation between perceiving and understanding, between seeing and knowing what is being seen. Both works are epistemological films, metaphorically speaking of course, because each film leads the viewer to think about thinking and knowing. The viewer first wonders about what is being seen and then learning what is actually being seen, wonders how the thing actually being seen could have appeared as it originally did. In Grenier's film it is literally the opening of a book of knowledge which reveals what is being seen. In Murphy's film the subjects are revealed by repetition and clarification. Though this description makes the films sound more like philosophical essays than experimental films, they do not always appear to be as serious as I have indicated them to be. Each of the films is a very sensuous work, as I hope the more detailed treatment of each film will show.

VINCENT GRENIER

World in Focus is a film taken from a book, but is not quite like a film adaptation of *Great Expectations* or *War and Peace*. Grenier's 1976 film is more like a work of mystery in which the object of the mystery is itself a book. The book is a Rand McNally *World Atlas*.

If I asked you to imagine what a film based on an atlas would be like, you would probably picture a documentary film with shots of the African wilds, the Arctic and the Great Wall of China. Even if I were more precise and said that the film was literally about the book, rather than being about the world represented by the book, I suspect that you would expect a film featuring maps and charts with a voice on the soundtrack lulling you to sleep with statistical data. In reality *World in*

Focus is not like any of these hypothetical *World Atlas* films. In Grenier's film the world which is photographed is within the book itself and there is no soundtrack. The space shown in the film is confined to the pages of the book.

The film opens with a shot of a textured surface with vertical striations. Initially this image is simply an abstract geometric design, but soon there is movement within the frame. The movement gradually becomes recognizable as a movement of light. It is in fact the shadow produced as pages are flipped. Shortly after noticing this, the viewer is able to piece together the clues and recognize that the opening image was the side of a book. The vertical striations had been the outer edges of pages.

As the film unfolds, a new type of tension comes into play. The viewer knows that it is a film about a book and that pages are being seen, but the pages are not in focus. Thus the pages become visual objects rather than reading matter, and they become a type of uniquely photographic visual objects because they are out of focus. Remember that our conscious perception is virtually exclusively of objects in focus, unless we have neglected to put on our glasses or we are looking at photographic images. We see the world in focus unless we are looking at a film such as *World in Focus*. The deviation of this film from our normal way of seeing disturbs us. It is this tension between "in focus" and "out of focus" which is central to Grenier's film.

After the viewer is sufficiently oriented to understand that the images are formed by flipping through a book, the images are understood in a different manner. One of the first things which is noticed is that the pages vary in interest. There will be a flash of red, creating a good page. Or a page composed entirely of print will seem comparatively dull. Also the rhythm of flipping responds to the form of the page. A page with coloured charts will be held for a longer period of time, meaning a few seconds rather than a steady flipping. A map will be arranged so that we see mountains, and even Canada, as words and designs on maps.

The pages of the book approach being completely out of focus. A typical page will be angled towards the camera, so that it is arranged in depth rather than lying flat as we usually see a page. Because the page is seen as it extends towards the camera and because the camera's lens has an extremely shallow depth of field, only a very narrow band of the page's surface will be in focus. Most of the surface of each page is completely out of focus, but there is generally a narrow in focus band running vertically down the center of the page. We understand what we can from the narrow strip of in focus information, but we keep grasping at the blurred surroundings. We want to know everything, but the lack of focus thwarts this desire. Hence the film leads us to think about focus.

Looking at an individual image in *World in Focus* is somewhat like looking at a lens focus test demonstration photograph. There is clearly delineated in focus section bordered by out of focus areas. But experiencing Grenier's film is different from experiencing a depth of field test film because *World in Focus* is structured to make us take an aesthetic interest in the out of focus areas. If a book had been chosen with only a written text, the viewer would have been able to understand very little; only a narrow strip of words running vertically down the center of each page could have been read. The film would have become repetitious and uninteresting. Similarly if a book of photographs had been chosen, the film would have grown monotonous. But by choosing an atlas, Grenier selected the perfect book. There are pages filled with words, there are maps and charts, there are coloured sections and sections in black and white. The variety of images makes it possible to create the mystery which sustains the film: What will the next page be? Can a bit of the text be read? Will the image be held for long enough to see it clearly? Will it be more or less in focus than the earlier images?

World in Focus is a rewarding film to watch: There is

the action of the pages flipping, varying in rhythm and occasionally creating a flicker like effect. There are colours and compositions. There is a cinematic emphasis on the questions concerning focus. And there is even information about the world. *World in Focus* turns out to be surprisingly complex and satisfying, particularly for a film totally about a book. Vincent Grenier has proven himself to be a promising young Quebec experimental filmmaker.

J.J. MURPHY

Print Generation begins as a film which cannot be seen. There is nothing on the screen, except a few dots of light. The dots seem to coalesce into a shape which can be recognized as a walking person, but then the shape disappears. There is also a sound which could be surf, so it can be imagined that the person is walking on a beach. Even so the overall impression is of not being able to see more than a few dots and patches of light.

Approximately five minutes after the start of the film, it becomes apparent that there are cuts. Thus it begins to be seen as an edited film rather than as a continuous flow. As the film continues, it becomes clear that not only are there cuts, but there are lots of cuts. It also becomes possible to estimate the length of the shots at this point when the subject matter of the shots still cannot be recognized. Each shot seems to last one second, 24 frames at this film's sound speed. *Print Generation* is a montage film composed of a barrage of one second shots, but it took a while to perceive this. We can see its form, but not its content.

The shots appear to grow steadily more distinct as the film continues. The walking person becomes recognizable as a walking woman, and this recognition hints that other images will become known: a person is sawing; there is a sign; there are firefighters with a hose. As the viewer recognizes these images and continues to think about the film, the same images appear again. The viewer gradually sees more and more repeated, recognizable images and then suddenly, in a flash, the viewer understands the film's structure. The film is composed of a fixed number of one second shots being repeated over and over as they approach clarity from the starting point of total visual obscurity. Knowing this about the film, the viewer wonders how many shots there are. Precisely what is the structure? Counting the shots reveals that there are sixty. So the film is composed of sixty shots of one second each repeated over and over in the same order.

This solves the mystery of the film. Its images have been gradually becoming clear, so the subjects of the film can be recognized. And its structure has been understood by thinking about the images as they evolved from obscurity to clarity. The viewer may think at this point that it was a worthwhile experience, actually quite a good film.

The film seems to end. All sixty shots have become clear. A title appears, but then the clear images begin to be repeated on the screen. By now the images have become very familiar, and the viewer may begin to learn the sequence of images. There does not need to be a conscious effort to do this; the images impose themselves, and their order becomes natural rather than surprising. The viewer may concentrate on the details of the images and begin to memorize their order. Before this can become tiring, or merely pedagogy, a new element comes into play: The images begin to go away again. Just as the viewer becomes familiar with the images, they begin to escape the mind's grasp again.

Like in the earlier part of the film, the viewer is at first puzzled. Why are the images disappearing? Thus the viewer is led by the action of the film — the disappearing images — to think about the structure of the film. As the images get progressively dimmer and more difficult to see, the viewer again begins to understand the structure: The second part of the film is the inverse of

the first part. In the opening half of the film, the sixty shots go from obscurity to clarity and in the second half they go from clarity to obscurity.

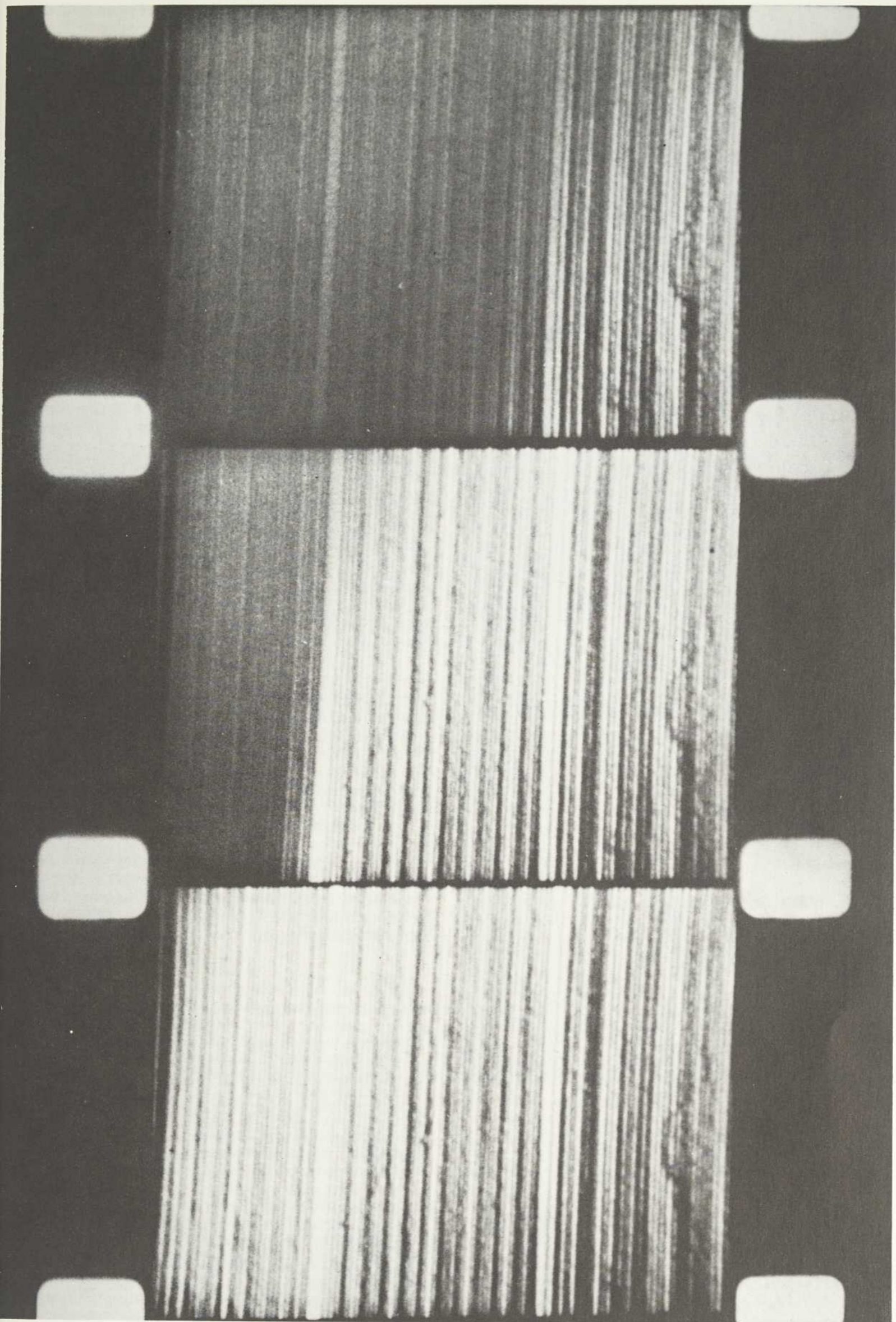
After the structure of the film is completely understood, the viewer may question why the film should be seen all the way to the end. The film will almost certainly end precisely the way it began. For me it is at this point, where the structure becomes evident, that the film becomes particularly fascinating. During the earlier part of the film, there was lots to do. The film led the viewer to concentrate on the visual characteristics of the image, initially to recognize them and then to organize them into a structure. Now after all this has been done what is left? I would answer that the most interesting part of the film remains to be seen.

As the sixty very familiar images grow dim, we attempt to retain them in memory, but the images which had been seen over and over become lost in a swirl of abstract movements. We are both frustrated and fascinated as another few images become unrecognizable with each additional cycle. We knew the images so well that it seems unthinkable that they would become unrecognizable. Yet we are literally seeing this happen, and this unexpected loss of knowledge is the most interesting aspect of the film's conclusion. We no longer understand what we are seeing, and the film ends as it began. The cycle is complete. However we do continue to recognize a walking person up to the very end and know this to be the walking woman seen through out the film. This final fragment of knowledge is of some significance: It is appropriate that the most strongly recognizable image is a walking human, and it is also notable that this final image is a walking woman, the figure which dominated Michael Snow's early work, thus producing a conscious or unconscious homage to the Master.

I have not discussed the method of making *Print Generation* because I am concerned with the finished film rather than with its method of production, but I will mention the process to satisfy your curiosity. The film was made by first having a print made of one minute of film composed of sixty shots of one second each.

Then a second print was made of this first print; then another print was made from the second print which was already a print of a print. As the successive prints continued to be made, they became more and more generations away from the original. Each generation became less clear until the final print was an abstraction having an ontological relation to the original, but hardly recognizable as the same film. The first half of the film consisted of twenty-five of the one minute print generations returning from the opening obscurity to the original. Then the second half consisted of twenty-five cycles of the one minute generations returning to obscurity.

Print Generation is not a radically innovative work. It fits into a tradition of contemporary experimental film and is related to the work of Hollis Frampton, in particular to *Zorns Lemma*. I have described how the film directs us to contemplate its structure, and it is this forceful directing of our attention to aesthetic considerations which accounts for the interest of the film. It is a complex process for which we were unprepared when Frampton's work was first seen, but now we know how to go about appreciating Murphy's film because we have seen its precursors. *Print Generation* is not an avant-garde film, but it is a really good film. ■



From *World in Focus*, 1976, by Vincent Grenier

par Serge Bérard

VINCENT GRENIER

Les films récents que présentait Vincent Grenier en mars dernier au Cinéma Parallèle, étaient LEVANT/WHITE REVOLVED, 1976, 12 min.; X, 1976, 9 min.; CATH, 1975, 9 min.; PUIT DE LUMIÈRE/LIGHT SHAFT, 1975, 15 min. et finalement MONDE AU FOCUS/WORLD IN FOCUS, 1976, 20 min. Je ne parlerai, ici, que de LEVANT et X, films où le "discours" du cinéaste semble être le plus mûri, le plus radicalisé.

La pratique de Vincent Grenier s'établit d'emblée comme moderniste; l'accent est donc mis sur la littéralité du médium, sur la *nature* de l'expérience cinématographique. "This film is very concerned with the projected, not just light or the emulsion, or the illusion or the projector, or the camera but all of them." (1) Définir la façon dont cette mise en présence des éléments cinématographiques est opérée demande une description des films.

LEVANT, tout comme X, est un film totalement abstrait. Dans LEVANT, les formes sont imprécises, blanches ou d'un pastel très pâle sur un fond noir, l'action est extrêmement réduite et semble, du moins à un premier visionnement, cyclique ou répétitive. Au début, des formes blanches se promènent sur la surface noire dans des mouvements obliques ou décrivant de légères courbes puis, ces taches se transforment en (ou sont remplacées par) une bande horizontale blanche parsemée de petites taches grisâtres qui semble défiler à toute vitesse de droite à gauche, créant tantôt l'impression qu'une bande de nuages passe rapidement devant nos yeux, tantôt l'impression que c'est nous qui tournons sur nous-mêmes, une vision donc ambiguë, pouvant être sentie comme objective ou subjective. (2) Cette bande s'élargit pour à certains moments envahir toute la surface (3) puis la blancheur se colore très légèrement de teintes à peine perceptibles. Une texture apparaît, devenant rapidement très précise pour ensuite disparaître après quelques secondes d'existence". La façon dont la granulation est produite donne l'impression d'une focalisation extrêmement rapprochée découvrant des détails microscopiques, comme si la pellicule elle-même était l'objet filmé. Ensuite, l'écran redevient noir et le cycle reprend légèrement différent à chaque recommencement, les premières apparitions lumineuses sont de plus en plus discrètes, l'accent est mis sur une image cinématographique au seuil du perceptible où le spectateur a quelquefois l'impression qu'une tache vient d'apparaître, sans toutefois en être sûr.

Contrairement à LEVANT, X est en noir et blanc. Il utilise des formes précises, géométriques. Les mouvements sont ici aussi réduits à un minimum, plus radicalement que dans LEVANT puisqu'ils ne comportent que des mouvements horizontaux et verticaux. Au début, un triangle blanc apparaît sur une surface noire, il "monte" graduellement jusqu'à atteindre le sommet de l'écran. Une diagonale noire épouse alors l'arête gauche du triangle (qui n'est plus percevable comme tel puisque, occupant tout un côté de l'écran, il forme un quadrilatère). Parfois, à cette diagonale noire est jointe une autre bande noire (elles surgissent simultanément) parallèle au bas de l'écran, situé environ au centre, et qui traverse toute la partie noire (devenue un peu plus grise de façon à percevoir les bandes). Le quadrilatère blanc occupe progressivement plus d'espace (il s'avance vers la gauche). Ce faisant cependant, il perd de son intensité, devient de plus en plus gris jusqu'à ressembler à la partie sombre. Les bandes noires se fondent elles aussi progressivement dans la masse grise, une fine raie de blanc restant quelquefois collée à la diagonale noire et s'éteignant avec elle. Ensuite le "jeu" recommence mais avec des variations, à gauche, en haut, apparaît le triangle qui descend, des inversions se produisent, triangle noir sur fond blanc... etc.

Cette lecture univoque, linéaire, ne peut donner qu'une image partielle des films. (Elle n'est d'ailleurs pas une description exhaustive de l'ensemble des événements du film.) Elle ressemble en fait à un plan de ville sur lequel même les maisons ne sont pas in-

scrites. Il est difficile de rendre compte des ambiguïtés spatiales présentes tout au long du film. Par exemple, dans X, ce que j'ai considéré comme un triangle s'avancant sur une surface bidimensionnelle peut en fait être vu comme un objet dans l'espace vers lequel mon regard (la caméra) s'avancerait ou bien le mouvement du triangle, à la verticale, pourrait être senti comme se poursuivant même lorsque la forme blanche est devenue quadrilatère, ou dans la vision "spatialisée", comme si mon regard scrutait la surface extrêmement rapprochée d'une partie du triangle. La partie noire qui, au début, semble se lire sans ambiguïtés comme le fond devient peu à peu forme, se détachant du blanc. Lorsque le triangle est noir il peut être lu comme forme s'avancant sur un fond blanc ou bien, toujours comme fond, graduellement révélé par la déchirure, ou l'écartement progressif du blanc, à ce moment interprété comme forme dissimulant le fond à nos yeux... etc. L'ambiguïté est poussée plus loin lorsque forme/fond/partie blanche s'éteint rapidement, créant ainsi une forme gris pâle dont on ne sait si elle existe réellement ou si elle n'est qu'une impression rétinienne qui persiste.

Les deux films, en plus de montrer des formes en mouvement, sont aussi une analyse de la temporalité cinématographique, à l'aide, par exemple, de la reprise mais inversée (spatialement) d'une même suite d'événements, sorte de variation sur un thème si l'on me permet cette comparaison musicale. Cependant, je n'ai vu les films qu'une fois, et ils demandent, pour être perçus sur ce plan, à être vus plusieurs fois. Vincent Grenier a insisté sur ce fait, d'ailleurs Stan Brakhage a déjà dit de ses films qu'ils ne pouvaient être bien vus qu'une fois entièrement mémorisés.

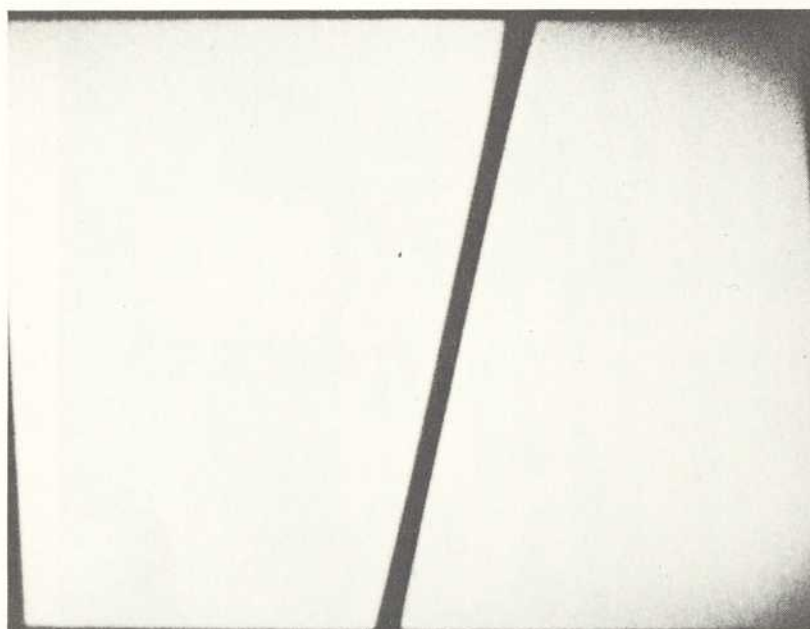
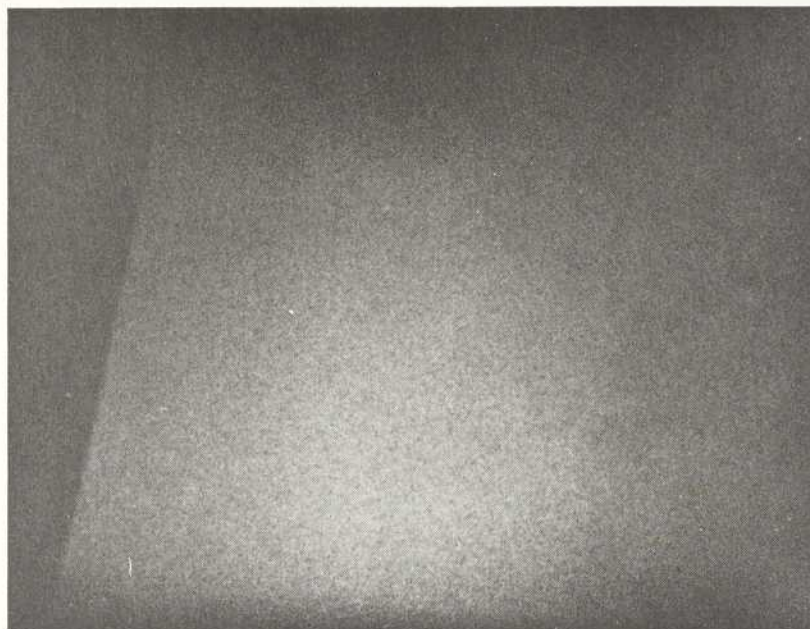
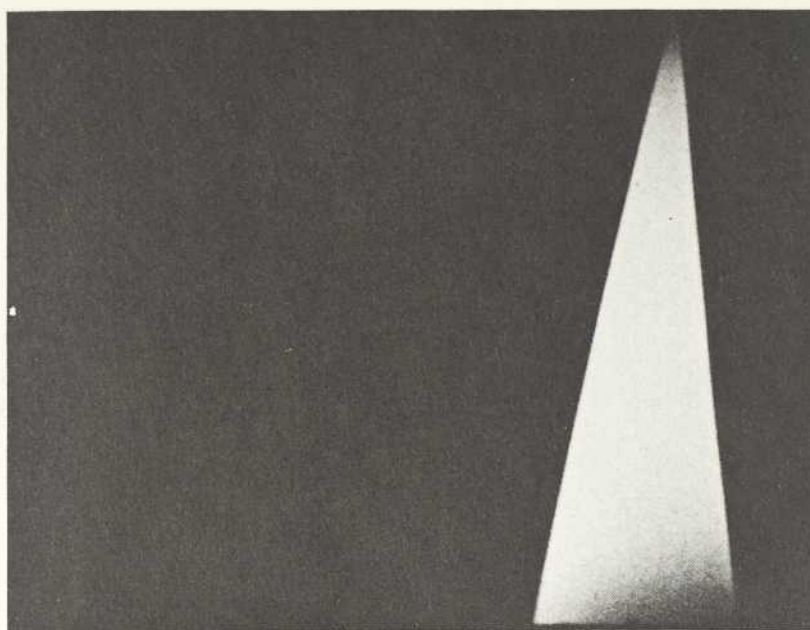
Parallèle avec la peinture.

"All four films could be considered as four parts of the same one continuous work. It's like when a painter gets involved in solving certain problems and produces a series of interrelated canvases." (4)

Bien qu'ayant fait de la peinture, Vincent Grenier considère que son propos est purement cinématographique tout comme ses sources d'influence d'ailleurs. Sans nier la spécificité de son discours, on peut considérer que ses films traitent d'une problématique semblable à celle de la peinture contemporaine. Je voudrais seulement esquisser dans quelle optique l'on pourrait percevoir les deux démarches comme convergentes. Cette ressemblance peut s'articuler en quatre points; la déconstruction de l'espace illusionniste, l'affirmation de la littéralité du support, l'utilisation d'une symbolique publique, conséquence d'un discrédit de la symbolique personnelle et finalement le refus d'inclure tout discours perçu comme extra-artistique.

Peu de temps après son invention le cinéma a attiré l'attention des peintres, Léger, Duchamp, Marinetti et même Malévitch. Or il se trouve que la peinture de cette époque est déjà engagée dans la crise de la représentation (s'il y a un rapport de causalité entre les deux, il demeure peu clair et ne me paraît pas être une explication exhaustive de cette crise que nous vivons toujours) ainsi donc en même temps que naîtra le cinéma "commercial" naîtra aussi le cinéma expérimental. Je ne veux pas reprendre l'histoire du cinéma d'avant-garde, mais simplement relever le fait suivant: bien que tout le cinéma d'avant-garde ne puisse pas être classé de cette façon, chaque mouvement pictural d'importance a eu soit des cinéastes produisant un cinéma semblable, soit des théoriciens proposant un cinéma en conformité avec les canons esthétiques d'un mouvement pictural particulier. Je ne crois pas que l'art de ces dernières années fasse exception et je pense que Vincent Grenier offre une recherche cinématographique qui loin d'être une simple illustration animée des mouvements picturaux des dix dernières années a en commun avec eux la même volonté de poursuivre une recherche sur les fondements de l'expérience artistique par une réduction à l'essentiel des composantes de cette expérience.

"Just consider that, unlike humans, cameras have



Tiré de X, 1976 de Vincent Grenier

only one view point. This means that the three dimensionality of images on film cannot be real but only suggested at." (5)

La critique de l'espace illusionniste semble avoir commencé avec le siècle et elle n'a cessé de se radicaliser depuis. À la perspective traditionnelle s'oppose, dans les années 50, l'espace optique provoqué par le contraste des tons et des couleurs. Chez Rothko par exemple, les divers rectangles qui composent l'image sont en relation ambiguë entre eux, il est difficile de dire lequel est placé en avant, lequel sert de fond... etc. C'est un peu de cette manière que travaille Vincent Grenier dans X dont l'ambiguïté "relationnelle" a déjà été décrite. Avec X cependant, la simplicité des moyens avec lesquels il rend ce jeu optique rappelle les Black Paintings de Ad Reinhardt qui fonctionnent au seuil du perceptible. L'affirmation de la littéralité accompagne cette critique. Si, en peinture elle se traduit par l'affirmation de la surface par l'utilisation de formes faisant écho au cadre, pour le cinéma, il s'agit de rendre le spectateur conscient de plusieurs choses à la fois. Je renvoie le lecteur à la première citation de Vincent Grenier (p. 2)

À la façon de l'art minimal, LEVANT et X utilisent des formes que l'on peut qualifier de symboles publics puisqu'elles sont directement compréhensibles par le spectateur, comme les oeuvres de Stella, Judd et Morris. Les formes qu'utilise Vincent Grenier ne sont pas porteuses de symbolique personnelle, il ne s'agit pas pour lui de reprendre le schéma créateur de l'expressionnisme abstrait et de faire des oeuvres "signature" mais plutôt de proposer une expérience esthétique accessible à tous, où le symbole laisse place au phénomène perçu (6).

"Les symboles sont des conventions inventées et utilisées par des gens de différentes civilisations du monde afin de se comprendre entre eux. Étant donné que ces symboles ont été créés à différents moments dans l'histoire de l'homme dans des buts et avec des données tout aussi différentes que contradictoires, il est évident que ceux-ci ne peuvent avoir qu'une valeur de référence, et que tout art se légitimant uniquement sur le symbole ne peut être que du "toc"." (7)

Conséquemment avec l'affirmation précédente, il ne peut être question pour Vincent Grenier d'utiliser la structure narrative, aussi remaniée qu'elle puisse être, ce problème rejoint celui de la crise de la représentation en peinture. ■

NOTES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

1. GRENIER, Vincent, feuillet expliquant ses films, non publié. Ce passage est à propos de LEVANT.
2. Lorsque j'ai fait part de cette idée à V. Grenier, (en prenant comme exemple LIGHT SHAFT où un "parallélépipède" de lumière qui parcourt l'écran en diagonale peut être perçu soit comme forme abstraite se promenant sur la surface ou bien, si le spectateur demeure conscient qu'il s'agit d'un puits de lumière qui est filmé, être perçu comme provenant des mouvements de la caméra, allant, elle aussi, en diagonale par rapport à l'axe de l'écran.) celui-ci m'a affirmé ne pas avoir travaillé avec cette idée. Tout le discours qui consisterait à faire sentir la présence de la caméra (disons plutôt à faire sentir la présence de celui qui tient la caméra) ou, plus globalement, la façon dont sont "fabriquées" ses images ne lui semble pas pertinent. Seul ce qui se passe sur l'écran compte. Conséquemment avec cette approche, il refuse d'expliquer, après visionnement, le côté technique de ses films préférant laisser "planer le mystère".
3. Dans les moments où l'écran est presque ou totalement blanc, les particules, poussières, saletés apparaissent. Bien que selon l'aveu de V. Grenier il s'agit là de défauts techniques, l'impression m'est restée d'avoir vu la pellicule se dérouler à toute vitesse.
4. Jonas Mekas, *The Soho Weekly News*, December 23, 1976, p. 32
5. V. Grenier, *Statement*, non publié
6. Voir à ce sujet, Rosalind E. Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculptures*, Viking Press, p. 977, p. 261. Symbole public est à mettre en parallèle avec la notion privée et langage public chez L. Wittgenstein.
7. V. Grenier, non publié.

LE CINÉMA QUÉBÉCOIS AU CARREFOUR

An Oblique View by a Foreigner

by Vlada Petric

At the present time, most of the small national cinemas find themselves in a serious economic and ideological crisis which is having considerable impact on their films. Canadian film, in particular, has been affected by this crisis due to its extraordinary interdependence on Hollywood production and the two-faceted aspect of its film industry — one, English-Canadian, and the other, québécois. Since this unique contradiction seems to be constantly present in Canadian cinema, I seized the rare opportunity to look at it closely at the month-long retrospective of Canadian films organized by the Conservatoire d'Art Cinématographique of Concordia University during the XXI Olympiad in Montreal July-August 1976.

Among the fifty full feature films shown during the retrospective, about thirty were produced by French-speaking Quebec filmmakers. Unquestionably, these films as a whole represented the best artistic achievements in the entire retrospective, revealing distinguished individual creative styles of filmmaking based on specific ideological and aesthetic attitudes. Yet the most important characteristic of the Quebec cinema was its awareness of the necessity to stand up against Hollywood convention as well as those commercial domestic movies which unscrupulously exploit film as mere entertainment. The ideo-aesthetic battle for national identity seems to be extremely crucial for the future of the "Cinéma québécois", manifesting itself on both ideological-political and artistic-aesthetic levels.

However mechanical it may sound, one has to take into account the fact that one-quarter of twenty-three million Canadians speak French as their first language, constituting a cultural milieu almost as close to European French culture as to the English-American culture. More so, some eighty percent of Quebec's seven million people have French as their mother tongue, while many of them do not speak English at all. Hence, it seems natural that a national group like this tends to cement its own cultural identity and, within it, to develop a specific cinematic style which would fit the themes and problems characteristic of Quebec people. Historically, this tendency became more pronounced after the national movement which started about twenty years ago and culminated recently in the victory of the separatist Parti Québécois. Encouraged by the political situation, Quebec filmmakers increased their militancy, using cinema to promulgate their ideological views. This development brought different results: intensification of the political charge often without sufficient aesthetic impact, but also — and unfortunately less frequently — deepening of the cinematic values appropriate to the specific topics and characters.

In an ideological sense, the situation in the contemporary Quebec cinema is reminiscent of the Soviet film during the 1920s with its innovative style (montage) which proved to be appropriate to the revolutionary enthusiasm of the October days. However, ideology and political aggressiveness were

not enough; all the Soviet films which contained solely this stuff are now forgotten, and only those remain significant which demonstrated extraordinary cinematic expressiveness as the formal manifestation of the narrative content. This is obvious in many contemporary Quebec films with manifest political message but lacking sufficient cinematic energy to support the agitated plot. You have to be Eisenstein, Vertov, or Dovzhenko to justify artistically the propagandistic fabric of scripts (or only synopses) like *October*, *The Eleventh Year*, and *Arsenal*. There is one additional similarity between the early Soviet and present Quebec cinemas: in both cases, the best artistic achievements were and still are unpopular among the general audience and therefore neglected by film distributors.

In the light of these circumstances, I will concentrate on the artistic (i.e. cinematic) aspects of those Quebec films which brought international reputation to their makers as serious artists. My judgments are made according to the thirty selected works produced before 1976, all of them narrative feature films.

The best Quebec feature films derive their style from the documentary tradition initiated by the Canadian government as early as 1939, when John Grierson founded the National Film Board in Ottawa. Perhaps an even more crucial moment was the establishment of separate English and French production units within the National Film Board when it was moved from Ottawa to Montreal in 1956. This realist attitude in Quebec cinema has been re-emphasized more recently by French *cinéma-vérité* style of shooting as well as by the "direct method" of capturing reality, used by American documentarists. What seems even more important is the capacity of the Quebec filmmakers to apply these methods and styles to the narrative films based on prewritten scripts and realized with professional actors. Again, as in the Soviet films with "naturshchiks" (non-professional actors), the performing side of Quebec cinema is unique in several ways.

Acting is an important component of Quebec narrative films, since they often depict everyday characters in both intimate and social conflicts. Tendency toward realism and factography in presenting authentic types on the screen creates a paradoxical situation: the same group of actors can be seen in almost all the major French-language films. On the one hand, this reminds us of the Hollywood star-casting system, while, on the other, of television series in which the same types appear again and again in slightly different circumstances. This also creates an impression of watching a group of real people — citizens who live their lives in common situations, familiar faces that can be seen on the streets, markets, subways, pubs, and at sport events. The reason for this can be found in the limited choice of character actors, but it is obvious that Quebec directors, in order to preserve a high degree of realism on the screen, select their ac-

tors according to the characterological features, just as Soviet directors chose theirs on the principle of *typage* (i.e. their facial expressiveness which had to "reveal" the psychology of the type immediately). There is no question that most of Quebec actors are excellent *interprètes* with an extraordinary sense for delicate facial expression, natural manner of speaking, often in slang and local dialect. As such, they perfectly match the authentic environment in which they are placed, communicating their thoughts in a manner and language familiar to ordinary people. In this respect, the acting style or major Quebec films may be compared to the early Neo-Realist cinema in which great Italian actors proved capable of identifying their acting style with the low-key expressiveness of the non-actors. I emphasize this because such a naturalistic expressiveness cannot be found in most English-speaking Canadian films, and because this feature greatly helps Quebec directors to create environmental atmosphere. This simplicity in acting is, therefore, one of the chief qualities of Quebec films, which initially drew European attention to Canadian cinema in the early sixties (*À tout prendre* by Claude Jutra and *Nobody Waved Good-Bye* by Don Owen). Unfortunately, this quality has been almost entirely abandoned in English-speaking Canadian films which, largely, succumbed to commercial entertainment, while in Quebec film acting has remained one of the most direct ways of presenting "life as it is."

Another element which contributes to the unique authenticity of Quebec narrative cinema is photography. Exterior shots are life-like to a degree that one can hardly be certain whether the events are randomly captured in reality or arranged in that manner before the camera. Vertov and Godard come to mind in this connection, but the important thing is that this strategy is used by many Quebec filmmakers. Films like *On est loin du Soleil* (Jacques Leduc 1970) combine footage of real people reacting in front of the camera, as well as professional actors performing their roles in a natural manner. The same authenticity is maintained in the films which deal with events entirely arranged before the camera, of course, in real locations, as in *Montreal Main* (Frank Vitale 1973) or *Bar Salon* (André Forcier 1972-3). For me as a foreigner, these two films functioned as cinematic documents of the Quebec metropole: the rhythm of Montreal's streets and pubs, the life style of its youth, a gallery of human types characteristic of Québécois and their everyday habits. All this is shown on the screen with great sense of what is known as ontological authenticity, i.e. the capacity of the motion picture image to create a feeling in the viewer that everything seen and heard on the screen existed as *such* in the moment of shooting. To enhance ontological authenticity, some Quebec filmmakers employ lip-sync interviews in the style of Chris Marker and Godard who ask both actors and real people to relate to the camera in the process of shooting, thus destroying narrative continuity in order to intensify the authenticity of the reaction as it really occurred in front of the camera. Following this method, *Le Soleil a pas*

d'chance (Robert Favreau 1974) discloses the "hidden side" of the glamorous selection of "duchesses" for Quebec's annual winter carnival. Similarly, *Le Chat dans le sac* (Gilles Groulx 1964) employs the Godardian method of self-referential style of shooting the actors as well as ordinary people who constantly relate to the camera as to the third person, or the filmmaker who interferes with the narrative. On the political level, both films appeared to be very controversial because of their open and critical attitude toward ongoing and pressing problems existing in Quebec society. But from a historical perspective, these two films are important as cinematic achievements, though the subjects could easily lead their filmmakers to yield to an artistic compromise and please popular taste. The matter of popularity, as we shall see later, is the key problem in the present development of Quebec cinema.

Quebec cinematographers, indeed, developed a unique style of shooting which preserves ontological authenticity in texture and laboratory execution of the photography. At the same time, their image is sophisticated in pictorial composition, lighting, and camera movement (often hand-held). While the ontological authenticity of Quebec motion pictures derives from the European documentary tradition, the pictorial sophistication comes from American practice. This unusual combination of authenticity and pictorialism characterizes the works of Claude Jutra, especially his early films such as *À tout prendre*. Following this stylistic feature, Jutra reached the peak of his mastery by mixing fantasy with realism in *Mon oncle Antoine* (1970) which remains the most beautiful and most significant among all Canadian films, English and French. In retrospect, *Mon oncle Antoine* proved that real works of art do not lose their impact as they age. However, this film was and still is unpopular among the broad Canadian audience, a fact which stimulated many Quebec filmmakers, Jutra among them, to seek resolution in artistic compromise.

Contradiction between entertainment and art in Canadian cinema is enforced by the cultural attitudes of the mass audience accustomed to the Hollywood type of movie entertainment which has dominated Canada's film market for decades. Quebec cinema suffers from this contradiction even more by virtue of the fact that it is, by and large, concerned with socio-political topics which general audiences prefer to avoid. With historical and cultural ties close to the United States, Canada was and still is one of the ideal spots where Hollywood can sell its products and also mine material for its movies. Hollywood treats the Canadian environment as other exotic places, using Canadian history as a mere pretext for slick spectacles. In his recent book, *Hollywood's Canada* (1975), Pierre Berton states that this "Cecil B. de Mille version of Canadian history had blurred our national identity to the point where we didn't seem to have any." Indeed, in Hollywood presentations, Canadian landscape and the people in it appear to be as trivial as oriental decor and Sahara sand dunes built around Hollywood studios.

This peculiar situation is further aggravated by the financial interests which tie Canadian and American distributors. As a result, the creative aspirations of contemporary Quebec filmmakers are halted in their efforts to produce serious films with topics of deep human and social significance. Therefore, any attempt toward serious film is important and has to be supported even if the final result is not superior. For, without such insistence and dedication, all Canadian films would be nothing but imitation of Hollywood, or to put it baldly, the only difference between Canadian and American cinema would be that the former products would be worse and less popular than the latter. In practice, the most "successful" Canadian commercial movies which imitate Hollywood clichés end up being insignificant both artistically and commercially. This has been proved over and over again. Even the most intensively advertised "Canadian" films like *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (Ted

Kotcheff 1973) and *Lies My Father Told Me* (Jan Kadar 1974) failed to become box-office hits: after four years of exploitation and promotion by American companies who participated in their making and distribution, both films are still at the bottom on the commercial list of entertainment movies shown in Canadian showcase theaters. Hollywood leads here as everywhere else.

What, then, is the purpose of making such films which neither bring money nor mean anything in cultural-artistic sense? Hasn't it become clear that Canadian entertainment movies cannot, in any way, compete with Hollywood? Conversely, isn't it more appropriate for Canadian national cinema to support those talents which feel that cinema is art, equivalent to any other artistic medium of expression, a great aesthetic tool capable of raising the cinematic sensitivity of the audience, especially younger filmgoers? As I said in the beginning of this article, there is nothing new and strange in this fact: it has been observed in many small national cinemas, although little has been done to change or improve the situation. Many do not want even to admit that commercialism is killing film as an art form, and that commercial production has to be dealt with apart from the films which belong to art. In this context, it is extremely important to recognize the artistic attitudes of those Quebec filmmakers who use the medium to express their personal aesthetic concepts and respond to the social problems of the nation. Bearing in mind the circumstances in which they work, it is necessary to give them every support, which at the same time does not exclude criticism aimed at strengthening their artistic position.

At this point I have to be more specific. But, instead of making a chronological survey of Quebec artists and their works, I will only mention briefly those films which draw my attention to both their topics and their form during the retrospective. After that I will concentrate on two films which I find crucial for making my point.

The films that impressed me most at the retrospective as works that face up to the real social contradictions and, at the same time cinematically present those problems on the screen were *La Vraie nature de Bernadette* (Gilles Carle 1971), *Réjane Padovanni* (Denis Arcand 1972), *Tu brûles... tu brûles...* (Jean-Guy Noël 1972), *Tendresse ordinaire* (Jacques Leduc 1973), *Bingo* (Jean-Claude Lord 1973), and *Les Ordres* (Michel Brault 1973). Above all these I would put *Les dernières fiancailles* (Jean-Pierre Lefebvre 1973) for reasons explained later in this article. Some of these films are preoccupied with the ideological message which their authors want to impart, others are more involved in finding cinematic devices which would make the content more impressive. But all of them reveal both ideological concern and cinematic sensitivity on the part of their authors. Needless to say, the best are those films which combine the contextual substance with the appropriate cinematic form like *La Vraie nature de Bernadette*, *Tendresse ordinaire*, and most of all *Les dernières fiancailles*.

By coincidence, I saw *Les dernières fiancailles* immediately after another Quebec feature film *Kamouraska* (Claude Jutra 1972). The comparison between these two films was, for me, irresistible in every respect. I began to think what there was that involved me so much in Lefebvre's love story between the two old people, and why I resisted so much Jutra's love story between the young couple? Soon I realized that these two films represent perfect examples of the two divergent tendencies existing in the contemporary Quebec cinema: one leading toward commercialism as a desperate attempt to compete with Hollywood, another to establish a unique cinematic style that will stimulate film as art in both Quebec and Canada within the socio-ideological context of the country.

It is surprising and disappointing that the most out-



Kamouraska, de Claude Jutra, 1972.
A love story with melodramatic conflict and pompous visual execution.

standing representative among Quebec filmmakers, Claude Jutra, is abandoning the stylistic features which not only characterized his early work, but considerably stimulated other directors to develop what can be considered Quebec cinematic style. Obviously, in *Kamouraska* Jutra made total compromise in imitating Hollywood clichés. This very fact is painful and disturbing. Painful for the lovers of film art to see a talented filmmaker betraying his own aesthetic ideals; disturbing for the younger filmmakers who need their more experienced and reputable colleagues to fight with them for the autonomy of this medium.

In the historical context, *Kamouraska* is a "period spectacle" without real historical perspective in treating a subject placed in specific social circumstances. Even less does it penetrate into the intimate psychological aspects of the characters. Based on the best selling novel written by Anne Hébert, *Kamouraska*, as a film, preserves all the conventional ingredients of a heart-breaking love tragedy, wrapped in glamorous images with trivial or very little meaning. One has to admit, however, that from a technical viewpoint *Kamouraska* is an effective film replete with visual effects: it uses enlarged screen scale, best color photography, fascinating camera travelings, massive mise en scène with lots of extras, dazzling optical tricks of numerous dissolves and flash-backs, a popular film star (Geneviève Bujold), picturesque decor (mid-nineteenth century Canada), embellished costumes, lovable music (both symphonic and country style), flamboyant folk songs and dances culminating in the spectacular chases over white Canadian *champs*. What else can be added to the technical perfection of a film? And yet, in spite of all its fanciful effects, *Kamouraska* has not become an international commercial success, as it was intended to be, let alone a significant work of art. The reason is obvious: the spectators in other countries who like such movies prefer to be entertained by a "genuine" Hollywood melodrama, be it a sequel to *Gone With the Wind* or remake of a Victorian novel.

Judged as a screen adaptation of a novel, Jutra's *Kamouraska* remains on the level of a mechanical illustration of the literary weaknesses which characterize the original whose frivolous style is typified in the following passage:

Dans l'anse de Kamouraska gelée comme un champ sec et poudreux. L'amour meurtrier. L'amour infâme. L'amour funeste. Amour. Amour. Unique vie de ce monde. La folie de l'amour. Je vous en prie dites-moi, l'état de votre santé et celle du pauvre petit enfant. (p. 11)

The entire book is written in this ecstatic manner. Tou-



Les dernières fiancailles, de Jean-Pierre Lefebvre, 1973
A love story with profound — and cinematic — concern for intimate human relationship.

jours l'amour et les armes! The last sentence of the novel can be quoted as the trade mark of Mlle Hébert's prose: "Voyez donc comme Madame aime Monsieur! Voyez comme elle pleure." Sighs and whimpering can be found on every page of this book, and Jutra used all his craftsmanship to preserve the melodramatic aspects of the novel, instigating the audience to cry without thinking about the psychology of the characters. The melodramatic side of the plot is emphasized in the film by repetitive use of the flashbacks without sufficient narrative significance. Glamorous images alternate on the screen, pile one over another, while their dramatic function remains merely illustrative and decorative. This slick picture of "Old Canada" is presented in a typical Hollywood manner: a story of passion, tears, murder, betrayal, cunning and — above all — leisure. Even on the level of entertainment, *Kamouraska* is a boring, pompous and ostentatious photo-play deprived of real life and truly cinematic rendition of human characters, atmosphere and milieu. It is a film that skilfully — and therefore dangerously — works against the trend which tries to make Quebec cinema autonomous and artistically relevant.

The Last Engagement, as Lefebvre's film is titled in English, is the opposite of *Kamouraska* in both contextual and a cinematic sense. Shot in 16 mm color for only forty-three thousand dollars, located in and around a small country house, this typical "Kammerspielefilm" with its concentration on human psyche, depicts the last few days of an old couple living a simple life, waiting and praying to die together in their modest home. Obviously, Lefebvre felt deep compassion for his characters, and succeeded to find a proper cinematic style to develop, both visually and auditorily, a story about the spiritual link between two old people becoming childlike and, through that rejuvenation, again naively pure. All the components of Lefebvre's film contribute to the film's subject and at the same time express the filmmaker's personal attitude. The constant use of "staring" point of view, interchanged with camera trajectories in a limited space bring to our attention many apparently insignificant details and profane events occurring in Rose's and Armand's little world. Like an invisible spirit, the camera investigates the various objects, resting deliberately on intimate details and connecting one character's subtle reaction with another's.

The camera in *The Last Engagement* is an omnipotent eye which helps us to penetrate below the visible appearance of reality, its function is similar to the ingenious principle developed by Robert Bresson in his earlier works, and described by Alexander Astruc as "la camera stylo". In that sense, *The Last Engagement* is a Bressonian film: the inside becomes visible through the outside. Of course, Lefebvre applies the

"camera stylo" method in his own way: while Bresson uses his camera "as a pen" to depict exterior behaviour of his characters without stimulating their emotional reactions, in order to achieve certain degree of "distancing" in the viewer's identification with the events shown on the screen, Lefebvre, on the contrary, explores with his camera the environment, objects and characters with a clear intention to enhance the viewer's identification with the protagonists. For Lefebvre, objects have the same significance on the screen as human faces, but objects reach that importance only through an interaction with human beings. Just as Carl Dreyer did it in his *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) using the gliding camera to record every change on the actors/actresses faces and their relation to the objects.

Searching for the revealing moments in everyday life, Lefebvre's and Guy Dufaux's camera becomes a real participant of the intimate drama presented on the screen, as such it assumes the function of an "explorateur des âmes humaines" (Dreyer's term). Thus the limited environment in which the events take place becomes a micro-world of great interior turmoil: the slightest movement of the actor's and actresses' bodies or a barely visible reaction appearing for only an instant on the human faces is related to the objects that illuminate other events in previous and forthcoming sequences. Identifying with the camera movements and the director's point of view, the audience perceives space through sensorimotor experience, thus becoming, almost physically, part of the world in which the protagonists exist.

Thematically, *The Last Engagement* means certain divergence from Lefebvre's earlier work. Some Quebec film reviewers have expressed surprise and doubts about its "evident respect for tradition", ignoring the fact that progress can be achieved by the quiet revolution, as well, especially when it is known that Lefebvre's first feature, made in the winter of 1964-65, was called *Le révolutionnaire* (D. John Turner, in *Journal of the University Film Association*, no. 3 1975, p. 70). However, John Turner admits that Lefebvre's film being "slow and mesmeric, achieves human behaviour" with an overwhelming emotional effect, hence, *Les dernières fiancailles* "must be recognized as a thoroughly mature work announcing Lefebvre's arrival as a consummate film artist." I fully agree with Turner's statement, and thus less can I understand John Hofsess' opinion about *Kamouraska* which he finds "a significant film which alters the images that Canadians have had of themselves — story of passions, murder, betrayal, and cunning — and the image that others have of us" (*Inner View*, 1975, p. 45). To me, the opposite is true: the picture of Canadians in *Kamouraska* — both in the book and on the screen — is full of passion, murder, betrayal, cunning and other hair-raising emotions, all of them dressed in fanciful attires to fascinate bourgeois mentality. If this is the "altered image" of Canadians as they prefer to see themselves, then they can identify with even more phony images about themselves offered to them in Hollywood movies. What is the goal of producing imitative movies like *Kamouraska*, when there are enough energy and originality in Jutra himself to follow the trend so brilliantly exposed in *Les dernières fiancailles*?

In human terms, Lefebvre's film has a profound meaning which cannot be studied without relating it to the social background. His first film, indeed, had a clear political implication, while here the focus is placed on the philosophical, rather existential concern of Canadians within their own consciousness. Rose and Armand are certainly spiritual and emotional parents (or grandparents) of the youngsters shown in *The Revolutionary*. Capable of understanding any gesture or intention coming from a sincere heart, the Tremblay couple in Lefebvre's film promotes the great ideals which have always served as a basis for human progress, including "the quiet revolution." The fact that these old people cannot get rid of their traditional beliefs, testifies to the fact that cultural heritage has a

deep and crucial socio-psychological impact on the people with consequences that cannot be eliminated overnight. Hence, the old couple in *Les dernières fiancailles* is both a product of specific Canadian historical evolution and a universal symbol of any man and woman approaching death. Contrary to this, the participants of the wild love triangle in *Kamouraska* proves to be direct descendent of Hollywood melodramatic heroes and heroines armed with all the conventions of the "B" movies. With such characterological features, Elisabeth Rolland and her maniacal husband obsessed by their immature egos, spread destruction around themselves, a destruction which is raised to a pedestal without any concern for its sources. Psychologically, then, *Kamouraska* is close relative of Duddy Kravitz: both pretend to be wealthy and powerful. At least such was the intention of their producers and directors, especially in the case of *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* which, as I said, was hailed by many Canadian and American critics as an "important breakthrough" for Canadian cinema. However, its ostensible success (the film cost \$910,000. to make, but has grossed only four million in the United States and Canada, which is not enough to bring any profit) is tragic for Canadian cinema because it gives a false impression that this is the direction which young Canadian filmmakers have to follow. Nothing can be more misleading than this, since Canadian cinema, if it wants to constitute its artistic identity within the world cinema, must explore an entirely different course.

John Hofsess tried to define "what Canadian movies really mean," and what they have to be. His definition rightly supports films like *Les dernières fiancailles*, and not *Kamouraska*, (which he likes), i.e., those directors and films "that are bound to be discussed, for these are the dreamers of independent mind and unique vision who said 'No' to American mass culture" (p. 36). Evidently, Hofsess' admiration of *Kamouraska* does not go along with his general statement about the future development of Canadian and Quebec cinema. Quebec filmmakers, in spite of all difficulties, were courageous to say "No" to the Hollywood dream factory. These difficulties, unfortunately, will become even more numerous in the future. For geographical, and psychological conditions place Canadian filmmakers in a difficult position. Quebec filmmakers would be naive to believe that their specific cultural situation makes these difficulties less detrimental for Quebec cinema. Economic power in the Capitalist world is above the cultural structure. Therefore they ought not to hope that separatism would help them in creating genuine cinematic style. On the contrary, they have to do their best to influence and encourage other Canadian filmmakers in defending their own ideas about cinema and in resisting Hollywood clichés.

As the things stand now, Quebec filmmakers are reminiscent of David fighting Goliath. Their courage is fascinating, because they accept this uneven encounter with the endurance of the mythical hero, and without thinking of their personal difficult situation. They do it with self-sacrifice and patience that only true artists can draw from their creative individualities. It is important to notice that in narrative cinema this sacrifice is more critical than in the non-narrative films which do not compete with current commercial production nor do they depend on the production codes.

The reality of the contemporary Canadian as well as Quebec film industry is such that their filmmakers have to choose between the two poles: cinema as art and cinema as trivial entertainment. I emphasize *trivial*, because this is the type of entertainment that pleases mass audiences the most. In this context, the achievements of those Quebec filmmakers who pursue film as art are extremely significant and exemplary. They have to be supported in order to grow and to be followed. ■

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RAMEAU'S NEPHEW BY DIDEROT BY

de Michael Snow:

par Pierre Théberge

"I started scripting this film in February 1972 and writing, shooting, mixing, editing continued till September '74. Some ideas used in it date from 1966 when I recognized in myself the ambition to make an authentic TALKING PICTURE i.e., true to its description, it moves for its 'content' from the facts of the simultaneities of recorded speech and image; it is built from the true units of a 'talking picture' — the syllable and the frame. All the possible image-sound relationships centering around people and speech generate the movie — audience relationships: a wide range of emotional possibilities; the experience of seeing/hearing this film.

" 'Speech', 'Language', 'Culture' — their sources, their nature... recorded, imaged, prove (?) that in this case a word is worth 1000 pictures." (Michael Snow).⁽¹⁾

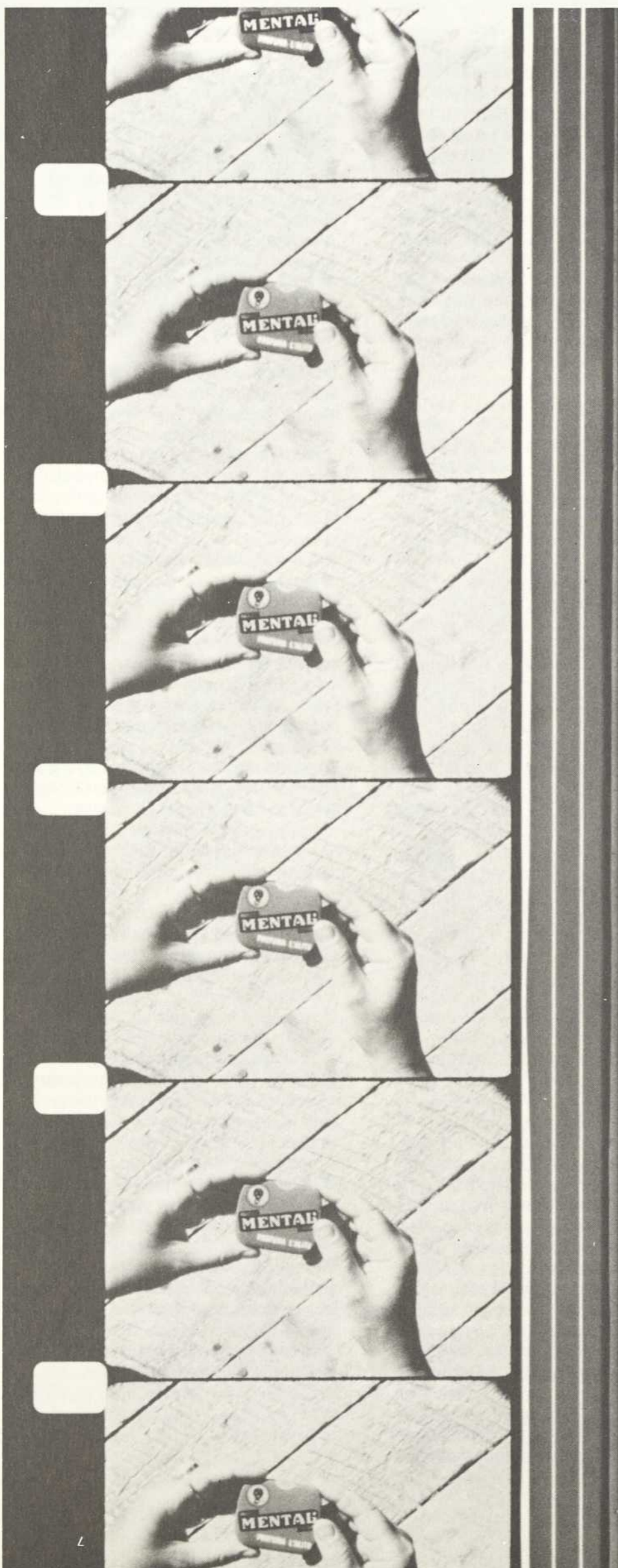
INTRODUCTION

Le déroulement temporel du film de Michael Snow *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot* (*Thanx to Dennis Young*) by Wilma Schoen est aussi peu dramatique que le déroulement mécanique de ses six bobines dans le projecteur d'une salle de cinéma. Chaque image et chaque son des 17 minutes des six parties de son introduction, comme d'ailleurs tout le film, se présentent comme ayant été délibérément choisis et analysés avant d'être insérés dans la chaîne des événements visuels et sonores.

Même si *New York Eye and Ear Control* est l'ancêtre le plus direct de *Rameau's Nephew...* dans ses rapports entre le son et l'image,⁽²⁾ c'est plutôt à *Dripping Water* fait par Snow en 1969 avec la collaboration de Joyce Wieland que nous faisons ici appel pour tenter d'en décrire le déroulement.

Dripping Water présentait en un seul plan l'image en noir et blanc d'un bol rempli d'eau dans lequel tom-

Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (*Thanx to Dennis Young*) by Wilma Schoen Photo Galerie nationale du Canada.



ROT (THANX TO DENNIS YOUNG) BY WILMA SCHOEN

OW: l'introduction

baient régulièrement des gouttes d'eau. La trame sonore, non synchronisée à l'image, représentait le son de chaque goutte frappant la surface de l'eau du bol. Le son et l'image se conjuguèrent seulement dans l'esprit du spectateur.

Seule visible par l'ombre de sa chute, chaque goutte ne devenait réellement perceptible que dans la présence des cercles excentriques se dessinant par intermittence sur la surface de l'eau du bol et s'y accumulant pour le faire déborder.

Les images et les sons de *Rameau's Nephew...* existent aussi dans une absence totale de progression dramatique: il n'y a plus de zoom de la pensée (*Wavelength*), plus de va et vient dialectique, (\leftrightarrow), plus de spirales de l'imagination (*La Région Centrale*). Seul existe l'inexorable déroulement des images et des sons qui, peu à peu, un instant après l'autre, font vibrer de façon de plus en plus intense, l'esprit du spectateur.

Plusieurs oeuvres cinématographiques antérieures de Snow avaient été construites à partir d'un objet central qui était à la fois la source de "l'action" et son point de convergence. Dans celles-ci, l'image projetée sur l'écran renvoyait essentiellement à la caméra et à sa lentille mouvante dans *Wavelength*, à sa tête articulée sur son trépied dans \leftrightarrow , ou à la machine omnidirectionnelle lui servant de support invisible mais perceptible dans ses effets dans *La Région Centrale*. Le spectateur pouvait s'identifier à cette caméra et assumer, pensant et réfléchissant bien sûr, l'expérience antérieure de l'automate.

Dans *Rameau's Nephew...* la caméra n'est évidemment pas absente car sans elle, et sans pellicule, bien sûr pas d'oeuvre. Elle n'occupe cependant pas plus de place dans l'ordre des événements qui s'y déroulent que tous les autres éléments objectifs de l'ensemble de la mise en scène du film qui y sont visibles: la pellicule et sa couleur, le système d'enregistrement



Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen Photo Galerie Nationale du Canada.

sonore, l'éclairage, les décors, les costumes, les acteurs, leur jeu, leurs accents, leurs voix et leurs dialogues, précédant tous le développement du film et son montage visuel et sonore, et enfin sa projection. Tous ces phénomènes demandent le même degré d'attention au spectateur qu'ils peuvent souvent assaillir simultanément!

La perception de *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen* est pour d'aucuns fort épuisante et ce n'est pas seulement parce que le film dure à peu près quatre heures trente minutes. Ce film exige du spectateur devenu le centre de l'action un degré d'attention extrême pour ordonner dans son esprit les effets conjugués de cette foule d'activités intensément cinématographiques. Le spectateur n'y a plus la caméra-écran comme objet auquel s'identifier, derrière-devant lequel se cacher dans l'obscurité de la salle. Tout s'y éclaire: celui-ci est seul, sans camouflage. L'expérience est directe, c'est sa pensée qui est en cause, c'est elle que Snow cherche à modeler: "One presumes a lot if one presumes that one can direct another consciousness into varying states of attentiveness. I could say that I mean not only the intensity of the attention but its nature and forms. I do presume I can do that and that I do it to myself. Impossible subject, I can never be objective. I tend to believe, because of occasional exterior manifestations, that many of the states of mind I experience experiencing my work are frequently enough experienced by others."⁽³⁾

Les 17 premières minutes qui constituent l'introduction du film sont l'amorce de ces débordements de la pensée auxquels il nous convie. Voyons concrètement comment ceux-ci sont amorcés.

LE RÉCIT

Écrit entre 1761 et 1776, le récit, la "satire" de Diderot, *Le Neveu de Rameau*, a eu le curieux sort d'avoir d'abord été connu non pas dans sa langue originale mais en allemand dans une traduction de Goethe parue en 1805. Ce n'est qu'en 1821 qu'une traduction française de ce texte allemand fut publiée, la version originale ayant disparu. Ce n'est qu'après plusieurs versions d'après des copies douteuses qu'une version définitive put être finalement établie en 1891, d'après une copie de la main de Diderot retrouvée tout à fait par hasard.⁽⁴⁾ En tant que "traduction" du récit à partir d'une traduction anglaise de l'original, le film de Michael Snow, *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen*, s'insère ironiquement en continuité avec sa première manifestation dans une existence autre que celle que l'auteur avait originellement inventée.

Le phénomène de la traduction en tant qu'inévitable interprétation, transformation ou trahison d'un "original" fait partie du langage plastique de Snow depuis longtemps. Par exemple, les centaines de manifestations des *Walking Women* avaient été, de 1961 à 1967, autant de traductions d'une seule forme. L'usage qu'il fait maintenant de la photographie ou du cinéma lui permet toutes sortes de traductions et de réductions du réel. Snow a même "traduit" ses propres oeuvres en filmant et commentant dans *Side Seat Paintings Slides Sound Film 1970* des diapositives qui étaient déjà des déformations de ses tableaux originaux. En 1977, encore, il traduisait dans son propre langage et au moyen de la caméra, des tableaux du *Groupe des Sept* dans les 25 parties de "Plus Tard".

LE TITRE

En général les titres des oeuvres de Snow décrivent, résument ou traduisent le contenu de celles-ci, processus que l'idéogramme du film \Leftrightarrow démontre de la façon la plus extrême. Le titre *Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen* n'échappe pas à cette règle. Il est presque uniquement composé de noms de personnages réels ou fictifs qui sont les premiers d'une longue série que le générique du film complétera.

La juxtaposition de noms de personnes appartenant à l'Histoire et de noms de personnages fictifs annonce le côtoiement incessant de la "fiction" et du "document réel" et leurs métamorphoses mutuelles dans le film, comme c'était le cas dans le récit de Diderot.

Qui sont les personnages énumérés dans le titre? *Rameau's* c'est évidemment Jean-Philippe Rameau, le grand musicien français dont on entendra même la musique au cours du film. *Nephew*, c'est Jean-François, son neveu, qui est le premier personnage du titre à avoir cette double existence, réelle et fictive: il fut musicien et fut aussi, en tant que "Neveu", le personnage fictif (?) créé par Diderot, l'écrivain français réel dont le nom apparaît en troisième ordre.

Les noms *Dennis Young* (Dennis comme Denis Diderot?) correspondent à un personnage dont la nature de l'existence, réelle ou fictive, n'est pas révélée dans le titre. Qu'il s'agisse du professeur habitant à Halifax, et du conservateur qui avait organisé la rétrospective *Michael Snow/A Survey* à l'Art Gallery of Ontario à Toronto en 1970 n'est établi que lorsqu'on le voit tirer la langue au spectateur dans un "post scriptum" ajouté récemment par Snow à son film. Même là, il n'est pas identifié comme étant "Dennis Young" sauf pour ceux qui savent à qui il ressemble! L'importance de sa présence précédée de ces "thanx to" dans le titre est due au fait qu'il signala à Snow, au cours d'une conversation, l'existence du récit de Diderot.

Tous ces noms propres ont en commun d'appartenir à des auteurs de quelque chose. Même le Neveu est identifié comme l'auteur de ses propres propos bien qu'ils proviennent "réellement" de Diderot. Le dialogue se déroule entre "lui" et "moi" et non pas entre "le neveu" et "l'auteur", ce qui permet théoriquement l'existence simultanée d'une troisième conscience, celle de l'auteur ayant créé ce "lui" et ce "moi", à laquelle le lecteur peut s'identifier.

Le Neveu imite aussi, comme un comédien, les douzaines de personnes qu'il décrit. Comme lui, elles ont eu une existence réelle hors de la fiction du récit, comme à leur tour les douzaines de personnes qui jouent dans le film les rôles que Snow leur a assignés.

Le sixième et dernier personnage du titre, *Wilma Schoen*, a lui aussi une double existence: fictive (?) dans ce titre et réelle comme anagramme, traduction, du nom de l'auteur du titre et du film. Wilma est le seul personnage du titre qui n'ait probablement pas eu d'existence historique indépendante de celle que lui confère le film.

Il pourrait exister ou avoir existé, peut-être dans l'Allemagne de Goethe, une ou plusieurs personnes du nom de Wilma Schoen. Si l'une d'elles était l'auteur du film, ou des neufs premiers mots du titre, les mots "Michael Snow" n'en seraient qu'un anagramme! Le générique offrira bien d'autres hypothèses sur la réalité ou la fiction de "Michael Snow" dans les variations sur l'ordre des lettres de son nom.

Qui est la duchampienne *Wilma Schoen*? C'est *Will-Machine*, la volonté créatrice transformée par une machine, la caméra ou le projecteur; c'est *Wilma Shone*, celle qui brilla comme une idée, une ampoule de projection ou un écran; Schoen c'est l'anagramme aussi du mot allemand *Schöne*, qui se traduit en français par "beauté", concept longtemps relié à l'oeuvre d'art.⁽⁵⁾

L'existence sonore du titre (et du film) est signalée par le "X" de *Thanx* qui représente, traduit le son du KS qu'il remplace. La nature des "(" et ")" en tant que signaux descriptifs d'une fonction, est analogue ici à celle du \Leftrightarrow ; ils signalent à l'esprit bien sûr l'existence de la parenthèse, l'équivalent grammatical du montage.

Ce titre, dans la juxtaposition des noms propres, représente le film, construit lui aussi par la juxtaposition d'un élément après un autre, hors de toute structure narrative traditionnelle. Chaque partie ou

"chapitre" du film, comme les mots du titre, est virtuellement autonome et existe dans des rapports de stricte égalité vis-à-vis des autres parties.

LA CITATION

"In my films, I hope to modulate the spectators's consciousness by composing with varying emphasis on the nature of the sound in relation to various means of indicating the fictional source of the sound within the range of image possibilities (from abstract pure color-light to "realistic" representation. "Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen" made in '73-'74 is the most radical of these image-sound compositions and most closely related to this...".⁽⁶⁾

Le film commence de façon si abrupte qu'on a l'impression d'être soi-même projeté dans un monde déjà bien en mouvement. Cette toute première séquence est un véritable pro-logue didactique, une séquence sonore mais non verbale, qui précède tout usage du langage verbal.

L'action s'y déroule ainsi: apparaît sur un fond rouge, le buste d'un homme non identifié vêtu d'une chemise bleue. Seuls ceux qui savent à qui ce tout premier personnage ressemble, qui (comme Dennis Young) il représente et interprète, sifflant dans le noir (*W in the D*) de la salle, reconnaissent comme Michael Snow, l'auteur présumé du film. Il est filmé d'abord de face, puis de profil gauche, puis de dos, et on l'entend siffler dans un microphone qu'il avance et recule de ses lèvres. *Mike Mike Show Mike Snow Mike Sounds on the Mike Snophone?*

Le siffleur, le microphone et l'air ambiant sont combinés pour produire le son que l'on entend par l'entremise du haut-parleur de la salle. Les sons qu'il émet en sifflant d'abord face à la caméra sont visiblement modifiés par la force de son souffle, par la forme de ses lèvres et par la distance à celles-ci du microphone enregistreur. Le siffleur mesure de ses gestes l'espace réel qu'il occupe devant la lentille de la caméra et sa distance à celle-ci. Il établit visuellement aussi qu'il existe (existera) en tant qu'image à la fois sur l'écran et à une certaine distance, fictive, derrière sa surface.

Le siffleur mesure en même temps la distance de façon sonore car les sons s'élèvent à mesure que le microphone se rapproche de ses lèvres, et s'abaisse quand il s'en éloigne jusqu'à sortir du plan. Il s'agit pour l'auteur d'établir une convention réaliste, car rien ne garantit que le siffleur ne triche pas en modifiant la force de son souffle en même temps que la distance entre le microphone et la lentille; un ingénieur du son aurait pu tout autant manipuler le volume de l'enregistrement et les sons auraient pu avoir été pré, ou post-synchronisés.⁽⁷⁾

En second lieu, le siffleur, présenté de profil gauche par montage, démontre le caractère bi-dimensionnel de l'écran en étendant son bras vers la limite gauche du champ de la caméra, donc de l'écran.

En troisième lieu, par montage toujours, le siffleur est vu de dos et ce que nous entendons est presque entièrement basé sur la vraisemblance. Nous ne le voyons pas siffler mais nous voyons d'abord l'ombre du microphone projetée sur le fond rouge avant de le voir à gauche de l'écran. Nous entendons des sifflements et nous avons lieu de croire qu'il fait les mêmes gestes avec le microphone que dans les deux séquences précédentes mais seule la mémoire nous garantit vraiment cette croyance. Nous sommes ici dans le domaine de la fiction.

Se succédant parfois en saccades, les sifflements sont analogues aux images mêmes du film qui déroule dans le projecteur 24 fois par seconde. Comme le film dans sa caméra et son projecteur, ils sont introduits dans une machine, le microphone qui est le premier maillon de la chaîne de transmission des sons éventuellement amplifiés et retransmis par haut-parleur dans la salle de projection.

Le va et vient (↔) de l'inspiration et de l'expiration sonore du siffleur est une citation des phrases sifflées de *W in the D* (créé en 1970 et publié dans le disque *Michael Snow Musics...*) où Snow avait réussi à représenter l'espace de façon non visuelle en faisant percevoir à l'auditeur idéalement situé dans le noir la distance entre le microphone et ses lèvres.⁽⁸⁾

Ces premières phrases de *Rameau's...* sont les premières citations d'un film dont tout le dialogue a été conçu et joué consciemment par les personnages comme des citations. Le "I just say what I'm told" de l'un des personnages est caractéristique; il apparaît dans la séquence tournée dans un avion et qui commence par la voix de Snow qui dit "I may be putting words in your mouth, but..." suivie d'une autre voix disant "quote". Le mot "unquote" termine cette séquence.⁽⁹⁾

LA PERCEPTION

Dans la deuxième séquence, le mot *focus* apparaît écrit en blanc sur un fond noir. Il se réfère bien sûr à la "Mise au point" de la lentille du projecteur à l'écran ou de la caméra à l'objet filmé, mais il représente simultanément la concentration visuelle et intellectuelle, l'aiguisement de la perception, "to focus on something", nécessaire au visionnement du film.

Le mot *focus* bouge et passe par animation du flou à la mise au point du flou ("in and out of focus") et semble glisser et sauter dans le projecteur. C'est sans doute un hommage discret de Snow aux milliers de projectionnistes distraits, sinon hostiles aux films qu'ils doivent surtout, comme les trains, regarder passer.

Toute "mise au point" implique une distance optimale du projecteur à l'écran qui imite celle de la caméra à l'objet qu'elle a enregistré et mesure l'espace noir et réel à l'intérieur duquel les spectateurs doivent à leur tour faire la mise au point de leurs esprits pour arriver à pénétrer l'espace fictif lumineux du film.

Dans *Authorization* 1969, Snow avait construit une oeuvre autour de la notion de la mise au point et du cadrage en tant que processus de connaissance et de réflexion intellectuelle. La surface d'un miroir correspondant à la surface argentée de la pellicule photographique réfléchissait un espace dans lequel se trouvait l'auteur de l'oeuvre pour réfléchir ensuite l'espace dans lequel se trouverait le spectateur éventuel. Le flou progressif de la première à la cinquième photographie et les cadrages de plus en plus petits correspondaient au déroulement temporel de l'oeuvre. À chaque étape le passé devenait pour l'oeil de plus en plus flou, comme pour la mémoire.

LA PAROLE

Parallèlement à cette comédie sur la mise au point on entend une voix sombre qui dit *en français* un texte sur Jean-Philippe Rameau. Le volume de cette voix est d'abord lui aussi "ajusté", mis au point. Contrairement au son simultané du début de la première séquence mais de la même façon que le son de la fin de celle-ci, cette voix est simplement juxtaposée à l'image par montage sonore sans lien autre que matériel sur la bande filmique. Le texte, (cité d'une pochette de disque) décrit l'ampleur de l'oeuvre musicale et théorique de Rameau et donne un bref aperçu de son caractère, "sombre et hermétique, voire inabordable", qualités caractéristiques aux yeux de plusieurs spectateurs malheureux des films de Snow, sinon de sa personnalité!⁽¹⁰⁾

Ce tout premier texte du film est dit en français, langue de Rameau, de son neveu, de Diderot et du *Neveu de Rameau*. Pour un public anglophone ("For english speaking audiences") comme l'indiquera plus tard le générique) c'est une langue étrangère possiblement "incompréhensible", un phénomène purement sonore sinon musical, analogue aux sifflements cités et entendus auparavant.

Cette hypothèse de l'absence de sens normal du texte

entendu, et de son existence en tant que son, bruit ou musique autonomes, de son passage du réel à la fiction, est vérifiée immédiatement par sa première répétition en allemand devant le même mot "focus" par une voix de femme (Wilma?) et sa deuxième répétition, finale, en espagnol dans la séquence suivante. Il ne sera jamais dit en anglais.

LA MUSIQUE

La séquence suivante se déroule ainsi: dans une pièce dont le fond est occupé par une bibliothèque chargée de livres, une femme (Marie-Antoinette Roy) est assise devant un piano et paraît réciter (ou lire?) un texte en espagnol. Sa voix est la même que la voix allemande entendue quelques instants auparavant. Le seul indice qui nous permet de croire qu'il s'agit du même texte est qu'ils commencent tous trois par les mots "Jean-Philippe Rameau...". Seule une personne connaissant les trois langues (et ayant bonne mémoire) pourrait vraiment en être certaine.

Le contenu visuel de cette séquence révèle d'autres indices métaphoriques sur la nature de *Rameau's Nephew...* Le texte que cette femme récite (ou lit) est placé sur le lutrin du piano comme une feuille de musique. Elle joue de ses cordes vocales comme elle jouerait des cordes du piano.⁽¹¹⁾ Le piano renvoie à Jean-Philippe Rameau. Snow lui-même est pianiste et l'image du clavier du piano apparaît ensuite à deux reprises dans le film. Le mot piano en italien signifie *plan* comme au cinéma, surface plane comme un écran, tout autant qu'une tonalité musicale.

En français, on pourrait parler des rayons de la bibliothèque comme de ceux d'un projecteur, et les livres accumulés représentent la dimension littéraire du film écrit avant d'être tourné, mis en sons et en images et basé sur un récit. Écrit avant d'être joué, le film a dû exister comme une oeuvre musicale traditionnelle.

Dans ces trois séquences, les signes visuels, sonores et musicaux ont convergé pour révéler que *Rameau's Nephew...* est un *FILM, SONORE, PARLANT, EN NOIR ET BLANC ET EN COULEURS*.

LE GÉNÉRIQUE

En général, tout film compte un générique écrit sur écran. Snow utilise ici cette convention jusqu'à la subversion parodique.

Dans *A Casing Shelved (Un Rayonnement)* 1970, Snow avait exploré des rapports entre une image projetée et une voix enregistrée. L'image représentait un rayonnement, une étagère, (une bibliothèque?) sur laquelle se trouvaient divers objets déposés au hasard du temps et qui avaient servi de près ou de loin à la création d'oeuvres d'art. Une voix enregistrée, celle de l'auteur autant de la photographie que de la "composition", décrivait (au hasard aussi?) les objets sur l'étagère en les groupant verbalement-visuellement, selon leurs formes, leurs couleurs, ou leurs fonctions.

Le déroulement temporel était mesuré uniquement par le mouvement de la bobine du ruban sonore sur le magnétophone parallèlement à l'image fixe sur l'écran. S'établissaient des rapports très complexes entre "des temps" simultanés: celui de la perception visuelle de l'image projetée, celui de la perception de la trame sonore par l'ouïe, celui du temps capté par l'enregistrement au magnétophone du commentaire devant l'objet réel (plutôt que devant la diapositive), et celui enfin de l'enregistrement par la caméra de l'image maintenant projetée. Pour pouvoir percevoir l'oeuvre dans toute la densité de ses épaisseurs, le spectateur devait coordonner au présent ces formes de représentations de temps passés, tout en tenant compte de sa propension à laisser son regard et son ouïe errer.

Le générique de *Rameau's Nephew...* contient des rapports analogues entre l'image (ici le mot) et sa description sonore. On y entend d'abord dans le noir, une voix dont l'auteur bégaye légèrement dire "For

English Speaking Audiences" immédiatement avant qu'apparaissent tous ensemble ces mots écrits. Ensuite, le titre complet apparaît, épilé une lettre après l'autre, de R-A-M-E-A-U jusqu'à S-C-H-O-E-N, pendant que l'image entière change de couleurs rapidement, par clignotement. Suit ensuite une phrase dont chaque mot apparaît en entier, l'un après l'autre: "executed/with/assistance/from/the/Canada/Council/and/the/Guggenheim/Foundation/based/on/the/Decameron/by/Boccaccio/and/the/Bhagavad/Gita/dedicated/to/Alexander/Graham/Bell/and/with/". Chaque mot remplace le précédent au même endroit de l'écran, qui passe successivement du rouge (à *executed*) au bleu (à *based*) au jaune (à *dedicated*) et au blanc et noir (à *with*).

Après cette première section, le mot "with" est répété. Suit le bruit d'un train en marche qui apparaît ensuite, et sur cette image passent en surimpression tous les noms des participants à la réalisation du film y compris les anagrammes des mots Michael Snow. Ces noms se déroulent de bas en haut de l'écran dans un mouvement opposé à celui, de haut en bas, du film dans la caméra (comme dans le projecteur), et en surimpression à ces images en boucle des wagons d'un train qui défile de droite à gauche. Ce mouvement horizontal permet de se faire dérouler dans l'ordre de leur lecture les lettres des mots écrits sur les wagons du train, que l'on peut clairement lire comme *Canadian Pacific*, le *pacifique canadien* (errant!) qui est peut-être l'auteur du film. La dernière séquence de ↔ présentait ce croisement des mouvements verticaux et horizontaux.

Les wagons du train, comme les lettres d'un mot (m-i-c-h-a-e-l-s-n-o-w), les mots d'une phrase, l'égroutement d'un robinet, les images d'un film par montage, sont des unités détachables et recomposables, susceptibles de former de multiples ensembles de sens. Ils représentent l'activité de la pensée, car on dit en anglais "train of thought" pour "fil des idées". Ces wagons sont "entraînés" vers l'avant par une locomotive comme des images d'un film le sont par un moteur sur les "rails" d'une caméra puis d'un projecteur.

Le pléonasma des premiers mots du générique "*for english speaking audiences*" agit à première vue justement, comme un avertissement banal car ce film (comme d'ailleurs tout autre film "parlant" anglais), serait "mal" perçu et quasi incompréhensible pour tout spectateur ne parlant et n'entendant pas l'anglais.

Il n'est cependant pas inutile car bien des jeux de mots, jeux d'esprit, jeux d'images du film ne peuvent y exister exclusivement qu'en anglais: pour ne citer qu'un exemple on verra et entendra dans une séquence subséquente les mains de Snow tambouriner autour d'un évier qui s'emplit et se vide d'eau, établissant ainsi en anglais un calembour visuel entre "sink" (évier) et "sound" (son) et "synch sound", son synchronisé.

Le choix du mot "executed" se réfère plus au domaine musical qu'au domaine filmique. En anglais, le terme normalement utilisé pour décrire la réalisation ou la mise en scène d'un film est "*Directed by*" ("dirigé par"), qui a une curieuse affinité à "*conducted by*" que l'on applique à la description de la direction d'un orchestre par son chef, ou d'un train. L'"*executed with*" est placé de façon ambiguë après "*by Wilma Schoen*" et son sens se trouve brouillé par l'absence de mention des noms des exécutants qui ne viennent qu'après le second *with* qui signifie là autant "avec" que "par".

"*Canada Council*" et "*Guggenheim Foundation*" sont des institutions philanthropiques bien connues. Le choix du terme "*based*" (pour "basé sur", "fondé sur") évite la dimension temporelle trop immédiate que "*after*" (d'après ou après) aurait pu avoir et indique un certain éloignement conscient des oeuvres citées. Le film ne sera pas une adaptation, une version ou une traduction des deux oeuvres mentionnées mais Snow

s'en servira comme fondements, fondations, comme en architecture ou comme dans "Fondation" Guggenheim. "Based" rappelle aussi le socle servant à isoler et soutenir une sculpture que serait ce film.

Alexander Graham Bell auquel le film est dédié fut l'inventeur du téléphone, l'instrument qui permet de parler à distance et qui impose nécessairement le dialogue comme moyen de communication. Bell avait fait d'importantes recherches sur le fonctionnement des organes de la voix et avait enseigné longtemps à parler aux muets selon la méthode du "Visible speech" (parole visible) inventée par son père.⁽¹²⁾

Ouvrage philosophique et religieux du 6e siècle avant J.C., le *Bhagavad Gita* se déroule comme un dialogue entre le héros Arjuna et le Dieu Krishna. Y sont peu à peu révélés les éléments de toute une éthique à travers l'examen des rapports de l'Homme à Dieu.

Le *Décameron* de Boccace présente, à travers les cent récits racontés par ses dix personnages, un inventaire des moeurs de l'Italie du quinzième siècle. Ces deux ouvrages sont encyclopédiques, et ils ont en commun, comme *Le Neveu de Rameau*, d'avoir une écriture qui se présente comme un phénomène parlé. *Rameau's Nephew...* est axé sur la déclamation, la rhétorique, la convention de la parole parlée.

Le reste du générique, se déroulant comme la déclinaison des chefs des armées *Pandu* du premier chapitre du *Bhagavad Gita*, présente tous les noms des personnes, ou organismes (personnes morales), qui ont participé de près ou de loin à la réalisation du film. Comme autant de combattants, les pseudonymes de Michael Snow y sont insérés: Naomi S. Welch, Simon A. Welch, Amos Wilench, Sam Womchile, Mona Chiswell, El Masochisn, Miles H. Cowan, Selma Nichow, Len Machiswo, Salome Winch, H. Acme Wilson, Louis Manchew, Milo W. Snech, Sam Lewhicon, Low Niche Sam, Onesime Chaw, Noel W. I. Chasm, Lois H. W. Canem, Machines Owl, Chas. M.W. Oneil, Elmo W.I. Snach, Nile Wash'M Co., Seminal Chow, O Islam Wench, Milena Sowch, Lance Mishow, Lemon Coca Wish, Male Cow Shin, Leon M. Mischa, Leah W.M. Nicols, Hal W.N. Simcoe, Casimo Weln, W.A. Noel Chism, Ow Lens Imach, Chaw No Slime, Mi Clean Show, Nice Slow Ham, Leo W.I. Schuman, Malice Shown, Wes Hamlin Co., Show Me a Linc. Notons l'absence de Wilma Schoen. Len Macwhison et H.E.W. MacLinson ont chacun un "n" de trop.

L'OBJET MENTAL

Après le générique apparaît l'avant dernier élément, muet cette fois, de l'introduction: deux mains montrent quatre des six faces (recto, verso, côté gauche, côté droit) d'une boîte de métal fermée sur laquelle sont écrits les mots "mental" et "profuma l'alito". La table au-dessus de laquelle l'objet est manipulé n'est pas encore la table des matières; celle-ci apparaîtra plus tard.

L'art, le film, est une chose mentale, une activité de l'esprit. Peut-on dire que l'activité intellectuelle "parfume l'haleine" lorsqu'elle se transforme en parole? La boîte de métal fermée contient-elle, comme cette boîte de film en métal elle aussi manipulée et rapidement entrevue au tout début et à la toute fin de *Side Seat...* le film que l'on a vu, que l'on voit et que l'on verra?

Elle ne sera ouverte que vers la fin du film, se révélant vide, soit qu'elle ait été vidée par le déroulement du film, soit que son contenu, son parfum, ait été aussi immatériel que la pensée et l'imagination, l'image mentale; la surface argentée de l'intérieur de son couvercle y sera réfléchissante comme le miroir d'Autorization, comme la pellicule filmique ou l'écran, comme peut-être le spectateur. Wilma aura réfléchi!

LA MATIÈRE

Survient ensuite un autre séquence silencieuse, la dernière de cette première partie du film. Elle est faite

de la projection de la pellicule même du film dont la couleur, ici rose, vibre. Elle vise à rincer l'oeil pour défaire l'esprit des images qui l'ont assailli et le préparer à recevoir celles qui suivront. Non figuratives, totalement "abstraites", des suites de couleurs pures analogues à celle-ci apparaîtront dorénavant à chaque changement de séquence. Plus encore que le "X" de *La Région Centrale*, elles rappelleront incessamment la matérialité première du film, son caractère coloré et transparent qui permet à la lumière de tacher l'écran. Elles expriment le paradoxe de l'origine concrète de la pensée, loin cette fois des pièges de l'identification inévitablement posés par l'apparition de personnes à l'écran. C'est là que se terminent les 17 premières minutes qui constituent l'introduction de *Rameau's Nephew...*

LES VUES ANIMÉES

Deux autres séquences complètent la première bobine du film et en constituent en quelque sorte le premier et le deuxième chapitre. La première, très courte, établira sur la surface de l'écran, l'illusion du déplacement d'une voix dans un espace réel comme prélude au glissement illusoire de toute l'image hors du cadre et de l'écran jusque dans l'esprit du spectateur.

La seconde, tournée dans un avion à réaction (on entendra au début de cette séquence le sifflement de ses moteurs), sorte de *talking picture plane*, permettra au spectateur, dans la longueur et la complexité de son déroulement de faire le décollage de ses habitudes de voir et d'entendre. Les mouvements de la caméra y seront liés à ceux du dialogue délibérément énoncés comme des citations dont le montage sera audible. C'est à cette séquence que nous nous permettons d'emprunter des citations en guise de conclusion à cette description d'un premier fragment du début du film, car...

— "You can't explain now, you'll have to explain later"

"Explain again"

— "You can't explain now you'll have to explain later"

— "Try again"

— "Now? Well I can't explain it but it means another time once more"

— "Right"

— "Again"

— "Right"

— "Why can't you"

— "Right"

— "Why can't you explain now"

— "I just did"

— "You'll have to explain later"

— "Again?"

— "Right"

— "Only on arrival" ■

NOTES

- 1 Michael Snow, dans *Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre Catalogue 1977*, Toronto, 1977, p. 39.
- 2 "The title of my film *New York Eye and Ear Control* was intended to mean what it means, if you get what I mean, and that was my first ('63; '64) attempt to deal with what I was starting to see as a fabulous practically uncharted artistic area: that of image-sound relationships in the cinema". Michael Snow, dans *Michael Snow Retrospective*, La cinémathèque québécoise, Musée du Cinéma, mars 1974, p. 24
"I should mention that since 1963, I have been especially interested in trying to compose in my films, strong image and sound relationships. In 1964 I finished a film called "New York Eye and Ear Control". Shot and edited by myself, it has a sound track by a great (again!) group with Albert Ayler, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd, Sonny Murray. This black and white film was an attempt to set up a simultaneity of a separate but equal picture and sound... found-film aesthetics is a vast subject and perhaps this is not the time and place to discuss it. Perhaps it is."
M. Snow, dans *Michael Snow Musics for Piano, Whistling microphone and Tape Recorder*, Pochette de disque, Chatham Square 1009/10, 1975.
- 3 *Michael Snow Musics...*
- 4 Henri Benac dans son introduction à D. Diderot *Oeuvres Romanesques*, Paris 1962, p. 87.
- 5 D. Diderot même a discuté de la relativité du beau dans *Recherches Philosophiques sur l'origine et la nature du Beau*.
- 6 *Michael Snow Musics...*
- 7 Par exemple Snow avait utilisé ce double processus de la "pré-post-synchronisation" dans son discours inaugural à l'exposition *Boucherville Montréal Toronto London 1973* à la Galerie Nationale du Canada à Ottawa le 4 juillet 1973, récitant au microphone simultanément à sa transmission par haut-parleur, un texte écrit et enregistré plusieurs jours auparavant.
- 8 Ce va et vient du souffle pourrait se rapprocher des exercices du contrôle de la respiration décrits dans le chapitre quatre du *Bhagavad Gita* consacré au "Yoga (méthode) de la sagesse". Cette courte séquence est aussi la métaphore du "souffle créateur" à l'origine du film, que rappellera plus tard la présence du bruit des moteurs à réaction entendu au début de la séquence tournée dans un avion.
- 9 "Un grand comédien est un autre pantin merveilleux dont le poète tient la ficelle et auquel il indique à chaque ligne la véritable forme qu'il doit prendre". (Diderot, *Paradoxe sur le comédien* dans D. Diderot, *Oeuvres esthétiques*, Paris 1959, p. 348.)
- 10 Le texte s'entend comme suit: "Jean-Philippe Rameau a été la personnalité la plus intelligente et la plus ouverte de la France de son époque comme compositeur et théoricien autant que comme interprète et il est bien peu de maîtres français qui aient connu une célébrité aussi grande au-delà des frontières de leur pays. Si l'observateur moderne peut se rendre compte de la diversité artistique et scientifique de l'oeuvre de Rameau, s'il se peut faire un tableau de son actualité contemporaine et constater quel esprit international marque son oeuvre théorique, il lui est difficile d'imaginer que Rameau ne tenait qu'à peine compte de son entourage, qu'il était farouche et silencieux et passait aux yeux de ses contemporains pour sombre et hermétique, voir inabordable."
- 11 "Un grand comédien n'est ni un piano-forté, ni une harpe, ni un clavecin, ni un violon, ni un violoncelle; il n'a point d'accord qui lui soit propre; mais il prend l'accord et le ton qui conviennent à sa partie, et il sait se prêter à toutes." (Diderot: *Paradoxe sur le comédien* dans *Oeuvres esthétiques*, Paris, 1949, p. 347.)
- 12 Voir le livre de Robert V. Bruce, *Alexander Graham Bell and the Conquest of Solitude*, Boston, Toronto, 1973.

C.P.: There are a lot of people that wonder how you came from dance to film, how you could sort of switch from being a dancer and become a filmmaker, how did that transfer operate, do you still consider yourself a dancer even though you are a filmmaker?

Y.R.: I don't really consider myself a dancer, because using my body is no longer my main point of departure for making art. Sometimes I like to think of myself as a choreographer because of the way I was and still am, concerned with putting different kinds of things together in time. And then there is the fact that I'm still concerned with stillness and motion; now it's camera movement and small movements in a very restricted frame as opposed to large movements in an open performing area. The main thing that made me switch was that I began to think about material that seemed to belong in a narrative and psychological tradition such as emotional experience. Since my work had never been concerned with dramatic presentation and development, it was not appropriate that I turn to a

theatrical form like the dramatic dialogue. But I was still concerned with gesture and with using people and movement as counterpoint to specific emotional material that would now be conveyed by language. Somehow it was fitting that I was drawn to the artifice of film conventions, such as intertitle, subtitle, voice over, and close-up. These devices seemed to be the more appropriate conveyance for emotional facts than anything I could do as a dancer with my body. I had never made symbolic movement. Gesture was used for its immediate suggestiveness for reference to everyday activity but it wasn't meant to stand for a context larger than that. Also, I was doing more writing, and film offered a way to use writing in other ways than simply as music or as a general accompaniment for dance. In my films, I now use language to convey primary meanings. In most of my dances it was the body that did this. Language was secondary.

C.P.: From the beginning, as a dancer, you were interested in choreography, you were never interested very much in being an interpreter.

Y.R.: I did dance with other people, but not for long.

C.P.: In a formative stage.

Y.R.: Yes, when I was still a student, but also after I had begun to make my own dances. I danced with Jimmy Waring until 1964.

C.P.: What are the ideas or influences that prepared you to generate the kind of choreography that you invented. You didn't really follow a tradition.

Y.R.: Well, in a way I did. I started making work at a time when John Cage's ideas via a Duchampian attitude about accident and organization were prominent. I would say that a lot of my ideas were in a surrealist tradition, and continued to be to some extent, I mean in an open endedness which makes a certain demand on the audience, on the perceiver. Ambivalent relation to specificity and incongruity, you might say. There wasn't such a tradition in dancing, but certainly in the New York art world avant garde

YVONNE RAINER

Interview by Chantal Pontbriand

Lil Picard in *Kristina Talking Pictures*, 16mm, color-b/w, 90 minutes, written and directed by Yvonne Rainer, 1976. Photo B. Mangolte.



and music world, there was this climate.

C.P.: I'm surprised that you refer to surrealist inspirations, because the way you used movement was very minimal, an antithesis to surrealism.

Y.R.: There were always insertions of unexpected, unpredictable everyday gesture. I guess I'm calling that surrealistic in the sense of a bending of the ordinary to make an unexpected new relationship. Then there was minimalism. I was never a purist, but I was affected by minimalism because it seemed so appropriate as objection to a dance history which was overburdened with all kinds of hokey spiritual values, an outdated humanism, or sentimentality.

C.P.: You were very much against that cultural weight that dance was carrying on.

Y.R.: Yes, dance has always been behind the other arts, it seems to have to be explored, discovered by its practitioners every generation all over again, so it has no history, and that's probably happening now again.

C.P.: Would that be because it's more a performing art?

Y.R.: Yes, it's transcendent, and up to recently had no documented history.

C.P.: I read someplace that you said: "For me, it's a surprise to see that" *Lives of Performers* is still around."

Y.R.: Because it's a film, an object. That was also the attraction of filmmaking. I got tired of making these works that disappeared, I mean they disappeared even for me, to say nothing of the audience, or the next generation. Of course there's another aspect to this: it's harder now to make work; my own past stares me in the face. This was a condition that I happily ignored because I was never presented with it before as a dancer. There is a different responsibility that goes with one's own work being on record. One wants to maintain the level of that work, compete with it, even surpass it. That's very much a condition of my working process in film.

C.P.: When you were doing dance, you slowly integrated bits of film in the dance, why did you feel the need to do that? And how did your current films develop out of that, or did they?

Y.R.: Not really, those early short films were mainly a way of juxtaposing changes of scale. One of the first ones was just a close-up of a hand with the fingers moving rather erotically, rubbing each other, it was projected very large on one side, in front of the proscenium. That was in an early version of *The Mind Is a Muscle*. Then, in the later version, there was a film with a close-up of legs from the knee down projected on a large screen in front of the performing area, and on either side, underneath the screen (the screen was elevated slightly), you could see the real dancers, very tiny in relation to those projected legs. Some of the ideas in those short films are reflected in sections of the longer films, like the beach section in *Film About a Woman Who...* where there's a play between a very large figure in the foreground and very small figures seen through an aperture in her limbs, underneath an arm, far off down on the beach. Those ideas crop up but they're not central, they don't stand out as a device in quite the same way they did in my dances. They are almost absorbed into the narrative.

C.P.: You were talking a lot about close-ups, was that a need to bring the audience closer to certain parts of the body?

Y.R.: Yes, and also focus attention in a way that is impossible to do in a live performance situation where the audience can look anywhere. You never know where they're looking; they may miss a tiny gesture especially if you have a number of things going on at the same time. I still like to have different things going on at the same time but now it takes the form of language

and image. I used to divide up the performing space and have two or three things going on, now it's a matter of finding ways to intersect language and image, and shift meanings and levels of correspondence to arrive at pluralities — now mental whereas before the shifting was primarily spatial.

C.P.: You also then started using text besides the images on the screen. Now you're talking about language, certain correspondences between languages and images; why do you need to verbalize certain things?

Y.R.: Language offers the possibility for a kind of analysis and specificity that image, body, and movement usually don't, and it's also another channel of information that can be played off against other things.

C.P.: Could it be the power of evocation that language has more than images?

Y.R.: Yes, in terms of specific meanings. Images certainly can be evocative, but the evocativeness of a given image can always be directed or influenced by language. When I was in Berlin, last year, I found myself thinking of images alone, and of camera work and movement, independent of a long-range plan and independent of writing. I went ahead and shot and edited some short sequences. There's a particular sequence that is about a man and a woman walking in an outdoor space. It cuts between her and him; the cuts are based on position and size of figure in the frame, speed of movement, continuity, narrative and otherwise, in other words, and exploration of various ways of making continuity and visual disjunction through editing. Only now am I trying to figure out a text to go with it. So far, I'm thinking that two voices in the form of voice-over will be commenting on who these people in the image are, where they may be going or what their relationship is. So language, in this case, is a way of bringing a specific interpretation, however tentative, to an image that is otherwise strictly formal and ambiguous with respect to characterization.

C.P.: So in your films finally, you do a lot of the work yourself, you do the script, directing, editing.

Y.R.: I don't usually do the camera work. In Berlin, because I had access to equipment and I wasn't pressured, I felt a kind of easiness there, a leisure that allowed me to fool around with equipment, so I worked a little bit with super-8 and video, which I've since had converted to 16 mm. But when I work directly with 16mm, I always use a professional camera person. Working with actors and performers as I do, I find it very difficult to think about the technology of equipment and to direct people at the same time.

C.P.: In a way, you're the director and sometimes also the performer, you have a very personal participation almost in every stage of the work. Do you find that it can contribute something more to the work, why do you find it necessary to do everything yourself? Would it be possible for you to work in collaboration with other people?

Y.R.: I never have. Sometimes I feel a need for collaboration in writing, making conversations come alive or something like that. I may eventually look for that kind of situation. So far, I've managed without this kind of assistance because I've settled on a recitational style. But I did collaborate in *Kristina* in the sense that I used not only my own text but other literary sources.

There are a great many quotes in the last film, largely from Simone de Beauvoir's autobiography and Noel Mostert's "Supership". And a lot of single line quotes from various places drawn from what I was reading in a particular period. So I would call that a kind of collaboration; other people can say it better than I can.

C.P.: Do you direct the camera work precisely?

Y.R.: That is quite precisely directed. I'm very meticulous about framing and about camera movement in relation to exact points in the action and speech. That's a matter of precise communication which of course sometimes breaks down.

C.P.: Who is it that handles the camera for you?

Y.R.: It's not always the same person. The first two films had Babette Mangotte on camera and for the last one, there were two camera people: Roger Dean and Babette Mangotte. The way things are going there may be a great many cinematographers' work in my next film. So far there have been two Germans and two American, including myself.

C.P.: When you're doing the script, is everything very precise?

Y.R.: Yes, by the time I'm ready for the bulk of the shooting, there's a complete script, including shot sequences and speech. There were a few exceptions to this in the last film, where there's a sequence of what I call "choreography of victimization", which consists of tracking shots past piles of corpses, people standing around with their hands in the air, etc. I wasn't sure how I would use all that but I hoped I would be able to make sense out of it on the editing table, so I didn't prescript this material. I just made sure I had plenty of footage to work with. The unifying element was a constant tracking movement past photos on the wall, past the people, victims, and lions and tigers in an animal park. The formal element that was to unify these categories was the motion of the camera going past.

C.P.: The sequences with the animals are sequences taken from reality and there are other parts of the film where it's more like performing situations that you direct; how do they relate to one another? How do you create a perceptive dosage between the two?

Y.R.: In the case of *Kristina Talking Pictures*, because Kristina was a lion-tamer and embodied a metaphor for danger and courage, I felt justified in inserting stories and imagery dealing with wild cats into the film. So I collected material around this theme: footage from an animal park, a dream about a leopard, and a story about a tiger by Julio Cortazar. Most of the animal stuff is with the choreography of victimization, but then, here and there, there are these isolated shots of a tiger that interjects an ominous element, or reference to other parts of the film. Isolated shots of people with their hands in the air work in similar fashion. But most of it had to work in terms of movement, camera movement, and that was the big challenge, can you move past a photo and intercut that with moving past a tiger. Some of it was rather crude, but I was very pleased to find that some of it worked hand-in-glove, very smoothly confirming my hunch that the camera movement itself would lead from one to another. So that was one main consideration in using those different kinds of material, once I had decided that on a thematic level, they could fit together. The background of Kristina as a Jew in Europe during the 30s and 40s and the theme of ecological disaster also linked the lions and tigers as endangered species, a category that could include people, animals, and — as her lover Raoul points out — even the plankton in the sea...

C.P.: What is the "choreography of victimization"?

Y.R.: It's my private designation for the two parts of the film that deal with the Holocaust, specifically the Nazi extermination camps. And I call these parts choreography because they contain a different level of stylization than any other part of the film. I mean it wasn't documented imagery like the lions (I didn't direct the lions), but was a combination of camera work and very explicite positioning, grouping, and arranging of configurations of people to represent a historical event: the round-up, herding, degradation and murder of the Jews. More broadly: a choreography of victimization.

C.P.: Do you ever use also sequences of films that

have been made by other people? You did, in a way, in "Lives of Performers"....

Y.R.: I make references to other films, like the tableau vivant based on photos from Pabst's *Lulu* in "Lives of Performers". I have a bit of footage that may go into my next film that somebody gave me. It's one of these air-bag tests showing the impact of an auto with dummies inside in slow motion. And that does intrigue me, very short insertions of illustrative material that comes from very different sources. The tanker in *Kristina* has that look, but we actually went up in a helicopter over New York harbour to film that.

C.P.: You had a very defined attitude towards the history of dance, you wanted to bring dance back to something more substantial, or down-to-earth, concrete, what is your relationship to the history of film or to film that is being done?

Y.R.: That's difficult to talk about. I feel a kind of debt to my influences in film and that sense of debt may be stronger than the messianic zeal I had as a dancer. But I do have a private war with narrative film and it's a different kind of argument than structural filmmakers have. I feel that film can encompass all kinds of treatment within the same work. I guess that's what interests me most about it, that it's possible to explore film in terms of its process, and structural/formal possibilities, and also deal with fiction and exposition through performers and language. I'm very aware that narrative is a trap, it's something that's very dangerous to deal with. In its ultimate perfected form, it gets into a kind of representation that can only be compared with methods of persuasion and myth that bombard us everyday, and that's something to be avoided. How one chooses to avoid these shoals of narrative film are the crux of the matter for me, and quite fascinating. True, I have a more ambiguous relation to film conventions than I had to dance conventions, and this ambivalence has also shown up, in the choreography I have made expressly for film. For instance *In Film About a Woman Who...* I used poses from the dances of Isadora Duncan which some people found extremely sentimental. How could I, being the hard-nosed post-modern dancer I was, how could I make something so maudlin?! I thought that the way in which it was cut and presented counterbalanced the sentimental overtones of the actual poses, but that's open to debate, I guess. Film has certainly given me permission to include a kind of dancing I would have been very reluctant to touch when I actually was a dancer.

C.P.: When you were in Montreal, you mentioned that you had been influenced in your filmmaking by Godard and Warhol. How did they inspire you?

Y.R.: Warhol influenced me before Godard. I had a lot of trouble with Godard's films at the very beginning in the '60s. But Warhol with his stationary camera and that prolonged time-sense that allowed a subject's character to emerge, the portraits especially, I found overwhelmingly beautiful. That series of thirteen beautiful men and twelve beautiful women, especially the portrait of Henry Geldzahler, had an effect on me long before I was thinking of using film; it was an image that really stayed in my mind. The case of Godard is more complex. I don't know that I have been influenced by him although people sometimes see connections, I think I have been influenced by some of the same people, including Warhol, who certainly affected Godard at a certain point. In any case he is one of the few people whose films continue to be on a consistent level of problem and question about the use of cinematic modes in relation to complex ideas, to politics. And if one works anywhere near the areas in which he has worked — specifically, "fooling around" with narrative — critics are going to make comparisons.

C.P.: So you have mentioned one European influence and one American influence...

Y.R.: I have to point to Michael Snow and Hollis



Valda Setterfield in *Lives of Performers*, 1972, 16mm, b/w, 90 minutes, written and directed by Yvonne Rainer. Photo Elizabeth Mangoite.

Frampton also. Especially Frampton's earlier work using photography and language. There is one work in particular called *Critical Mass* about an argument between a man and a woman. The way in which it is cut complements in the most amazing fashion the subject of the film.

C.P.: And Michael Snow?

Y.R.: Snow too, although when I saw *Wavelength*, I was rather bored but only because I was dancing and it did not really concern me. Certainly anyone who uses a repetitive camera movement must acknowledge Snow's influence.

C.P.: So you have taken something from structuralist film; do you think that narrativity is used in this type of film?

Y.R.: Well, *Wavelength* certainly pioneered a new use of narrative. Also Frampton's *Nostalgia* and *Poetic Justice*.

C.P.: What have you taken from the classics in cinema?

Y.R.: A sense of "poignant imagery" from Renoir and Vigo, and from Bresson and Dreyer, a sense of pacing, of stillness.

C.P.: When you came to New York, what were you planning to do?

Y.R.: I was studying acting, I had discovered that I liked performing and had been attending an acting class in San Francisco and then I went to a couple of schools here in New York. I had no success. They thought I was intelligent but I did not conjure up the proper "credibility", so I found it very frustrating and somewhere along the line I went to a modern dance class and I really liked it, I liked using my body. I had always been very athletic, I loved to leap and jump.

C.P.: Did that kind of difference that you had with the

other students propel you to insert yourself even more in the art milieu?

Y.R.: You mean my difficulties in the acting school? It did not occur to me that way at the time. I was living with Al Held, the painter, and was very involved with his work, so I was thinking a lot about painting ideas and problems. I don't know that dancing offered anything in that direction for me. It was really basically on a kinetic, physical level that I got involved and...

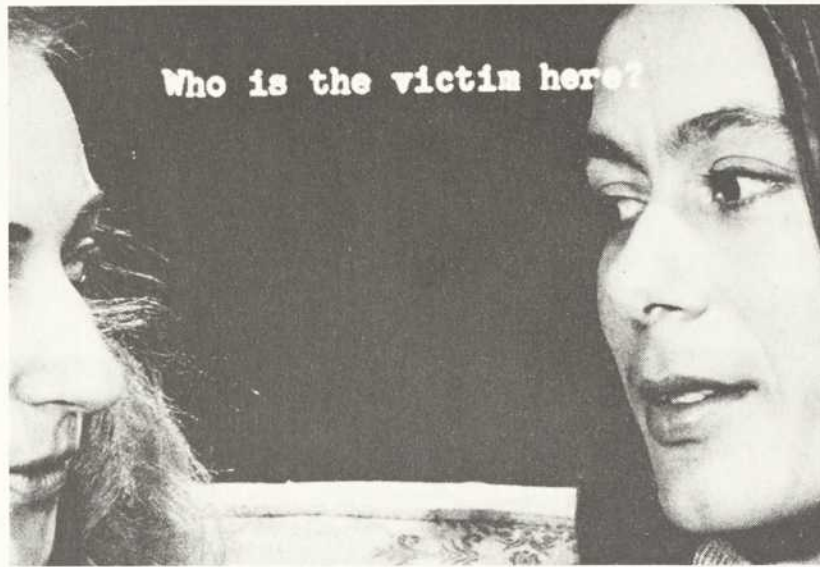
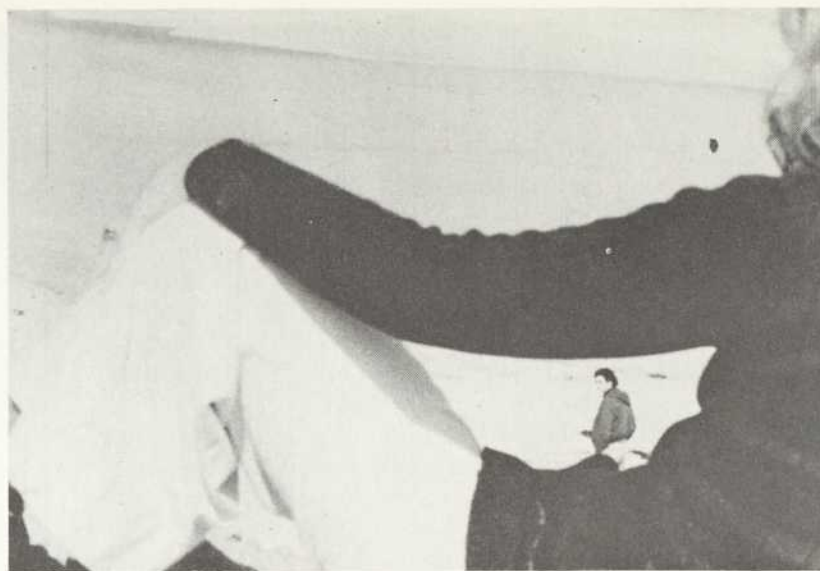
C.P.: But you were interested in what was going on in different fields.

Y.R.: Yes, and I knew from the beginning that I had certain physical limitations, I did not have an elongated, limber lithe body, so I could not make pretty pictures. I suspected from the beginning that I would be doing my own work, at some point, and sure enough, within three years I was.

C.P.: We talked about the way that your body was developing itself and what you learned from it but there was certainly a parallel development in your way of thinking because what comes out in your films touches this issue very much.

Were you thinking from the beginning of how to deal with psychological matters?

Y.R.: No not at all. My early work was made from my body and observing in the mirror the shapes it could make. The sources of the material were eclectic, with references to balletic technique, eccentric gestures, athletic movement. I learned to organize this material by working with the chance procedures that Robert Dunn was exposing via John Cage's scores. Things like phrasing and timing were subjected to aleatory procedures, the results of which — even though I no longer use them — have influenced me to this day. What has remained is "doubling back" in terms of meaning and dynamics, changing, turning a corner, starting over, doing something that puts one instantly



Ivan and Yvonne Rainer in *Kristina Talking Pictures*, 16mm, color-b/w, 90 minutes, written and directed by Yvonne Rainer, 1976. Photo B. Mangolte.

Kate Parker in *Kristina Talking Pictures*.

Shirley Soffer and John Erdman in *Film About a Woman Who...*, 1974; 16mm, b/w, 105 minutes, written and directed by Yvonne Rainer. Photo B. Mangolte.

Shirley Soffer and Yvonne Rainer in Yvonne Rainer's *Film About a Woman Who...*

into another frame of reference, of questioning. Today, it is fashionable to talk about distancing and Brecht but somewhere along the line there have been many different roads to the same result. Artaud, Brecht, Duchamp. In different art forms people have been influenced by one or the other of these sources but the end effect may be very similar if one ignores subject matter, that is, I find it curious that my work has been appreciated and understood in terms of one set of ideas, while it was initiated and developed in terms of another, the Duchamp, Cage source. More and more, however, it seems unproductive to refer to these remote "fathers". The limb one goes out one is finally one's own.

C.P.: There are some questions that I wanted to ask you about characterization. How do you define that?

Y.R.: Up to *Kristina Talking Pictures* there was no character development. In *Lives of Performers*, people used their own names and the material is blantly autobiographical. From one point of view, I simply assigned parts of it to the four performers so it seemed as though it was their lives that were being exposed, the lives of Valda, Fernando, John and Shirley. In the second film, which also was largely autobiographical, the people had no names at all, it was just he and she, and to diffuse the pronoun singularity, I made the he and she apply to four different people. The two hes and two shes, were interchangeable so that one never got attached to or identified with a particular she or he. There is in my films always an impulse to diffuse a sense of character in order to make the events themselves predominant, and that is done through the writing in voice-over and titles. In a way it is an opportunity for the audience to fit themselves into the diegesis. I also leave open the specifics of time and place as well as the specifics of character. It is the emotional event, or fact, that interests me. I finally found a name, Kristina was based on a lion tamer whom I saw in Germany. Her photos are used in the film, but again I used the device of fracturing the singular character by dividing her among five different female performers. They are all meant to

be Kristina or aspects of Kristina and each of them spoke for her at different times. The same was done with the character Raoul, her lover, who was played by one person in the long section called "The Return of Raoul" and by several others in the rest of the film.

C.P.: You give indications to the public that one actor is playing the same role as another one. How does this happen in Kristina, are there not some objects that are used to give away this idea, like the sequined costume?

Y.R.: The green costume is attached literally to two people, to Kate Parker, who runs back to the room to get it and then is seen lying across the bed with the costume on top of her, and later, myself wear it. It is meant to be the circus insignia that identifies the women as Kristina. Valda Setterfield, with her gariser gown, also carries this "leitmotif". In a sense, Kristina in all her manifestations — is the vehicle for the ideas of the author. She voices the particular problems or discourse in which I the author am involved, and, by extension, the audience. I am not interested in the character's credibility, although certain token gestures are made in that direction.

C.P.: You are playing this role that you give yourself, being author, director, performer...

Y.R.: Do you mean that I the author am in the film talking as a character but talking also about myself, about things that involve me, the author?

C.P.: You give yourself a role about yourself in a way, but what I am wondering, is, to what extent are you interested in giving away your biography?

Y.R.: This was the least autobiographical film that I have made. True, Kristina's giving up the circus for dance parallels my dance-to-film transition. Nevertheless, I really tried to extend the particulars of my own life and deal with things that I had no direct involvement with. So my performing in this case was not so loaded or involuted an affair as it might have been if I

had been talking about myself. As it was in the section in which I appeared, I was talking about lions, about the interests of the fictional character, Kristina. The work differs from that of many people working in video who use themselves in a much more exposed way. I tend to be rather cautious about that. In fact the closer the material is to my own life, the more pains I usually take to have other people represent it, or by other means transform it into fiction. Fiction is a somewhat dirty word in the art world. There is some notion that fiction and authenticity are contradictory. As I see it, the word fiction designates a technique for exposing truth.

C.P.: You have said: "I go back and forth between documentation and fiction". What do you mean by documentation? We have talked a lot about what you mean by fiction.

Y.R.: I think that was said in relation to *Lives of Performers* in my book*. In that film, I used a real rehearsal situation. I was still involved as a choreographer in rehearsing for live performances, so I documented one of the rehearsals we were having in preparation for a performance that was coming up soon at the Whitney Museum. I arranged to have a camera crew there while we worked and later incorporated the edited footage. These sections supplied an "authentic"-looking background against which the narrative fictions were elaborated, and the "real" dancers interchanged with the fictional characters of the story. I have not done anything quite like that since. The film I'm working on now contains a similar interplay. My niece who is a baroque flutist, gives me a lesson on the recorder. The fact that it was set up expressly for the camera does not make that much difference in the way one looks at it, or I would hope not.

C.P.: In some circumstances, the distance between recording a given situation and role playing is very narrow.

Y.R.: How true. In *Lives of Performers*, I began using the device of silent-filming people while they talk so I could get their ordinary every day social gestures and mannerisms and then on the sound-track, using information from the script, we impose explanations on the scenes. This was a way of having naturalistic gesture lend support to fabricated meanings. Simultaneously the "re-invented" speech of the sound track both complemented and subverted the "reality" of the image.

C.P.: What I find interesting also is that you use objects that mean more than what they really are, or images that mean more than what they really are. In a way they are symbols.

Y.R.: Such as?

C.P.: You have talked about the bed cover in "Kristina" as a reference to the sea...

Y.R.: I suspected this would happen, but not to the extent that it did. When putting together the script I made certain gestures and camera movements dovetail with the text. For instance, at the beginning when Raoul says: "As I walked out on that black expanse", the camera pans over the dark brown blanket until it gets to his face. The bed — its folds, bulges and sounds, repeatedly becomes a metaphor in this section; the bulges in the dark blanket become the seacoast and the shore, the sounds of bodies-against-sheets become wind. Many people don't see this, or they see it only when I point it out. I don't think we are accustomed to looking at film in this way, i.e. seeing metaphor in the *relationship* of word, movement and image.

C.P.: It is very obvious with the sequin costume.

Y.R.: Because you have seen the photograph of the actual lion tamer and also it is a more idiosyncratic object. But the bed does not work in the same way. The costume is a specific referent, while the bed, in its more general aspects, lends itself to metaphor. I am

still thinking a lot about this. In *Film About a Woman Who*, in the sequence where I used the forty stills from the shower scene in *Psycho*, you hear on the soundtrack a voice telling about "her", the heroine, stumbling out of a movie, feeling sick, and trying to find her way back to the hotel in this silent, dark town late at night. Finally, seeing the outline of an oil storage tank, she realizes that she has seen workman painting it that morning. She thus situates herself and finds the hotel. Meanwhile the 40 stills are flashing, close-ups of hands and Janet Leigh's mouth and face. I was aware, when cutting, of aiming for a rhythm that would make the overall duration of image and sound hang together. I did not realize that I was setting up a possibility for the moment by moment reading of image word intersection. Later I was fascinated, and I am still fascinated by this phenomenon. I cannot quite figure out how it happens so frequently that some aspect of a particular image and word connect. For instance, you see the drain of the bathtub and simultaneously hear "gas storage tank", and there's something about their common roundness. The problem is to get people into a frame of mind to look at and listen to something that closely. Not that I want to illustrate or find blow-for-blow connections, like tap-dancing to the beat. I am interested in a situation where that possibility is available and you can get involved on *that* level as well as others. So I was aware of this in the cutting of "The Return of Raoul", with all those sea images in the writing. Another example: Raoul says, "The South Atlantic is a calm sea where nothing is what it seems", and you see the image of this man jumping around; his words are continuous but his body is doing this peculiar pixilated movement in the bed which of course is humanly impossible, it can only come about through editing. He was not really doing what he seemed to be doing. Film is indeed a situation where "nothing is what it seems".

C.P. You have mentioned that you are worried about how others will perceive or if they will perceive exactly what you want them to perceive. Are you continuously preoccupied with this idea?

Y.R.: This consideration always comes after you have made a work and then you get this array of contradictory reactions from the audience. I am very aware that it is always possible to read more into the work than the author, the artist, intended and also to miss a lot of things. So much depends on the viewer's background and frame of reference. When I am making something, I am obviously dealing with things that interest me. That is all I can do. At some point, you simply have to have faith that there are other people in the world with similar interests. It is only when the work is complete that the artist must deal with this audience issue again.

C.P.: Is the relationship with the audience very different from when you were dancing, when you were doing choreography?

Y.R.: Yes. In spite of what I said before, I am even more concerned now with how things read, how they register. In retrospect it seems that I did what I pleased when I was a choreographer. Perhaps I am wrong, but it does seem that the problem of representation in film is more loaded, or risky, than the more purely formal terms of dancing. Now, especially since I am dealing with a peculiar mix of moral, psychological and social subject matter and a kind of personal/public thought process, I have a different dilemma. The "ante" has been "upped" in term of the effort to "speak" to the audience and I mean the audience at its most sensitive and at its most informed in relation to film. I am not interested in making films for the masses. Not, that I ever made dances in this spirit, but somehow there's much more at stake now. Duchamp's "beauty of indifference" and Freud's notion of art as "play" are not as applicable as they once were. Maybe it's partly a function of the aging process but not entirely. I know a number of people involved in art who are working out of a "new seriousness". Americans, naturally. We always were "less serious" than the rest of the world. Which didn't prevent our being taken terribly serious-

ly. But enough of this. I'm getting unserious.

C.P.: I was thinking more of the relationship between the one who sees and the one who makes... That was what my question was all about. I wanted to ask you about how you deal with time, how is that organized in your films?

Y.R.: That is the most difficult thing to talk about because it is always changing. I cannot make a general statement about my sense of time. People complain that it is too dense, there is just too much to take in especially with all the talking...

C.P.: Many things are often happening at the same time or almost: it is more difficult to do in film than on the stage where simultaneous actions are possible...

Y.R.: But the equivalent is to have a fluctuating relationship between sound and image. My particular sense of pace, I think, is most apparent when the talking stops and hardly anything happens from a very dense outpouring of information, visual and verbal, all of a sudden there is no speech and you are just looking at someone sitting looking out at the camera. I find certain images in themselves very mysterious, especially in contrast to a lot of verbal input. The silence of an image suddenly drained of verbal "under pinings" can be extremely evocative. And I am still involved with prolonged duration and with uneven durations.

C.P.: You are interested in fiction but you are not interested in using short-cuts, you want to show how things happen in "real" time but at the same time, how in real time, there are so many things that happen.

Y.R.: No, I don't use "real" time, but there are other ways in which I try to counteract my enslavement to narrative. The narrative stops and you have to deal with images on a formal level, with cutting, with camera movements, with things that don't propel the plot as the language has propelled it. It is a kind of story telling that is constantly breaking down into its formal components. It starts, it stops, it chugs, it huffs and puffs, it does not go anywhere and then starts up again. It's confusing, but people who know my work get used to that. At any one moment you have to deal with that moment both as an isolated phenomenon and in relation to what has gone before, which is not the case with most narrative films where at each moment you are into the next phase of development of the plot.

C.P.: It is really a necessity, in your case, to see the films often. It is as if you had to have the time to live with them before they fulfill their whole role as a work of art, which is very different from other kinds of narrative films where there is one story, you see it once and you know what it is about.

Y.R.: But the same might apply to great narrative films. You see them again and you see more in them than the outline of the plot. I saw Bresson's "Balthazar" again recently and was overwhelmed.

C.P.: Do you feel that you have affinities with other artists of your generation that are maybe not necessarily working in film but that deal with psychological situations, maybe Richard Foreman or...

Y.R.: I don't feel much kinship with Foreman. Maybe it's the difference between ontology and emotion. His sense of the visual is also very different from mine. You might say mine in comparison is almost non-existent, very much tied to a kind of obsessiveness that comes from examining the banal, the everyday, which is very hard to realize in a theatrical setting. People have compared my work with Mark Rappaport's. He is a writer and director who has now made four narrative films. Although the style and treatment are totally different we share an affinity for something that might go under the heading of soap-opera.

C.P.: Before, you were talking about the moral issues that you are dealing with. How would you identify those?

Y.R.: Problems of conscience, this recurring discrepancy between private experience and public action. Some of these things are specified in *Kristina Talking Pictures*. Perhaps the morality of the image itself, but that is hard to talk about. That is something I appreciated in Godard's last films, this constant questioning of filmmaking itself, how you can or cannot make a film about political or moral questions. I think the best one can do, in a sense, is to include contradictions in the film, to demonstrate the difficulty of making art about complex moral and political issues. I am certainly getting into difficulty in my present film, *Journeys from Berlin*, which is trying not to equate, but to parallel, certain events such as political ideology and the desperate emotional state that produce the terrorist act and/or the desperate act against oneself, namely suicide. It would be so easy to appear to be saying that terrorist tactics against the state can be seen only in terms of psychological difficulties. I don't want to say that. It would be easy to fall prey to such an interpretation with a misplaced image or sentence. Yet, there is something to be said. As yet I am not sure what that is. This is a film that is going to have to take all kinds of "tacks" to keep clear of facile interpretation and arrive at what it is about. ■

* Yvonne Rainer: *Work 1961-73*. Presses of Nova Scotia College of Art and New York University, 1974.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS

As much as I enjoyed reading Georges Roque's article "Une autre dimension" (*Parachute*, 9, hiver 1977-78), I feel I must rectify a misconception:

The two sides (films) of *Les deux côtés de la médaille* par Michael Snow are not "incongruent" (sic), nor is it true that "le premier film est tourné en studio..., le second à l'extérieur, en pleine rue...". In fact, both sides were shot inside (late at night in the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto), each camera in a fixed position facing the other at opposite ends of the gallery. Viewing from the side where Snow was seated (in the film), one sees frontally the actions which took place on the other side of the room, the street exterior through a window, and reflections in the window of the interior (including glimpses of Snow and "l'autre côté").

The symmetrical, concordant, simultaneous and reflexive qualities of this work are central to its conception.

Sincerely,

Mayo Graham

P.S. *Les deux côtés de la médaille/Two Sides to Every Story* will be exhibited at Galerie Optica in Montreal on 27-28 March.

LETTRE À L'ÉDITEUR

Je vous envoie un article ainsi que trois photos sur le travail des Reinder Werk, lors de leurs "performances" de juin 1977 à la Documenta 6 de Kassel. Malgré la mise à l'écart systématique dont ils furent l'objet de la part des autorités de cette Documenta: local non-aménagé, ouvriers bousculant les artistes, emplacement-même de ce local presque introuvable, derrière un environnement spectaculaire de Vostell, "oubli" de les mentionner dans le catalogue pourtant exhaustif, l'auditoire s'accroissait de jour en jour et demeurait longuement à discuter par après avec Dick Larsen et Tom Puckney sur cet art du comportement, le "behaviour", et non cette violence destructrice comme on a pu lire dans votre journal. Il importe de rétablir une compréhension juste des visées véritables des actions de Reinder Werk, et espérant que vous saurez m'appuyer dans ce projet par une publication prochaine,

Je demeure votre obligée,

Claire Gravel

Reinder Werk

"Pour le développement du Behaviour"

Jamais on ne pourra raconter une action de Reinder Werk, puisqu'elle n'a pas de structure, de commencement et de finalité. Dans une galerie ou dans un champ, des gens se sont groupés. Dick Larsen et Tom Puckney sont parmi eux. Et soudain, Larsen s'accroupit en tremblant des pieds à la tête, Puckney avance en glissant ses jambes sur le sol; ils crient, salivent, balbutient des sons étranges; ces gestes, ces cris semblent dénués de sens, fous, désordonnés, déraisonnés et violents.

Dick Larsen et Tom Puckney jouent sur ces configurations improbables et font directement participer le spectateur à cette quête de l'insensé. Ils lui restituent cet état premier de l'être dans un univers totalement

pulsionnel et inconscient, celui de l'enfant avant sa naissance, avant la main-mise de la société sur sa spontanéité gestuelle et verbale lui dictant une manière d'être, un ordre toujours imposé, jamais découvert, jamais personnel.

L'action informe de Reinder Werk nous renvoie à cet imaginaire individuel et exerce une fascination profonde, souvent celle de la crainte et du rejet, de par l'agressivité que nous pouvons facilement y lire; et pourtant nous devons admettre que ce sont là des gestes primaires, d'un naturalisme saisissant et cependant presque abstrait, puisque toute l'action se déroule comme une juxtaposition de fragments multiples de gestes indistincts — Larsen et Puckney deviennent aveugles, sont aveugles, et le spectateur n'a plus aucun point de repère, aucune lecture d'image, aucun indice lui permettant de récupérer une quelconque figuration symbolique. L'accident, imprévisible des gestes sans aucun lien de causalité: mais tout notre siècle scientifique ne nous propose-t-il pas ce retour à ce qui peut sembler une destruction ou une régression de l'être, mais qui est en fait le fruit d'une civilisation avancée qui pose l'incertitude radicale à la base de tous ses cheminements mêmes mathématiques.

L'action de Reinder Werk décrit un processus, une quête d'une forme non finie, donc infinie, essence même de l'art, cet objet multiforme du désir devenu ici éclatement d'une violence pure, auparavant enfouie au plus profond de l'être, jamais libérée, toujours matée et que la société ne veut surtout pas voir ni reconnaître en tant qu'art.

Car ce questionnement sur la valeur de cette violence en tant qu'art repose celui des critères par lesquels on peut juger de l'art, l'accepter ou le refuser, et, bien sûr, cette violence instinctive, individuelle et gratuite, d'avant la culture, est rejetée par les tenants de l'institution culturelle-même. Si nous n'acceptons pas la violence en tant que force destructrice, nous ne pouvons cependant ignorer la violence d'avant la destruction, lorsqu'elle était l'état naturel de la vie. À cela, la culture dominante préfère la violence intellectuelle, Lautréamont crevant des voeux sur du papier, les films d'après Sade, et la masse, les reportages monstrueux des guerres et des accidents. On se délecte donc d'une certaine horreur.

Ceci est fort inquiétant, symptomatique d'une impuissance à vivre et surtout à accepter une agressivité personnelle quotidienne: on se repaît de celle des autres, magnifiée, "enculturée". Or, que deux artistes britanniques puissent arriver à ces instants de transe d'une qualité rare où force est donnée au pulsionnel et à l'inconscient, où l'humain rejoint l'informel, donc l'infini, constitue un événement dans l'histoire de l'art contemporain.

Claire Gravel

CITIZENSHIP REGULATIONS
AT CANADA COUNCIL

The Canada Council's recently announced new "working regulations" — they go into effect on April 1st — are being greeted with satisfaction by those who are cultural nationalists and with dismay by those who are not. In a debate like this it is naturally assumed by both

sides that "one of us cannot be wrong" but a closer look at the figures and loopholes involved suggests that the new regulations will not affect more than a handful of artists. So far, the only measurable result has been the lowering of morale among Council personnel — they had not been consulted about the new policy but are now asked to administer it.

In the visual arts, the new rules affect the awarding of grants to non-citizens and the purchase of works by such artists by the Art Bank. Landed immigrants who are not yet citizens will no longer be able to sell to the Art Bank. They can receive one arts grant during the first three years of their stay in Canada, after which they must take up Canadian citizenship or forfeit further eligibility.

The new rules are obviously designed to deny aid to free-loading foreigners (i.e. Americans) who stay here just long enough to benefit from the system and then leave for brighter prospects. While there have been a few such cases of abuse in the past — the most notorious one involves a sculptor who returned to Florida with a senior grant in his pocket — their number is insignificant and will likely decrease in the future. Most Americans who have remained here in spite of the Carter amnesty have become Canadian citizens. Thus, if the new measures were intended to encourage a long-term commitment to this country, then they were introduced too late.

In any case, the concept of commitment is a questionable one. In order to be consistent, the Council would also have to re-examine its policy of giving unrestricted support to Canadian artists who live abroad and are often more identified with the New York or Paris scene than with Canada.

Another inconsistency is the loophole offered to non-citizens who have made "an exceptional contribution" to the arts in Canada. The Council's Advisory Arts Panel will judge who qualifies under that provision — which means, in effect, that the criteria will be switched from "commitment" to quality, and the process will revert back to the same jury system that has been used all along. Thus the loophole becomes a tacit admission that commitment is not synonymous with citizenship and makes nonsense of the reasoning behind the rest of the policy.

Opponents of the new rules have noted that the added material rewards to Canadian artists will be negligible. Less than five percent of the more than 600 artists bought by the Art Bank have been non-citizens and the Council's visual arts section seldom awards its full quota of grants. The restrictions will not create a bonanza for our artists.

Instead, the new policy — besides being a sop to ultra-nationalist sentiments — represents only a spiteful narrowing of vision that does nothing to encourage the settling of foreign artists in this country. This in contrast with places like Ireland which are enriching their culture by offering tax-exempt shelter to artists with no requirements as to citizenship.

Opponents are also worried that a dangerous precedent has been established, one that could lead to even more restrictive measures such as the withholding of public funds from museums that purchase art from foreign artists. And, on a wider plane, the Council has introduced the concept of differentiating between the rights of citizens and the rights of landed immigrants (albeit tax-paying) — a notion that dismays those of us

who still cling to the illusion that the arts are somehow more liberal and tolerant than other areas of national life.

Georges Bogardi

NOVA SCOTIA COLLEGE OF ART & DESIGN PRESS

Cette maison d'édition spécialisée dans les livres d'artistes, recueils d'écrits (Steve Reich, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer), projets majeurs (Michael Snow), se retrouvera d'ici peu entre les mains d'un nouveau directeur. Il s'agit de Benjamin Buklow, qui jusqu'à maintenant était le directeur de la revue **Interfunktionen** en Allemagne.

QUELQUES ÉVÉNEMENTS PERFORMANCE

03 23 03, les premières rencontres internationales d'art qui eurent lieu à Montréal en mars dernier, organisées par Parachute et l'Institut d'art contemporain, comprenait un important festival de performances. On se souvient que Klauss Rinke, Charlemagne Palestine, Simone Forti, Reindeer Werk, Giuseppe Chiari, General Idea, Michael Snow, Image Bank et Raymond Gervais y participaient. Le catalogue de cette manifestation est maintenant disponible en écrivant à Parachute (\$15.00 l'unité). Ce catalogue est composé de nombreuses photographies et des textes de performances, en plus des textes des conférences de Amman, Celant, Michelson et Tisdall, et de la reproduction d'éléments de chacun des 400 projets acheminés par des artistes à 03 23 03 et représentant une participation internationale.

Au P.S. 1, New York: Jean Dupuy a organisé en février une série de performances dans une tour construite dans l'auditorium de cette ancienne école. La tour était en bois et mesurait 20 pieds de haut; deux échelles permettaient d'atteindre des plates-formes situées à 7 pieds et 14 pieds en hauteur. Chaque samedi et dimanche, se succédaient 12 performances de 25 minutes chacune. Toutes les performances devaient s'articuler autour de la limitation de l'espace.

À Varsovie, en Pologne: la galerie Remont a mis sur pied, en mars, une rencontre dont le sujet était la performance. Un livre intitulé "What is performance" sera publié à la suite de cette rencontre internationale. Pour une copie de ce document écrire à REMONT GL-LERY, 00-950 Warszawa, P.O. 744, Poland.

À Toronto: Art Metropole prépare, sous la direction de Peggy Gale et de A.A. Bronson, une anthologie de textes sur la performance. Ces textes ont été sollicités auprès d'artistes et de critiques de divers pays. La publication devrait être disponible à l'automne prochain. Art Metropole, 241 Yonge Street, Toronto.

1978 CANADIAN VIDEO OPEN

Cette exposition organisée par Clive Robertson, directeur de Artons à Calgary, regroupait du 15 février au 15 mars les bandes vidéos des artistes canadiens suivants: Elizabeth Vanderzaag, Rodney Werden, Barbara Steunman, Ross Gentleman, Gary Bertsig, Rick Ward, Terry McGlade, Nora Hutchinson, Image Bank, Tom Sherman, Saul Goldman, Marshalore (seule artiste de Montréal), John Freeman, Baron Infinity, Don Druick, Charlie Fox, Noel Harding, Gregg Simpson, The Dishes, Clive Robertson, Susan Britton, Glenn Lewis, Bill Jeffries, Wayne Sterloff, Robert Young, Mark Morris, Carol Huggler, Marion Barling, Ken Kuramoto, Kate Wiwcharuk, Keith MacHattie. Deux prix ont été attribués par un jury composé de Kate Craig, responsable de la vidéo à Western Front, Vancouver, Peggy Gale, responsable de la vidéo à Art Metropole, Toronto, Brian Dyson, assistant-conservateur de la galerie d'art du Alberta College of Art, et Clive Robertson. Rodney Werden, pour "May

1/Can I", 1977, 1/2" noir et blanc, 6 min., et Susan Britton, pour "Interference", 1977, 1/2" noir et blanc, 52 min., ont été les bénéficiaires de ces prix.

PROGRAMME DE SCULPTURE 10

Le lecteur se souviendra que dans Parachute 9, nous annonçons cette imposante manifestation torontoise qui aura lieu du 31 mai au 4 juin sur le campus de l'université York. On compte parmi les participants à l'heure actuelle: Carl Andre, Louis Archanbault, Jack Burnham, Ted Bieler, Anthony Caro, Ulysse Comtois, Mark Di Suvero, Kosso Eloul, Mathias Goeritz, Nancy Graves, Clement Greenberg, Duane Hanson, Michael Hayden, Allan Kaprow, Rockne Drebs, Les Levine, Richard Lippold, Heinz Mack, Henry Moore, Robert Murray, Dennis Oppenheim, Beverley Pepper, George Rickey, George Segal, Marcia Tucker et Jan Van Der Marck. Pour tout renseignement, ou pour connaître les conditions et frais de participation, écrire à: 10TH INTERNATIONAL SCULPTURE CONFERENCE, 55 Bloore Street West, Suite 1405, Toronto, Ont., Canada M4W 1A5.

RÉTROSPECTIVE DENNIS OPPENHEIM

Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal a mis sur pied une importante rétrospective de l'oeuvre de l'artiste américain Dennis Oppenheim. Cette rétrospective comprend une documentation photographique de nombreux projets, plusieurs installations, en plus des films et des bandes vidéos de l'artiste. Cette exposition s'est ouverte à Montréal le 9 mars dernier et doit se poursuivre jusqu'au 9 avril, à la suite de quoi elle sera présentée au Art Gallery of Ontario, à Toronto, en septembre et au Winnipeg Art Gallery au cours de l'été 79. Entretemps, l'exposition doit voyager aux États-Unis. À noter que l'exposition comme le catalogue offrent une documentation bilingue des oeuvres de Oppenheim, y compris les transcriptions de toutes les bandes sonores.

film video

EVENTS

Annette Michelson will be lecturing at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts on April 2. She will also lecture at University of Montreal. Check for dates and place. This programme is co-sponsored by Concordia University.

Claude Chamberland opened LE CINÉMA PARALLELE (3682 St. Lawrence, 843 4725). Independent cinema screened nightly. Admission \$2. Check their programme for specific listings.

Abbreviated version of Another Dimension showed in Vancouver Art Gallery in January along with new installation by Noel Harding: "Once Upon the Idea of Two". This work will be seen at OPTICA (451 St. François-Xavier, 288 2419) during the month of May.

On March 27 and 28 OPTICA will house another film installation: Two Sides to Every Story by Michael Snow. This will be the first time this work will be seen in Montreal. It is on loan from the National Gallery.

Also in March, on Sunday the 19, OPTICA will screen films by two Vancouver Filmmakers: Gordon Kidd (Self-portrait, Olympus, Sketches) and Peter Lipskis (Trance American Impressions, Floating Reflections).

On Sunday April 23rd Optica will present screening and lecture with David Rimmer. This programme is subject to change, verify with Gallery Optica.

PUBLICATIONS

New improved edition of Leslie Halliwell's **6th Filmgoers Companion** (Hill & Wang; \$30). This is actually 5th edition — the title was given to a paperback version of the 4th edition. More than 350 additions and revisions of illustrations.

MOTION PICTURE MAGAZINE, first issue December 1977. 50¢. Publishers and contributors include: Kathy Acker, Diego Cortez, Jacki Ochs, Jimmy de Sana, Terence Severine. Write for copies to 246 Mott Street, New York, N.Y. 10012.

A GUIDE TO INDEPENDENT FILM AND VIDEO edited by Hollis Melton 1976. Mainly list of distributors, exhibition in USA; Canada and Europe also merit some listings. Divided into five sections: making, distribution, programme & exhibition, study and funding. Available from Film Anthology Archives, 80 Wooster Street NYC, NY for \$4.

INDEPENDENT FILM COMMUNITY edited by Peter Feinstein 1977. Published and copyrighted by Committee on film & television resources and services. Copies available from Film Anthology Archives. Essays rather than listings.

TORONTO SUPER 8 FILM FESTIVAL (Box 7109, P.S. A Toronto M5W 1X8, 416-367 0590) is asking submissions of super 8 films before April 1st. Write for application forms and programme of the festival.

CEAC (15 Duncan Street, Toronto; 416 368 4933) Regular Tuesday night screenings of 16 and super 8 independent films. Open screenings last Tuesday of each month. New workshop: basic filmmaking and production.

Video production workshop (portapack, color, editing) and monthly showings of video of local and out of town artists. (CEAC is the only facility in Canada that has European format video equipment.)

CEAC also publishes ART COMMUNICATION EDITION (STRIKE) «Antithesis of dominant ideologies». Single copies 50¢, yearly \$5 plus postage for 10 issues.

YANA STERBAK

À LA CINÉMATHÈQUE

Vendredi, le 7 avril prochain, la Cinémathèque québécoise présentera les plus récents films du documentariste hollandais Johan van der Keuken. Dans une première séance, on présentera **Congrès de Cinéaste** (30') et **les Palestiniens** (45'). En vacances avec sa famille dans la campagne française, van der Keuken fait le bilan de sa pratique de cinéaste au cours des dix dernières années. Quelques mois plus tard, il se retrouve au Liban, dans les camps de réfugiés palestiniens, témoin, comme il le dit lui-même, d'«un peuple en lutte, pressé par l'histoire». On présentera par la suite le dernier long métrage de van der Keuken, **Printemps**: cinq portraits qui sont aussi cinq façons de voir et d'analyser la crise économique et sociale actuelle: un chômeur hollandais, un économiste marxiste, le président d'un comité de citoyens d'Amsterdam, un professeur victime des interdictions professionnelles en RFA et un ouvrier métallurgiste hollandais.

Van der Keuken, qui avait été l'invité de la Cinémathèque au moment de la rétrospective de ses films en février 1975 sera présent et rencontrera les spectateurs après les projections.

Le 11 avril, la Cinémathèque inaugure un cycle «Ernst Lubitsch à Berlin». Ce cycle, qui se compose de VII séances, permettra aux cinéphiles qui connaissent déjà les célèbres comédies américaines de Lubitsch (**Ninotchka, To Be Or Not To Be...**) de voir les films qu'il a joués et réalisés entre 1914 et 1921. Mentionnons **les Yeux de la Momie** qui marque les débuts de

la collaboration Pola Negri-Lubitsch, **Madame du Barry, la Poupée** et **Anna Boleyn**.

Le 18 avril, débutera un cycle «Films récents du Portugal» qui nous permettra de voir quelques films qui ont été réalisés depuis le renversement du régime Caetano et salazarisme.

Finalement, à partir du 27 avril, la Cinémathèque présentera en quatre semaines une intégrale Joris Ivens, un des plus importants documentaristes de toute l'histoire du cinéma. Ivens et Marcelline Loridan, co-réalisatrice de **Comment Yukong déplaça les montagnes**, seront à la Cinémathèque pour discuter de cette dernière série et de l'ensemble de l'oeuvre de Ivens.

Jean-Pierre Bastien

photographie

PARUTIONS RÉCENTES

Sylvain P. Cousineau, **Mona Nima**, Powys Press, 1977; 36 pages et 34 photographies en noir et blanc. Environ \$6.00.

Il est toujours regrettable que, dans ce genre de publications, les photographies ne soient pas accompagnées d'un texte aussi court et sommaire soit-il, car le lecteur se trouve confronté à une série d'images, privé de l'information minimum nécessaire pour situer le photographe et son travail. Ce manque est ressenti avec d'autant plus d'acuité quand il s'agit de jeunes artistes encore mal connus comme c'est ici le cas. Il n'en reste pas moins que le travail de Sylvain Cousineau est visuellement très intéressant et que, dans une large mesure, les images parlent par elles-mêmes.

Photography within the Humanities, Edited by Eugenia Parry Janis and Wendy Mac Neil, Addison House publishers, Danbury, New Hampshire, 1977; 157 pages, illustrations en noir et blanc. Environ \$35.00.

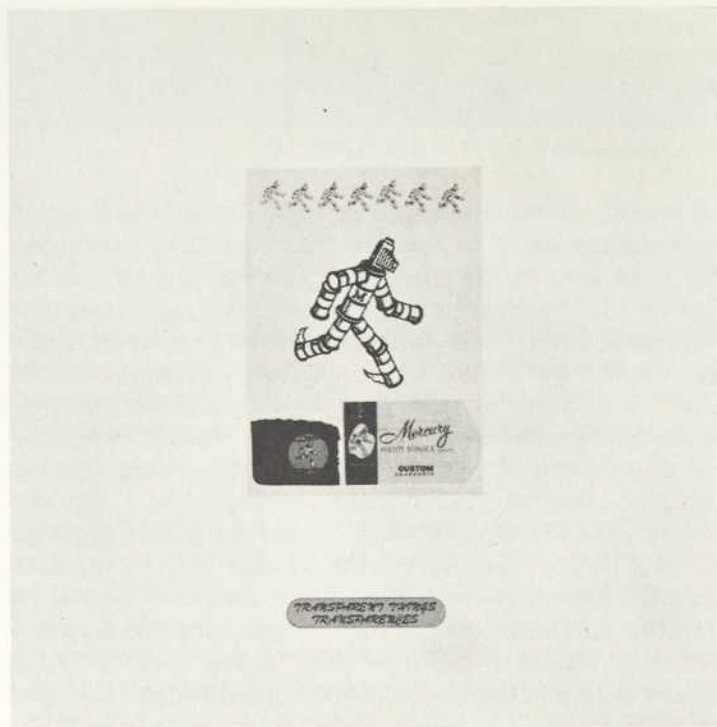
Cette publication constitue en quelque sorte les actes d'un symposium qui eut lieu à Wellesley College en 1975. Sur le thème: **Photography within the Humanities**, on a invité quelques photographes, critiques, conservateurs à donner une communication. Participaient: John Morris, Paul Taylor, Gjon Mili, Robert Frank (la communication prend ici la forme d'une interview), Frederick Wiseman, John Szarkowski, W. Eugene Smith, Susan Sontag, Irving Penn, Robert Coles.

Dennis Logwell, **Steichen: The Master Prints 1895-1914**, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1978.

Catalogue de l'exposition qui avait lieu en février et mars derniers au Musée d'art moderne. Cette exposition portait sur les premiers travaux de retraçant son développement de 1895 jusqu'à la première Guerre mondiale.

Transparent Things Transparences, Conseil des Arts du Canada, Ottawa, 1977; illustrations en couleurs et en noir et blanc. Environ \$3.00.

Catalogue d'une exposition ayant pour thème l'utilisation de la photographie par l'artiste. Cette exposition a été organisée à partir de la Banque d'oeuvres d'art du Conseil des Arts du Canada. Dans son introduction au catalogue Geoffrey James (qui est conservateur de l'exposition) définit les différences qui existent entre



ce qu'il appelle la photographie pure "où l'image photographique conserve sa propre indépendance esthétique, quelle que soit l'intention de l'artiste" et une conception élargie, ouverte de la photographie telle qu'on la retrouve chez les artistes contemporains. Les oeuvres regroupées sous le titre **Transparences** s'apparentent à cette conception nouvelle de l'image photographique qui n'est plus pensée "comme une fin en soi" mais qui "d'une façon métaphorique, devient... transparente, porteuse d'autres messages."

REVUES ET PÉRIODIQUES

L'Immigration, Ovo, nos 27/28, 1978

Voici le troisième numéro de la revue depuis l'adoption de la nouvelle formule du dossier. Les numéros précédents consacrés respectivement aux prisons et à Lewistine, tout comme ce dernier dossier sur l'immigration, montrent bien le désir d'engagement et d'implication social de l'équipe rédaction. Ovo n'en reste pas moins une revue de photographie, quoique laissant une large part au texte, dans laquelle l'image prend un sens politique et social immédiat et déterminant.

The New Republic, 29 octobre 1977; pp. 25-37.

Dans son numéro d'octobre le journal américain **The New Republic**, parution hebdomadaire consacrée à la politique et aux arts, présentait six articles sur la photographie. Parmi les auteurs de ces articles on retrouve Peter Bunnell, Hilton Kramer et Shelly Rice. Sauf dans le cas de P. Bunnell qui s'interroge sur "le pourquoi de la photographie", les articles portent sur des sujets particuliers (Edward Weston — Irving Penn — Harry Callahan — Aaron Sisking — Lewiis Hine).

Photography and Ideology, The Dumb OX, a quaterly art journal, number 5, summer 1977. Environ \$1.50.

Jean Arrouye, **Semio-photo ou la mort de l'analogie**, in Critique no. 368, janvier 1978; pp. 72-87.

Excellent texte dont le propos central est "de montrer que le contenu informel de l'image photographique est toujours d'ordre culturel".

Special Section, Photography Books, in Art in America, novembre-décembre 1977; pp. 31-47.

EXPOSITIONS/ÉVÉNEMENTS

Nous reproduisons ici un des programmes présentés par l'**International Center of Photography** durant ce dernier trimestre. Ce programme constitue en lui

seul, par les titres des films mentionnés et les catégories sous lesquelles ils sont regroupés, une «petite histoire des liens qui existent entre le cinéma et la photographie».

A Short History of the Relationship Between Cinema and Still Photography — or How Still Photography and Cinema Touch Each Other with the Tips of Their Wings — Programmed by Jonas Mekas.

Discussion and screening of the work of both filmmakers and still photographers will provide the basis for exploring the synthesis of cinema and still photography. Guest participants will include: Robert Breer, Morris Engel, Hollis Frampton, Barry Gerson, Ken Jacobs, Francene Keery, Les Levine, Helen Levitt, Stephen Shore, Michael Snow, Arthur Tress and Willard Van Dyke.

The Creation of Cinema by Still Photographers, an Irresistible Passion

Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand, **Mannahatta** (1921); Man Ray, **Le Retour à la raison** (1923), **L'Étoile de Mer** (1928); Ralph Steiner, **H²O** (1929); and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, **Lightplay: Black-White-Grey** (1930).

Still Photographers Turn to Cinema out of Social Concern

Paul Strand, Ralph Steiner and Leo Hurwitz, **The Plow that Broke the Plains** (1936); Willard Van Dyke, **The City** (1939), **Valley Town** (1940); Henri Cartier-Bresson, **Le Retour** (1946).

The Unrelenting Attraction of Cinema Continues

Rudy Burckhardt, **Haiti** (1938), **Montgomery Alabama** (1941); Weegee, **Weegee's New York** (1948); Morris Engel, **The Farm They Won** (1950); Helen Levitt (assisted by James Agee and Janice Loeb), **in the Street** (1952); Brassai, **Tant qu'il aura des Bêtes** (1956); Arthur Tress, **Inner Texture** (1961); Stephen Shore, **Untitled** (1971); Robert Frank (with Al Alfred Leslie), **Pull My Daisy** (1959).

The Procrustean Bed of the Still Photograph

Chris Marker, **La Jetée** (1963); Jean-Luc Godard, **Letter to Jane** (1972).

Filmmakers Meditate on Still Photography and Stillness

George Landow, **Film in Which There Appear Sprocket Holes, Edge Lettering, Dirt Particles, Etc...** (1965-66); Morgan Fisher, **The Production Stills** (1970); Barry Gerson, **Endurance** (1970), **Remembrance** (1970), **Metamorphosis** (1970); Gary Beydler, **Pasadena Freeway Stills** (1974); Ken Jacobs, **Soft Rain** (1968); Ernie Gehr, **Still** (1971).

Manipulations of the Single Frame

Robert Breer, **Blazes** (1961); Marie Menken, **Excursion** (1966); Linda Klosky (untitled) (1970); Robert Polidori, **Genetic Codes** (1976); James Herbert, **January** (1975); Michael Snow, **One Second in Montreal** (1969).

But the Desire for Motion Persists... Eternally

Les Levine, **Wedding Album** (1968) (slide Piece); Dan Kowalski, **Doorway Piece** (1971-72) (slide piece); Francene Keery, **Appropriate Associations** (1975) (slide piece); Michael Snow, **A casing Shelved** (1971) (slide piece)

The Still Photograph is Consumed by Fire to be Reborn as Cinema.

Hollis Frampton, **Less** (1973), **Hapax Legomena 1** (nostalgia) (1971).

La Chambre blanche, 531 rue Saint-Jean, Québec.

Cette galerie récemment ouverte à Québec, présente des oeuvres de photographes mais aussi d'artistes qui ont utilisé la photographie à un moment ou l'autre de

leur démarche. **La chambre blanche** est dirigée par Raymonde April et Fabienne Bilodeau et offre outre un espace d'exposition, certains services comme les cours de photographie, un atelier, un laboratoire, les services d'un photographe. Du 13 avril au 3 mai la galerie présentera le travail de **Serge Murphy**, professeur d'art plastique au Cegep de Ste-Foy.

Galerie Nationale du Canada, angle des rues Elgin/Slater, Ottawa.

6 avril — 10 mai: **Carrefour photographique: La Photo League.**

Exposition qui regroupe environ 200 photographies qui font partie du documentaire sur la condition humaine réalisé par la **Film and Photo League**, organisation fondée à New York vers la fin des années 20. Anne Tucker, conservateur de la photographie au Houston Museum of Fine Arts et auteur du livre **The Woman's Eye**, a organisé cette exposition itinérante mise en circulation par le Visual Studies Workshop de Rochester.



Le journal, publication bilingue de la Galerie Nationale, consacre son 25e numéro à cette exposition. Le texte d'Anne Tucker est accompagné de 12 illustrations. Disponible à la Galerie Nationale au prix de \$0.50.

Galerie Optica, 451 rue St-François-Xavier, 288-2491.

Pendant le mois de mai, la galerie exposera des photographies Polaroid. Il s'agit d'une exposition ouverte à tous les artistes (et pas seulement aux photographes) qui sont invités à envoyer, dès maintenant, leurs photos Polaroid à la Galerie.

Galerie Yajima, 1625 ouest rue Sherbrooke, 935-2217.

8 avril — 1er mai: **Lee Friedlander**

Pour célébrer l'arrivée du printemps la Galerie Yajima présentera un album de photographies de fleurs, de plantes et d'arbres, réalisé par Friedlander en 1974. Il s'agit des premiers travaux du photographe consacrés à des études de plantes et d'arbres. Cette nouvelle orientation dans le choix des sujets fait suite aux séries du monuments.

Les Yeux du temps, conférence nationale sur **La photographie et l'histoire.**

Colloque de quatre jours qui aura lieu à Ottawa du 23 au 26 mai et qui est organisé par la Collection nationale de photographies, Archives publiques du Canada, en collaboration avec Héritage Canada.

L'inscription coûte \$60.00 et les demandes de renseignements doivent être adressés à:

Les Yeux du temps
Archives publiques du Canada
395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N3
Tél.: (613) 992-2761

CHRISTIANE CHARETTE

livres et revues

MONOGRAPHIES ET OUVRAGES
THÉORIQUES DIVERS

Jean Baudrillard, **L'effet beaubourg, implosion et dissuasion**, Paris, Galilée, 1977; 50 p.

Beaubourg c'est "une machine à faire le vide", "un monument aux jeux de simulation de masse", polyvalence où tout vient s'anéantir. Baudrillard analyse, dans la production culturelle de Beaubourg au centre de Paris, la présence d'une violence nouvelle: une implosion irréversible. Donc Beaubourg est un *contre-sens*.

Christo — Running Fence, texte de W. Spies, photos de W. Volz, Paris, Chêne, 1977; nomb. ill. c. et n. et b.

En plus de cent photographies le dernier et monumental projet californien de Christo est raconté à partir des maquettes et plans, du travail d'installation, jusqu'à la réalisation finale. Cette oeuvre qui n'aura existé, terminé, que deux semaines est en fait aussi importante par le temps, l'espace et le personnel que sa réalisation a mobilisés. Les 40 kilomètres de tissus blanc translucide qui de l'océan courent plus les collines et retournent à l'océan sont plus qu'une prouesse technique, ils sont une oeuvre d'une grande beauté, à la fois dramatique et élégiaque. Mais comme le souligne W. Spies, Christo aura été encore une fois ici "un producteur de souvenirs".

David Cooper, **Qui sont les dissidents**, Paris, Galilée, 1977; 102 p.

L'auteur cherche à saisir s'il y a une base "idéologique" commune entre les dissidents, à l'Est et à l'Ouest. "Pour définir la vraie dissidence il est peut-être temps, pour nous, à l'Ouest, de cesser de proclamer un soutien purement formel à quelques personnages héroïques venus de l'U.R.S.S. ou de l'Europe de l'Est, ou qui y vivent encore. Il est temps de constituer une base commune de compréhension et d'action en faveur de la dissidence dans le monde entier." Pour cela l'auteur rapproche le travail intellectuel et la folie.

La question du *discours* de la folie semble être aujourd'hui une question subversive. On consultera aussi sur cette question: **La folie**, Actes du colloque de Milan 1976, 2 tomes, Paris, U.G.E., coll. 10/18 nos 1182-1183, 1977; 750 p. Les nombreuses communications analysent les liens entre la question politique de la sexualité et celle de la folie.

Diane Waldman, **Joseph Cornell**, Paris, Fayard, 1977; 128 p., 102 ill. c. et n. et b.

Diane Waldman présente ici le plus grand choix jamais publié de *boîtes* et de collages de Cornell dont Harold Rosenberg disait qu'ils sont des *poèmes-objets*. Les montages de Cornell, chargés, complexes et souvent incongrus, sont un bel exemple de rhétorique picturale: les objets ou images y sont en tant qu'objets, donc ils y apportent tout un réseau d'associations, mais ils insistent aussi sur leur disposition spatiale, c'est-à-dire sur l'effet signifiant de la juxtaposition et de la simultanéité.

Diane Waldman analyse davantage l'oeuvre de Cornell dans ses rapports au Surréalisme, mais elle présente aussi dans ce livre une somme importante de documents.

Danse dans la neige (Françoise Sullivan), Montréal, 1978; \$600.

Il s'agit d'un album de 17 photographies (imprimées en offset) de Maurice Perron qui relatent une improvisation de Françoise Sullivan réalisée en 1948, dans le contexte du mouvement des Automatistes montréalais. Au moment où F. Sullivan signait dans le *Refus global* un texte intitulé *La danse et l'espoir*, cette improvisation est déjà une "performance", au sens actuel de ce terme. C'est ce qu'analyse F.-M. Gagnon dans un des textes qui accompagnent cette édition de photographies. F. Saint-Martin, J.P. Mousseau et d'autres participent encore à ce recueil. Une sérigraphie originale de Riopelle complète cet album luxueusement relié en toile de lin. Il est évidemment dommage qu'un tel document ne soit pas plus aisément accessible.

L'Espace de la Lettre, Cahiers Jussieu/3, Université de Paris 7, U.G.E., coll. 10/18 n° 1180, 1977; 438 p., ill. n. et b.

Ce recueil de textes interroge les rapports qu'entretient l'écriture avec l'image. L'écriture est la représentation de la langue pour la vue, mais ce faisant elle entre dans le domaine du peintre. Par cette mise en page (qui est une mise en scène) le *texte* se distingue du discours, et les éléments visuels de l'écriture peuvent être analysés comme système signifiant autonome. L'espace de la lettre devient un autre lieu de lecture. L'histoire des procédés d'écriture, manuels ou mécaniques, impose aussi une analyse de l'utilité sociale de l'écriture.

Film Is (The international free cinema), Stephen Dwoskin, N.Y., Viking Press, 1978; 272 p.; 116 ill.; \$6.95US.

Maintenant disponible en format de poche ce livre à propos de Bunuel, Cocteau, Fassbinder, Truffaut, Warhol, Riefenstahl, Ray et plusieurs autres cinéastes indépendants moins connus.

Malcolm Haslam, **The Real World of the Surrealists**, N.Y., Rizzoli, 1978; 272 p., 272 ill. c. et n. et b.; introduction de Barbara Rose; \$35.US

Ce livre ne concerne pas que la peinture mais aussi les rapports du Surréalisme avec la politique et la psychologie. Le Surréalisme y est présenté comme l'expression d'une idéologie utopique. Les documents photographiques présentent les ateliers, les cafés, les parcs, les films, les événements politiques qui servent de toile de fond et de matériaux à la théorie surréaliste.

Jean-François Lyotard, **Instructions païennes**, Paris, Galilée, 1977; 87 p.

J.F. Lyotard, dont paraissent aussi récemment les **Rudiments païens** (Paris, U.G.E., coll. 10/18 n° 1187, 1977) et les **Récits tremblants** (en collaboration avec Jacques Monory, Paris, Calilée, 1977, 16 ill. c.), propose ici un dialogue où, à travers les théories de la narration, il est question du travail et du capital, de la gauche et de la droite, dans une suite de petits récits qui font intervenir une critique de l'affaire Clavel et Levy.

Man Ray: the Rigour of Imagination, Arthuro Schwarz, N.Y., Rizzoli; 384 p., 560 ill. c. et n. et b.; \$35. US

Artiste de média multiples, dès 1915, Man Ray participa aux grandes tendances de l'avant-garde artistique. A. Schwarz analyse ici, à travers les théories de la psychologie moderne et de l'alchimie, cette oeuvre immense et riche en associations complexes.

Pierre Daix, **La vie de peintre de Pablo Picasso**, Paris,

Seuil, 1977; 448 p.

Picasso, une des figures importantes qui au début du XXe siècle libèrent l'art des servitudes de la représentation, aurait fait de son art un journal intime. C'est la proposition que fait P. Daix en retenant de la vie de Picasso ce qui a un rapport à sa création artistique. "Les rétablissements chronologiques qu'on trouvera dans ce livre modifient de fond en comble les problématiques admises tant à propos de la naissance du cubisme que de la révolution des papiers collés, écrites à l'envers jusqu'à ces toutes dernières années."

Jean-Louis Ferrier, **Picasso, Guernica**, Paris, Denoël/Gonthier, 1977; 110 p.

"Guernica est un mythe qui exprime totalement l'homme moderne. Le déchirement de ses formes est un cri d'effroi." J.L. Ferrier trouve la clé de ce célèbre tableau dans les média de l'époque, journaux, radio, cinéma, etc. Le livre se compose de deux parties: une lecture du tableau, un dossier des documents qui servent à l'analyse.

Dans la même série "Anatomie d'un chef-d'oeuvre", par le même auteur, **Holbein: les Ambassadeurs**, 1977, 110 p.

Jackson Pollock, F. O'Connor et E.V. Thaw, New Haven/London, Yale Univ. Press, 4 tomes, 1160 p., 1310 ill. n. et b. et 45 ill. c.; \$250. US.

Paraîtra bientôt ce catalogue raisonné (1096 titres) des peintures, dessins, et autres travaux de Pollock. L'importance de Pollock dans l'art du XXe siècle n'est plus à redire. On trouvera dans ce catalogue le travail actuellement le plus exhaustif sur le maître du *drip-ping*, une chronologie qui comprend aussi les écrits de Pollock. Des documents photographiques de l'artiste dans son studio, d'expositions, de catalogues et de ses différentes signatures, complètent ce monumental travail.

Lionel Richard, **Le nazisme et la culture**, Paris, Maspero, Petite coll. n° 186, 1978; 393 p.

Ce livre remplace et complète **Nazisme et Littérature** (1971, même éditeur) en élargissant le champ des analyses de l'action du nazisme dans le domaine culturel, action qui "change la culture en barbarie". L'auteur analyse les fondements de l'esthétique nazie, son rapport à la politique et à la morale, à d'autres mouvements artistiques comme l'expressionnisme ou le futurisme. La moitié du livre est composée de commentaires et de documents qui sont une source importante d'informations.

Tom Sherman, **3 Death Stories**, Toronto, Art Metropole, 1977; s.p. (env. 50).

"The end of the spiral", "Red and green make brown" et "Detroit poison" sont les trois histoires que Sherman introduit ainsi: "The danger red of a poison label. A murder of love. In places Cincinnati, Kansas City, Detroit and Toronto, traveling through colors blood red and fern green, against a blackening sky I witnessed the transformation of a brown dog into a white woman, strange as it might seem. The stars were very bright. At last we danced a spiral in white light such as daylight. We danced to our death complete."

Art Metropole annonce aussi la publication prochaine de quatre autres livres: de Lisa Steele, Rodney Werden, Colin Campbell et General Idea. Tous, comme celui de Sherman, appartiennent à la catégorie des *livres d'artistes*.

Jan Swidzinski, **Art as contextual art**, Warszawa, Remont Gallery, 1977; 92 p.

Ce livre contient des textes et des *statements* sur l'art contextuel. "Contextual artists oppose the whole tradition of conceptual art, regarding it as an art which cannot be the answer to the problems of modern civiliza-

tion. They also oppose all modifications of contemporary modernism as being a stylistic version of art of the past. (...) Contextual art is a form of acting in reality, through the following transformation of meanings: REALITY - INFORMATION - ART - NEW OPEN MEANING -> REALITY as a pure sign, cleansed of stereotypes; a sign which is filled by the present reality."

Gail Levin, **Synchronism and American Color Abstraction**, N.Y. Braziller, 1978; 144 p., 116 ill. n. et b., 50 ill. c.; env. \$15.

G. Levin retrace l'histoire de ce mouvement américain (1910-1925), connu à Paris avant la première Guerre mondiale quand Morgan Russell et Stanton MacDonald-Wright, expatriés, s'y trouvèrent.

La ville n'est pas un lieu, Revue d'Esthétique 1977/3-4; Paris, U.G.E., coll. n° 1193; 446 p.

"La ville n'est pas seulement un lieu, elle détermine des circuits, des conduites, des représentations hors espace. La ville n'est pas un lieu... pour vivre." Préparé par Michel Zérafra et Anne Cauquelin (**La ville la nuit**, Paris, P.U.F., 1977) ce numéro spécial présente de la ville une description plurielle: fictions et analyses de fictions, mais aussi la réalité de la ville où des hommes, des corps, essaient de vivre, c'est-à-dire aussi de rêver.

Sur la problématique de la ville on consultera aussi le dernier numéro de **Traverses: l'Anti-ville**, n° 9, 1977, et encore Jean Duvignaux, **Lieux et non-lieux**, Paris, Galilée, 1977, 153 p.

What is Performance, Warszawa (Pologne), Remont Gallery, 1978; (P.O. Box 744, 00-950 Warszawa)

Ce livre est publié à l'occasion d'une rencontre internationale sur la performance (29 mars - 6 avril 1978) et propose une confrontation des diverses tendances de cette forme d'expression. Recherche de définition et critique sur l'*activité* artistique comme matériel signifiant.

Sur la même thématique on pourra encore consulter **Performance in Postmodern Culture**, éd. M. Benamou et C. Caramello, Madison, Coda Press, 1977 (\$5. US à Coda Press, 700 West Badger Road, suite 101, Madison, WI 53713, USA). Ce recueil de douze textes est le premier d'une série de livres, prévue par le Center for Twentieth Century Studies (Univ. of Wisconsin, Milwaukee) et Coda Press, qui se propose de présenter des positions interdisciplinaires sur le film, les mass-média, les avant-gardes, les cultures minoritaires, l'ethnopoésie...

À noter aussi: Art Metropole de Toronto prépare actuellement un livre comprenant des textes de critiques et d'artistes sur la performance. Ce livre devrait sortir vers le milieu de 1978 (241 Yonge Street, Toronto, Canada M5B 1N8).

Elsa S. Fine, **Women and Art** (A history of women painters and sculptors from the Renaissance to the 20th century), New Jersey, Allanheld & Schram, 1978; 256 p., 181 ill. c. et n. et b.; \$38.50 US.

Dans le même esprit d'une réécriture de l'histoire qui n'oblitérerait pas les artistes féminines: **Women Artists** (Recognition and reappraisal from the early Middle Ages to the Twentieth century) Karen Petersen et J.J. Wilson, N.Y., New York Univ. Press, 1976, 212 p. (en poche chez Harper & Row). On peut aussi se procurer une bibliographie de catalogues d'exposition, "Women as Artists and Women in the Arts", en écrivant à Worldwide Books Inc., 37-39 Antwerp St., Boston, Mass. 02135, USA. Signalons aussi une autre revue qui s'intéresse à la femme et la culture: **Chrysalis** (No. 4, 1977, 125 p., \$3. US) dont l'abonnement est de \$10. US à The Woman's Building, Dept 4150, 1727 No. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA.

CATALOGUES D'EXPOSITION

Borduas et l'Amérique, Vancouver Art Gallery (9 déc. 77 - 8 jan. 78), 56 p.; ill. c. et n. et b.; textes anglais et français.

Ce catalogue contient une bibliographie, une chronologie et un texte de F.-M. Gagnon qui analyse, pas à pas, l'histoire de Borduas à New York (1953-1955), ses antécédents et ses répercussions à Paris. On y retrouve un Borduas conscient de sa production picturale, entre l'École de Paris et l'École de New York.

David Craven: Recent Works, Vancouver Art Gallery (11 nov. - 4 déc. 1977), 25 p.; ill. c. et n. et b.

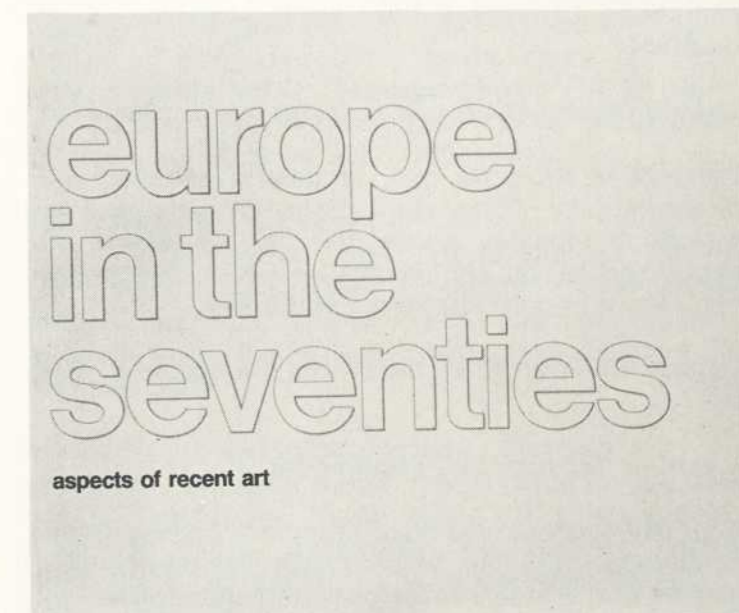
G. Bogardi présente de Craven les peintures récentes qui mettent encore davantage l'accent sur l'histoire de leur production: histoire des gestes, histoire des matériaux, histoire de leur rencontre organisée sur la surface délimitée de la toile.

De Kooning in East Hampton, N.Y. Guggenheim Museum, 1978; 150 p. et nomb. ill. c. et n. et b.; texte de Diane Waldman; \$13. US

Cette rétrospective présente les peintures et les sculptures de De Kooning à East Hampton, c'est-à-dire où il habite depuis le début des années soixante alors qu'il quitta New York. Dans les tableaux, mieux que dans les sculptures, De Kooning, fidèle à l'expressionnisme abstrait, a graduellement dépouillé ses images des figures féminines pour laisser jouer librement les couleurs sans toutefois annuler totalement leurs connotations figuratives.

Europe in the Seventies: Aspects of recent Art, Art Institute of Chicago (8 oct.-27 nov. 1977), 120 p., nomb. ill. n. et b., \$7.50 US (Disponible chez Jaap Reitman, N.Y.).

Cette exposition, organisée par A.J. Speyer et A. Rorimer, en tournée dans cinq musées américains jusqu'au 31 janvier 1979, présente vingt-trois artistes qui sont connus en Europe mais qui le sont plus ou moins aux États-Unis. Le catalogue contient aussi des textes de J.C. Ammann, "Europe in Seventies: aspects of recent art", D. Brown, "Some aspects of British art today", B.H.D. Buchloh, "Formalism and historicity - changing concepts in American and European art since 1945", et une lettre de R. Fuchs (Hollande).



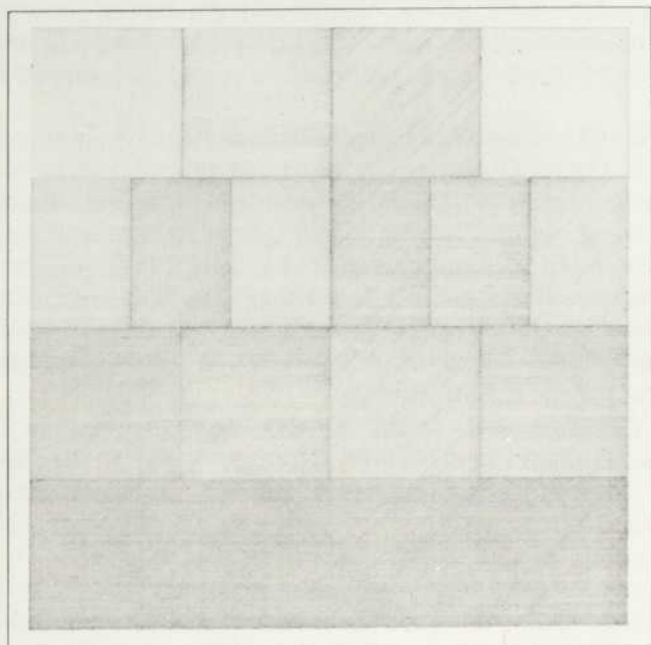
In/Visible, Milano, Artra Studio, 1978; 100 p. ill.; textes ital., franç., angl.; \$10. US

Exposition inaugurale de la galerie Artra Studio, organisée par Italo Mussa qui signe aussi des textes du catalogue auquel collaborèrent les artistes eux-mêmes: L. Bartolini, D. Bianchi, M. Camorani, M. del Re, M. Parisi, L. Romualdi. Écrire à Artra Studio, Via Fiori Chiari 8, 20121 Milano, Italia.

Sol LeWitt, Museum of Modern Art, New York (3 fév.-4 avril 1978), 182 p.; nomb. ill. c. et n. et b.; textes de L.

Lippard, Bernice Rose, R. Roseblum; \$12.50 US

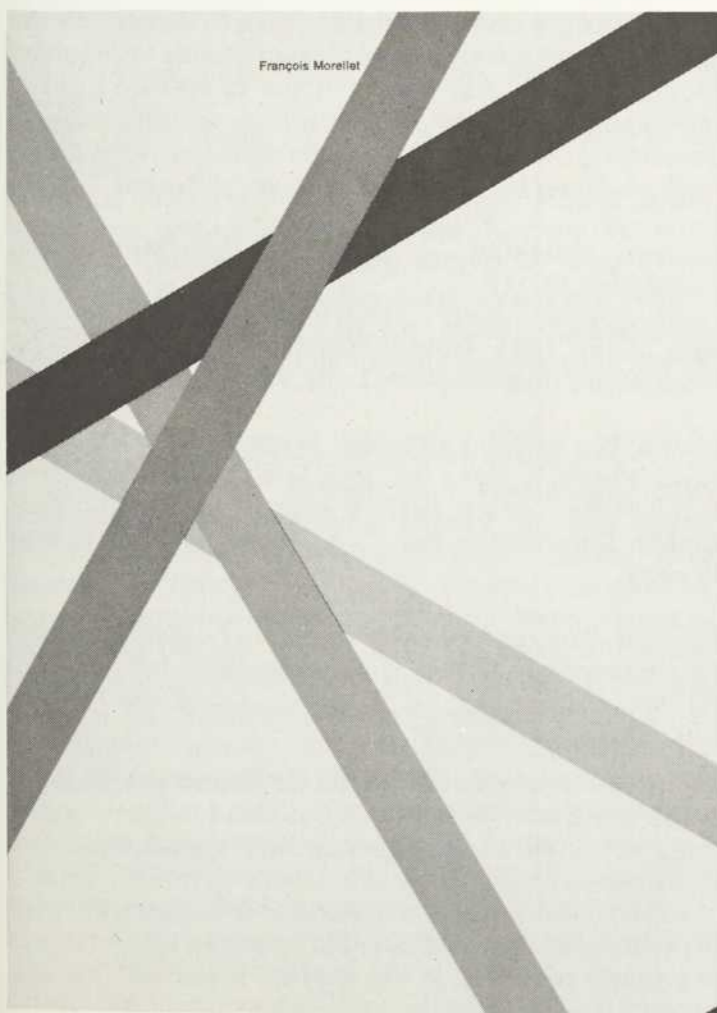
Cette rétrospective, que l'on pourra voir à Montréal au Musée d'art contemporain (5 sept.-24 oct. 1978), regroupe des structures, des dessins, des dessins muraux, des livres. Parallèlement (4 fév.-4 mars 1978) le Brooklyn Museum présentait "Sol Lewitt Graphics". On aura donc pu voir ainsi presque tout l'oeuvre complet de ce "pionnier de l'art minimal" des années soixante. Lewitt qui a composé lui-même ce catalogue s'explique quant au caractère conceptuel de son travail: "The concept and the idea are different. The primer implies a general direction while the latter is the component. Ideas implement the concept."



SOL LEWITT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Cf. aussi Michel Harvey, **Notes sur les dessins muraux de Sol LeWitt**, Genève, Ed. Centre d'Art contemporain, Salle Patino & Ecart Publications, 1977; 28 p. ill. (disponible chez Jaap Reitman, N.Y.).

LeWitt vient aussi de publier un livre: **Photo Grids**, N.Y., Paul David Press & Rizzoli, 1978, \$14. US: 50 pages de photographies en couleur de motifs de grilles.



François Morellet, National Berlin Staatliche Museen PreuBischer (15 jan.-20 fév. 1977), 188 p.; nom. ill. c. et n. et b.; textes all., angl., franç. \$12.

Cette rétrospective, qui termina sa tournée au Musée d'art moderne de la ville de Paris en octobre 1977, regroupait de Morellet les juxtapositions, les superpositions, les oeuvres de hasard, les interférences, les fragmentations. Des textes de D. Honisch, S. Lemoine, M. Imdahl, G. Boehm, et deux textes (1962, 1971) de l'artiste. On peut se procurer ce catalogue à la Galerie Gheerbrant (2130 Crescent, Montréal) qui présentait dernièrement des oeuvres de Morellet.

Numerals 1924-1927, Leo Castelli, Yale Univ. Art Gallery, Dartmouth College Museum and Galleries, 1978, s.p. (env. 80).

Cette exposition a été préparée par des étudiants diplômés de l'université de Yale. L'organisation numérique comme sujet artistique, qui trouve sa réalisation dans l'art abstrait formaliste, est ici retracée jusqu'au début du siècle. Un texte de R.F. Crone, "Numerical order and structure: from Paul Klee to Mel Bochner", s'ajoute aux commentaires qui accompagnent les oeuvres des trente-trois artistes exposés. Le catalogue comprend aussi une bibliographie sélective pour chacun des artistes.

Objects, N.Y., Marian Goodman Gallery (mars 1978); 23 p. sans ill.; \$2 US à MMG, 38 E. 57th St., New York 10012.

Un texte de Nicolas et Elena Calas introduit cette exposition organisée par N. Calas. Plus de trente artistes y sont exposés qui ont travaillé en construisant des oeuvres-objets qui s'inscrivent hors des catégories traditionnelles de peinture et de sculpture.

SoHo, Downtown Manhattan, Academie der Kunste, Berliner Festwochen (5 sept.-17 oct. 76); 430 p., 398 ill. n. et b., textes angl. et all.; \$20. US (Disponible chez Jaap Reitman, N.Y.).

À l'occasion du bicentenaire des États-Unis deux musées organisèrent conjointement une *documentation* intitulée "New York — Downtown Manhattan: SoHo", en vue de présenter le cas particulier de ce quartier de New York où s'est développée, dans un endroit autrefois exclusivement réservé à l'industrie, une vie culturelle complexe qui fait se côtoyer, non seulement toutes les tendances de l'art actuel, mais aussi l'art et la vie de la cité, avec tout ce que cela implique des rapports de l'art à l'environnement urbain. Des textes de R. Block, "Europe in SoHo" (entre autres), S. Koch, "Reflections on SoHo", L. Alloway, "SoHo as Bohemian", P. Frank, "New York Fluxus", L. Lippard, "... Street works Downtown", D. Davis, "SoHo du Mal — Film, video, culture, politics", S. Reichard, "Alternative Arts Spaces...", J. La Barbara, "... Music, Dance, Video, Performance...".

Southland Video Anthology 1976-1977, Long Beach Museum of Art, California, 1977; 142 p.; ill. n. et b.; \$7.95 US (Disponible chez Jaap Reitman, N.Y.).

Une anthologie de video présentée au Long Beach Museum of Art de septembre 1976 à juillet 1977. David A. Ross, qui est à ce musée conservateur de la section video, film, performance (n. b.: ça existe!) présente chacune des quatre parties du catalogue. "This second survey exhibition is meant, among other things, to reaffirm our conviction that television is the most promising and potentially most revolutionary art medium of this — or any former — area" (J.E. Adlmann).

Television: Adjusting the hold (Clive Robertson), Alberta College of Art Gallery (3-22 déc. 1977), 32 p., ill. n. et b.

"One aspect of television that offers alternative functions other than mere prostitution of the viewer is the capability of using live broadcasts as an instantaneous national or global communication link. So the

very same broadcast technology which subverts dialogue also enable us at times to experience the potentials of telescopic vision."

REVUES ET PÉRIODIQUES

ARTbibliographies, abonnement à ABC-CLIO Inc., Riviera Campus, 2040 Alameda Padre Serra, Box 4397, Santa Barbara, CA 93103, USA.

Service de référence qui couvre la littérature publiée sur l'art moderne et le design. Il existe deux séries: **Artbibliographies Modern** et **Art bibliographies Current Titles**. **Modern** est publié depuis 1973; un volume par année qui inventorie les livres, revues, catalogues d'exposition, avec un court résumé. Les prix varient et on peut obtenir tous les renseignements à l'adresse ci-haut.

Artmonthly, No. 13, Dec/Jan. 1977/8; abonnement \$15. US à Artmonthly, 37 Museum St., London, WC1, UK.

Entre autres, dans ce numéro, en plus d'un texte de E. Lucie-Smith, "Politicians and the visual arts", un entretien avec David Hockney et un texte de C. Greenberg, "Four scottish painters", un texte dans lequel Joseph Masheck, actuel directeur de **Artforum**, explique les politiques de la revue depuis la "révolte de palais" survenue en décembre 1976.

Artnews, Vol. 77 No. 1, Jan. 1978 (P.O. Box 969, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737). Disponible chez Multimag, \$3.00

Dans ce numéro, une section spéciale consacrée au Canada (25 pages). Des articles de L. Rosshandler sur Montréal, J. Purdie sur Toronto, R. Fulford sur la sculpture, G. Swinton sur l'art des Esquimaux, plus un guide des musées et galeries.

Artscribe, No. 9, Nov. 1977, 55 p.; 5 nos/an \$8. US à Artscribe, c/o Lloyds Bank, 19 Highgate Hill, London, England N1^o 5LS. (Disponible chez Jaap Reitman, 157, Spring St., New York 10012).

Dans cette livraison: "Art ans Social Constraints" (D. Sweet), "The new art of four dimensional space" (T. Robbin), "British painting in common view 1952-1977" (B. Prendeville), entre autres. On annonce pour le numéro suivant un entretien avec K. Noland, des articles sur la jeune peinture abstraite, le surréalisme, Léger...

Artweek, 14 Jan. 78, Vol. 9, No. 2, 20 p.; 44 nos/an, \$19. US, 1305 Franklin St., Oakland, CA 94612, USA.

Ce journal de la côte ouest, en plus de présenter un calendrier détaillé des activités artistiques et toutes sortes d'autres informations (festivals, concours, emplois, logements, comptes rendus), contient aussi des articles de fond assez longs. Ici: "Recent art legislation — an overview" (T.M. Goetzl), "Film photography and semiotics" (H. Fischer), et un entretien avec Marcia Tucker, ancien conservateur au Whitney Museum et fondatrice du récent New Museum de New York qui se propose comme un "alternative space".

Chroniques, nos 29-30-31-32, automne 77 - hiver 78, Montréal, 320 p.; \$8. (C.P. 747, Succ. N. Montréal, Canada H2X 3N4)

Fondée en 1975 (jan.) **Chroniques** publie maintenant son dernier numéro. Produite par un collectif, d'orientation politique progressiste sur des bases marxistes, cette revue se proposait de "couvrir chaque mois les activités culturelles et politiques d'importance au Québec dans une perspective critique de lutte des classes", c'est-à-dire de dénoncer toutes les formes de domination/répression de l'exploitation capitaliste. Après de nombreuses contradictions internes (changement graduel des membres du collectif) et externes (la nouvelle situation politique du

Québec) et une tentative de reformulation de ses bases théoriques. **Chroniques** disparaît. Comme on le souligne dans la présentation de ce dernier numéro, cette disparition est un échec qui traduit la démission des intellectuels: une désertion du travail critique. Mais le collectif actuel ajoute: "Nous pensons que se dessine une nouvelle conjoncture et un espace politique favorable à la mise sur pied d'une nouvelle revue." À voir l'abondance et la qualité des textes du dernier numéro, on pourrait y croire... sous une forme nouvelle: sans collectif (peut-être).

Dérives, nos 10-11, 1977: "Québec, convergences/divergences", 68 p.; \$3. (Abonnement 5 nos/an \$9. aux Éditions Dérives. C.P. 398, Succ. M., Montréal, Canada H1V 3M5.

Cette revue *Tiers Monde/Québec, une nouvelle conjoncture culturelle* consacre ce numéro à la création dans la ville de Québec à travers le travail de G. Amyot, P. Laberge, F. Saillant, J. Tourangeau. Poésie, peinture, film sont réunis, non nécessairement dans l'idéologie de **Dérives** mais par un "groupe" accidentel. "De même, ce seul fait d'être réunis (...) constitue/transforme un geste de publication en un geste critique. Désir de montrer l'hétérogène, de soulever à la fois la différence et le globalisant, remise en question des sujets et des sens, par frayages des limites, littéraires et pratiques."

Luna Park, no 3, 1977; 135 p.; Transédition, rue Paul Émile Janson 21, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgique; 270FB le numéro ou abonnement à trois numéros 760FB.

Ce numéro, qui a reçu le Prix des créateurs, présente entre autres des textes de Françoise Collin, Daniel Fano, Brion Gysin, Sophie Podolski, Gertrude Stein, et des photographies de Pierre Guyot par Marc Dachy.

The New Art Examiner, Vol. 5 No. 2, Nov. 1977; 20 p.; 10 nos/an, \$10. US, 230 East Ohio, Room 207, Chicago, IL 60611, USA.

Publié par la Chicago New Art Association, ce journal d'informations artistiques concerne surtout la région mais s'intéresse aussi à des problématiques d'ordre général. Par exemple dans ce numéro: "Europe in the 70's — Idea into Art, Film under Dictatorship" (M. Rabiger), "Anarchy in Kassel" (P. Pero), "Art and Politics/Taking the Art Institute at its words" (M. Vermeulen).

Les Nouvelles littéraires, 23 fév.-2 mars 1978: "Les Beaux-Arts se rebiffent"; \$1.

Une section spéciale (pp. 15-22) de cet hebdomadaire français répond à l'attaque faite dans le **Figaro** des 7 et 21 février 1978 contre l'enseignement de l'art. Le dossier essaie d'être un bilan auto-critique et un exposé de positions diverses; y participent: G. Plazy, M. Ragon, J. Leppien, M. Gérard, F. Bret, J.-L. Pradel, P. Velon, J. Garcin, H. Fischer, M. Pleyne, M. LeBot, B. Lassus, C. Millet, J. Clair.

October, No. 4, Fall 1977, 96 p.; \$3. US

Dirigée par Annette Michelson et Rosalind Krauss, cette revue, après un léger retard, reprend ses publications et sera maintenant publiée par la MIT Press. Pour s'abonner: \$12.60 US pour quatre numéros par année, à October Magazine, IAUS, 8 West 40th Street, N.Y. 10018, USA. Dans le numéro suivant: la photographie.

Strike, Vol. 2 No 1, Jan. 1978, 35 p.; \$7. (8 nos/an) à Strike, 15 Duncan Street, Toronto, Canada M5H 3H1.

Publié par Art Communication Edition, ce journal s'engage dans une nouvelle orientation: "As the unresolved contradictions emerge we discover further contradictory isms, and so on. But the premise lies in the speaking out one's oppressions. The students' riot, the gay activism, the feminist or blacks' polemics, terrorism (...) the refusal to co-operate with the subjugations: to strike — the only ones which usually do

OCTOBER

4

Dolf Sternberger
Craig Owens

Amy Taubin
Michael Snow
Rosalind Krauss

Keith Cohen
Richard Sennett
Robert Whitman

Panorama of the 19th Century
Einstein on the Beach:
The Primacy of Metaphor
Doubled Visions
Notes for Rameau's Nephew
Notes on the Index:
Seventies Art in America (Part 2)
Feast
Narcissism and Modern Culture
Light Touch

Fall 1977

\$3.00

not go on strike are those individuals that hold power like ministers, bosses and pimps — for example."

Umbrella Associates, Vol. 1 No. 1, Jan. 1978. Par abonnement seulement, \$12.50 US, 6 nos/an, P.O. Box 3692, Glendale, CA 91201, USA.

Judith A. Hoffberg, qui avait créé **Arllis/NA News Letter** il y a cinq ans, remplace maintenant cette publication par **Umbrella Associates**. La nouvelle formule continuera, mais sur un plan international, à fournir les nouvelles les plus récentes en art: expositions, bibliographies, comptes rendus de livres, thèses, articles, catalogues, rapports annuels d'institutions, etc. En plus d'offrir aussi d'autres services: emplois, listes de marchands, acheteurs... **Umbrella Associates** est publié tous les deux mois.

RENÉ PAYANT

musique au présent

Music Gallery Editions, "A record company devoted to new Canadian music." 30 St. Patrick Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1V1.

MGE4 — **On Being Invisible**, David Rosenboom, Février 1977, "A solo electric concert utilizing hybrid computer wave analysis and sound synthesis, brain signals, touch sensors, and small acoustic sources." D. Rosenboom/Notes.

MGE5 — **Whalescapes**, Interspecies Music, "The underwater sounds and communications of various species of whales and other marine life forms, serve as thematic and structural sound models. Using traditional and electronic instrument..." Notes.

MGE7 — **The Contemporary Viola de Gamba**, Peggie Sampson
3 oeuvres canadiennes: **Two Pieces for Viola de Gamba** de Murray Adaskin, **At Your Memory the Transparent Tears Are Like Molten Lead** de Rudolf Komorous, **On Mrs. Arabella Hunt Singing** de Bernard Naylor et quelques variations improvisées sur un thème de Tobias Hume (1605). Avec Michael Purves-Smith (clavecin) et Christina Harvey (soprano).

MGE8 — **The Canadian Electronic Ensemble**, "A group dedicated to live electronic music." Works heard on this record are **Whale Oil** (1973), **Piano Quintet** (1976) for electronics and altered piano, and **Arnold** (1977), a textural exploration for electronics and brass." Notes.

MGE9 — **Improvised Music from Acoustic Piano & Guitar**, Casey SoKol (p) et Eugene Chadbourne (g)

"By referring to traditional, experimental, jazz and avant-garde, as well as personally developed techniques, these two virtuoso musicians explore an incredibly broad range of sounds and sound qualities. Some of the compositions use the instruments in prepared form, where various objects (paper, rubber, and metal) are placed on and between strings to alter patterns of vibration." Notes.

MGE-10 — **The Glass Orchestra**

"The Glass Orchestra is a group of musicians who create a unique sound environment with instruments made of glass. These include glass clarinet and flute, marimbas, pookaphone, chimes, bow bowls, soprano, alto tenor and bass bottles, as well as OJB raks, silica shakers and the glass loudspeaker." Notes. Personnel: Miguel Frascioni, Marvin Green, Eric Cadesky, John Kuipers, Paul Hodge.

Josquin Des Prés/**Motets, Chansons, and Instrumental Music**, ABC/SEON-AB67017/2, sinon Philipps 6775-005

Capella Antiqua of Munich — Konrad Ruhland.

Ornette Coleman (as)/**Coleman Classic**, Vol. 1, IAI-373852, 1958-4 pièces: avec Paul Bley, Don Cherry, C. Haden et B. Higgins.

Karl Berger/**Interludes**, FMP-0460
(solo piano, vibraphone et balafon, N.Y. 76/77)

Bead Records: 28 Chiswick Road, London, England.
3 dernières parutions au catalogue:
Peter Cusack/**After Being in Holland**, Bead 5
(solo Guitar & tapes)

Chologogues, Bead 6
(Nestor Figueras/body sounds, David Toop/flûtes et Paul Burwell/perc.)

Chamberpot/**Sparks of the Desire Magneto**, Bead 7
(Richard Beswick/oboe & guitar, Philipp Wachsmann/violin, Tony Wren/b.)

"**Bead** has no defined musical policy, though all the records so far have been of predominantly improvised music, and this may well continue to be true (...) the musicians here are interested in a continuously developing music, and it is this that the label might finally be seen to represent." Musics 15/Notes.

George Coleman — Tete Montoliu/**Meditation**, Timeless SJP-110
duo saxophone ténor/piano, 6 pièces: **Lise, Dynamic Duo, First Time Down, Walsing At Rosa's Place, Meditation, Sophisticated Lady**, février 1977.

Marion Brown (as) **La Placita**, Timeless SJP-108
avec Brando K. Ross (g), Jack Gregg (b) et Steve McCraven (dm), mars 1977, 6 pièces: **La Placita, Fortunato, Sonnymoon For Two, Bosco, I'm Sorry, Soft Winds**.

Michael Gregory Jackson (g, voc., f., perc.)/**Clarity**, Bija Records MJ-1000 1976, avec Leo Smith (tp, flp, fl.), Oliver Lake (as, ss, fl., perc.), David Murray (ts), Solo/Duo/Trio/Quatuor.

Julius Hemphill (as, ss, fl)/**Roi Boye and the Gotham Minstrels**, Sackville 3014/15 (double)
mars 1977, "An audiodrama by multi-instrumentalist/composer Julius Hemphill in which Hemphill, on alto saxophone, soprano saxophone and flute, improvised the final layer of sound over a framework which he had previously recorded in the studio." (mars 1977/Solo). Notes.

Doc Cheatham (tp) — Sammy Price (p)/**Doc and Sammy**, Sackville 3013
(duos, Toronto, 17 nov. 1976). "Doc and Sammy have played duets together many times, but this is only the second time they have recorded in this format. The first occasion was in Paris twenty years ago for **Le Club français du disque** — a recording which has long since disappeared! Their repertoire reflects their associations with the musical stylists of the 1920s." Notes.

Sonny Rollins (ts, ss)/**Easy Living**, Milestone 9080
avec George Duke (claviers), Charles Icarus Johnson (g), Paul Jackson (el. b) et Tony Williams (dm)
août 1977, Berkeley, 6 pièces: **Isn't She Lovely** (S. Wonder), **Down the Line** (S.R.), **My One and Only Love**, **Arroz con Pollo** (S.R.), **Easy Living**, **Hear What I'm Saying** (S.R.).

Thelonious Monk/**Live in Paris 1970**, Byg 2044 (Vol. 1)

Archie Shepp (ts) — Horace Parlan (p)/**Duo**, Steeplechase 1079

Dexter Gordon (ts)/**In New York 76**, Steeplechase 1080
avec Barry Harris (p), Al Foster (dm) et Sam Jones (b)

Dexter Gordon/**Sophisticated Giant**, CBS-JC34989

Mal Waldron (p)/**One-Upmanship**, Enja 2092
(1977, avec Steve Lacy)

Pierre Favre (perc.) — Andrea Centazzo (perc.)/-**Dialogues**, Ictus 0004

Steve Lacy (ss) — A. Centazzo (perc) — K. Carter (b)/**Trio Live**, Ictus 0005

Steve Lacy (ss) — A. Centazzo (perc)/**Clangs**, Ictus 0001

Airwaves, two-record anthology of artists' aural work and music.

One ten records, 1200, 110 Chambers St., New York City, N.Y. 10007

Vito Acconci, Laurie Anderson, Jacki Apple, Connie Beckley, Him Burton, Diego Cortez, Terry Fox, Jana Haimsohn, Julia Heyward, Leandro Katz, Meredith Monk, Richard Nonas, Dennis Oppenheim.

Lovely Music Ltd., 463 West Street, New York, N.Y. 10014

"Blue" Gene Tyranny/**Out Of the Blue**, Lovely Music LML-1061

Musique composée et orchestrée par Robert Sheff, 1977, interprétée par Blue Gene Tyranny et musiciens. 4 pièces: **Next Time Might Be Your Time** (chanson), **David Kopay** (portrait), **Leading a Double Life** (Chanson) et **Out Of the Blue/A Letter From Home About Sound and Consciousness** (narration/-musique).

Jon Hassell/**Vernal Equinox**, Lovely Music LML-1021

6 pièces: **Toucan Ocean** (Jon Hassell/trompette modifiée électroniquement, Fender Rhodes piano, Nana Vasconcelos/congas-shakers, ocean, **Viva Shona** (J. Hassell/tp, David Rosenboom/Mbira, Nana Vasconcelos/talking drums, bells, tropical birds), **Hex** (Miguel Frascioni/claves, bells, J. Hassell/trompette transformée électroniquement, et piano F. Rhodes, N. Kilbourn/talking drums et Mbira, D. Rosenboom/rattles, N. Vasconcelos/shakers, Bill Winant/kanjira, rattles), **Blues Nile Nile** (J. Hassell/tp et drone/serge synth.), **Vernal Equinox** (J. Hassell/tp, D. Rosenboom/tablas et dumbeck, N. Vasconcelos/congas, drone/serge synth. et motorola scalatron), **Caracas Night September 11, 1975** (J. Hassell/tp, N. Vasconcelos/congas, night creatures of Altamira, distant barking by Perrasita.

Enregistré à L'université York/Toronto 1976.

Peter Gordon/**Star Jaws**, Lovely Music LML-1031
6 pièces de P. Gordon enregistrées au Center for Contemporary Music, Mills College, Californie, en septembre 1977.

Star Jaws, I'm Dreaming In the Sun and Dreaming In the Moon (chanson), **Macho-Music, Intervallic Expansion, Life Is Boring** (chanson), **Lullabye** (chanson), Peter Gordon (clarinette, as, p, ts, poly moog, synth., voc) et musiciens.

David Behrman/**On the Other Ocean, Figure In a Clearing**, Lovely Music LML-1041

"**On the Other Ocean** is an improvisation by Maggi Payne and Arthur Stidfole centered around six pitches which, when they are played, activate electronic pitch-sensing circuits connected to the "interrupt" line and input ports of a microcomputer, Kim-1. The microcomputer can sense the order and timing in which the six pitches are played and can react by sending harmony-changing messages to two hand-made music synthesizers. The relationship between the two musicians and the computer is an interactive one, with the computer changing the electronically-produced harmonies in response to what the musicians play, and the musicians influenced in their improvising by what the computer does. The recording is of a live performance." Notes de pochette.

David Behrman/electronics, Maggi Payne/flute, Arthur Stidfole/bassoon, Kim-1/harmonic responses, Californie, septembre 1977.

"In **Figure In a Clearing** for thirty-three electronic generators and cello, David Gibson improvises on six pitches (A, B, D, E, F# and G) within a rhythmic and harmonic setting provided by computer-initiated

chord changes. The chord changes are made by sixteen triangle wave generators, each of which has several preset tunings among which the computer can choose. The rhythm, continuously accelerating or decelerating, is modelled after the velocity of a satellite in falling elliptical orbit about a planet. Sixteen additional triangle wave generators and one drone-producing sine wave generator are also present in the mix." Notes

David Behrman/electronics, David Gibson/cello, Kim-1/harmonic changes, electronic music studio, State University of New York et Albany, juin 1977.

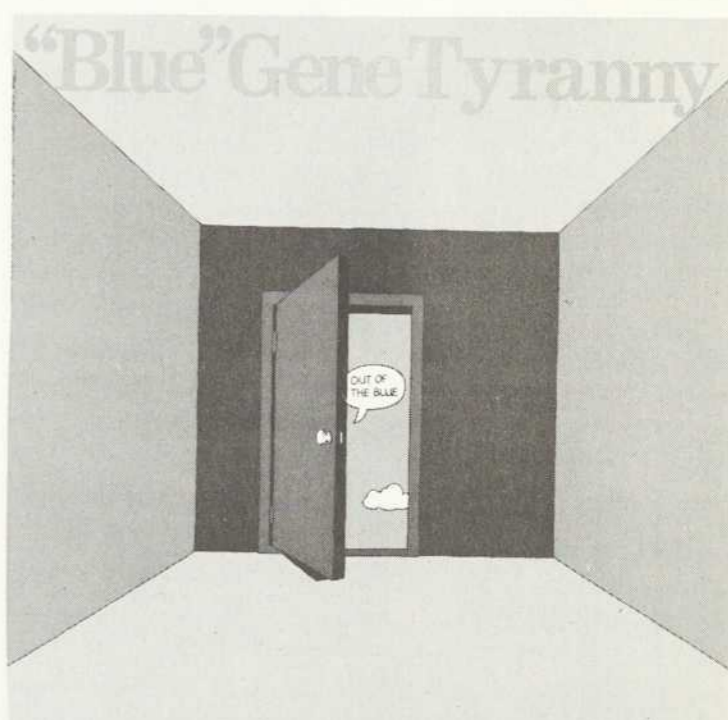
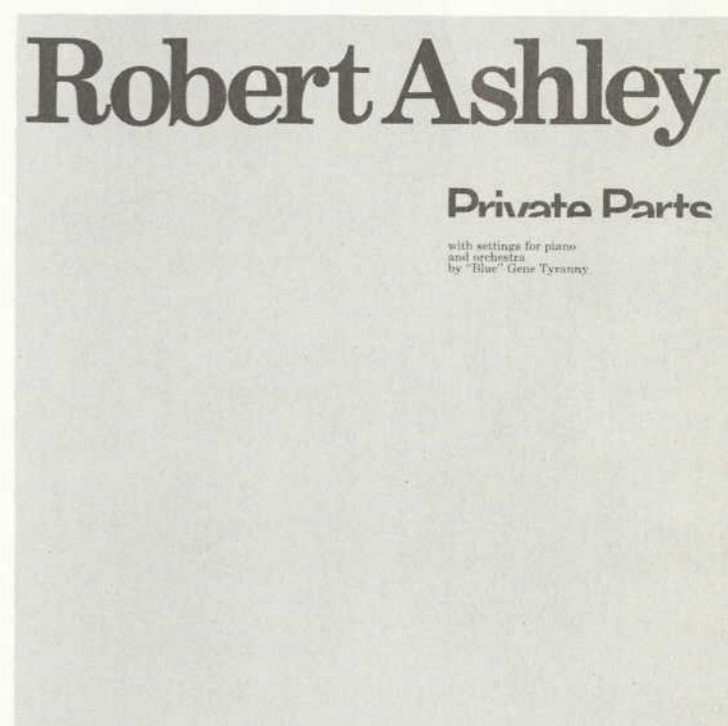
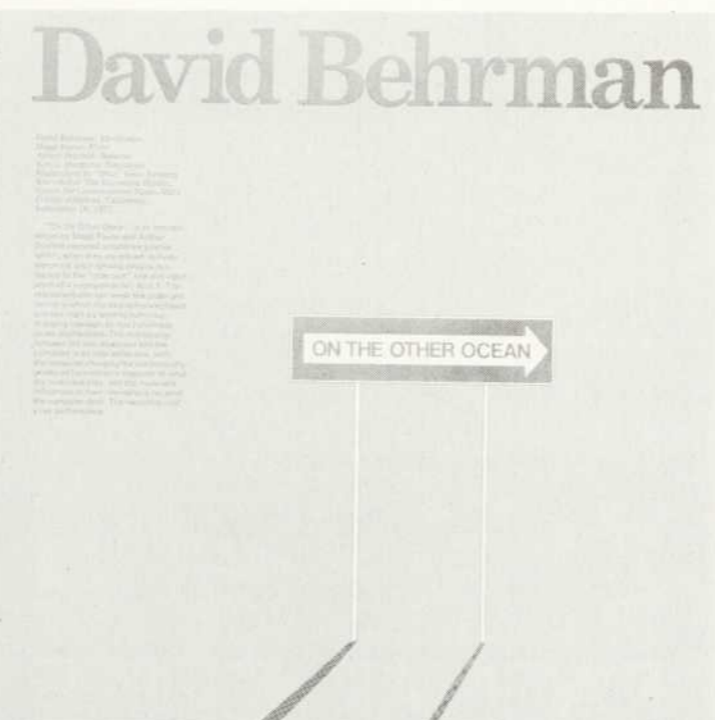
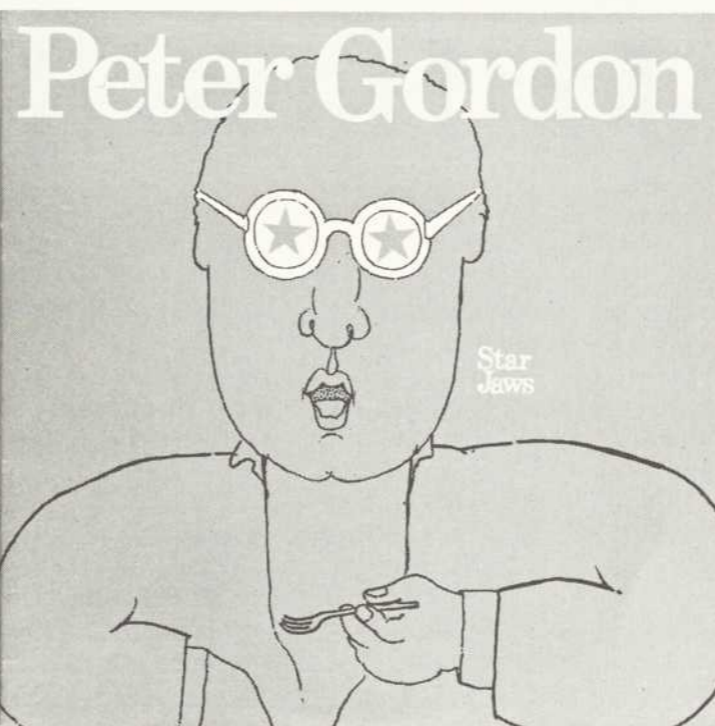
Robert Ashley/**Private Parts**, Lovely Music LML-1001
"With settings for piano and orchestra by "Blue" Gene Tyranny." 2 pièces de Robert Ashley: **The Backyard, The Park**. Robert Ashley/narration, "Blue" Gene Tyranny/piano, polymoog, clavinet, Kris/tablas, Californie, juillet 1977.

RÉÉDITIONS

Tony Fruscella (tp), avec A. Eager (ts), Atlantic 7535

Jimmy Knepper (tb)/**Idol of the Flies**, Bethlehem 6031
1957, avec Bill Evans (p), Gene Quill (as) et D. Richmond (dm).

Charlie Parker/**Live** (with strings), Columbia 34832



Charlie Parker/**Summit Meeting** (Diz — Bud... Columbia 34831

Charlie Parker/**One Night in Birdland** (2 LPs, Bud — Navarro...), Columbia 34808

Lester Young/**Story Vol. 1**, 2 LPs, Columbia 33502

Lester Young/**A Musical Romance, Vol. 2**, Columbia 34837

Lester Young/**Enter the Count, Vol. 3**, Columbia 34840

Erroll Garner/**Overture to Dawn**, Blue Note 25101

Erroll Garner/**Yesterdays**, Blue Note 25102

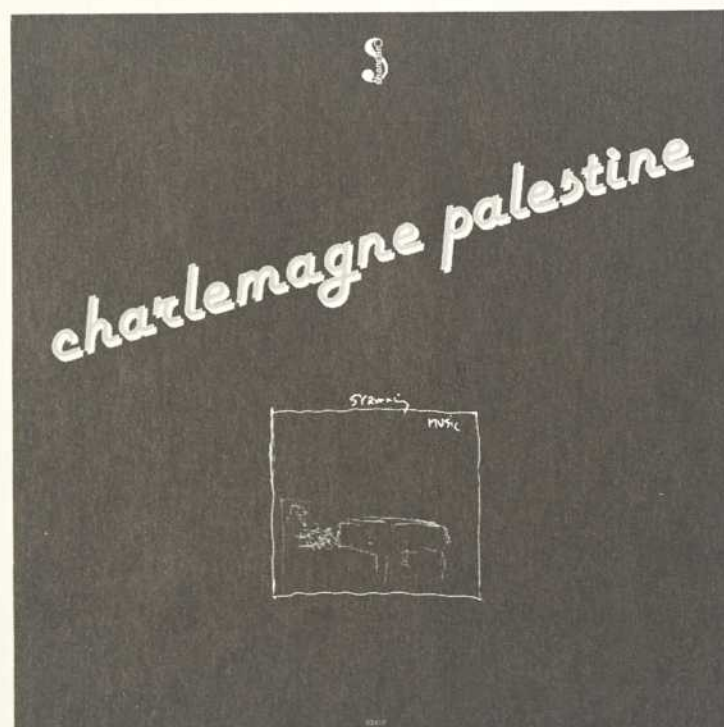
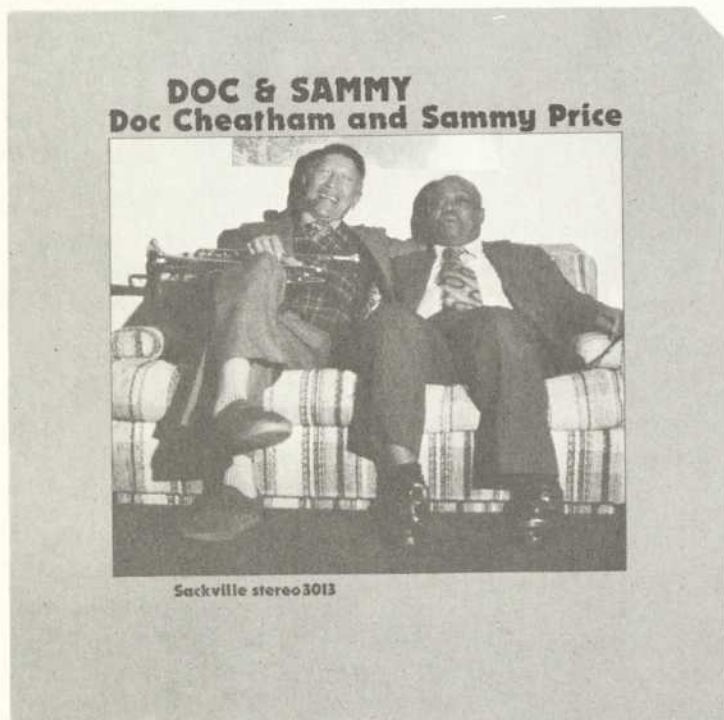
Gerry Mulligan/**Vol. 1**, Blue Note 25103 (avec Chet Baker)

Tal Farlow (g)/**Early Tal**, Blue Note 25104 (avec Horace Silver, Gigi Gryce, Howard McGhee...)

Zoot Sims/**Jazz Alive, A Night at the Half Note**, Blue Note 25205 (avec Al Cohn, Phil Woods, Mose Allison...)

Warne Marsh/**Jazz of Two Cities**, Blue Note 25106 avec Ted Brown (ts), Ronnie Ball (p), Ben Tucker (b) et Jeff Morton (dm)

Booker Little (tp)/**Milestones**, Blue Note Note 25107 avec George Coleman (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Art Davis (b) et Max Roach (d.)



Art Farmer (tp)/**Jubilation**, Blue Note 25108 avec Benny Golson (ts), Bill Evans (p), Addison Farmer (b) et Dave Bailey (dm)

Lee Morgan/**Candy Lee**, Blue Note 25110 avec Sonny Clark (p), Doug Watkins (b) et Art Taylor (dm)

Bud Powell (p)/**The Best Years**, Roulette DY 21010 (double) (1947-1964)

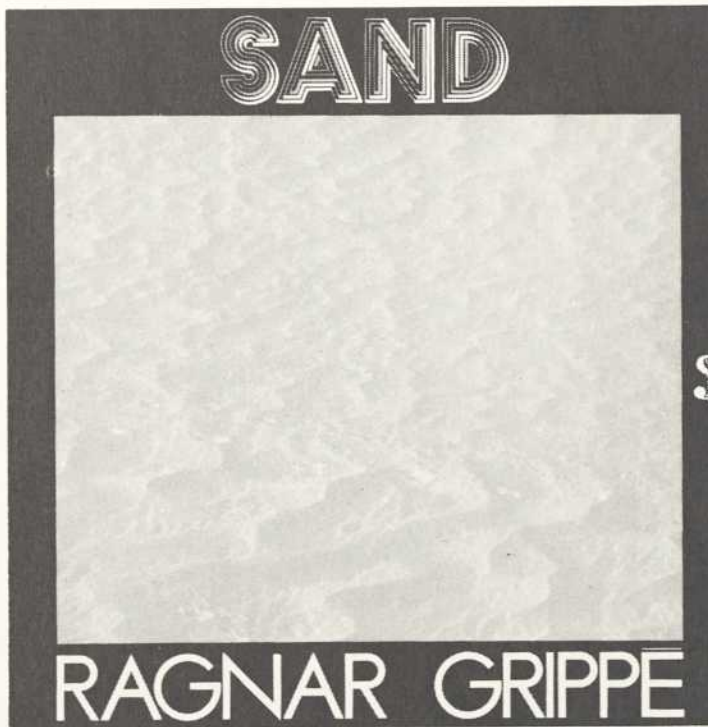
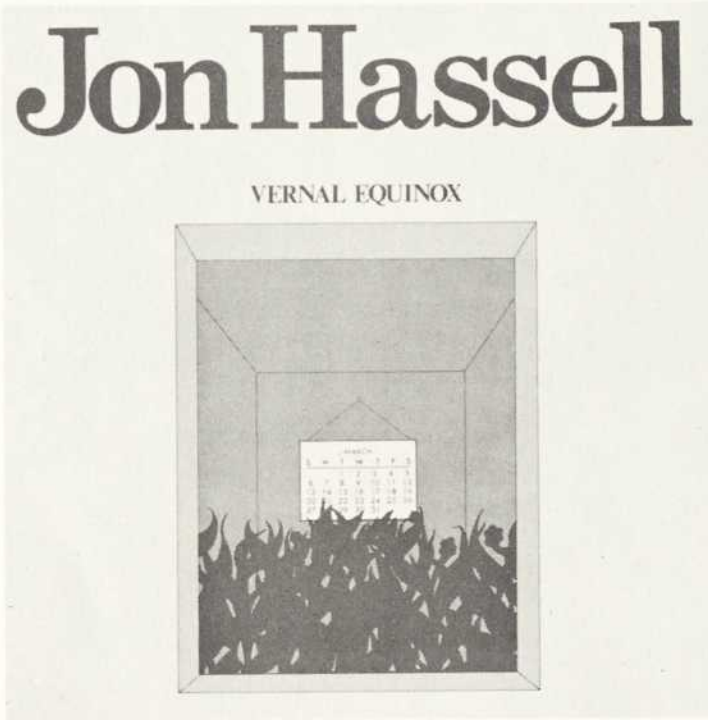
Bobby Jaspar (ts, fl)/**Riverside**, SMJ-6156 avec George Wallington (p) et Idrees Sulieman (tp), 6 pièces: **Seven Up, My Old Flame, All Of You, Doublemint, Before Dawn, Sweet Blanche.**

MUSIQUE ARABE

Salman Shukur (oud), Headline HEAD-16 "Improvisations on a theme of Hajjj Abdul-Gahfar, from a takya in Tikrit. Romance, festival in Baghdad, The Mountain Fairy."

LIVRES

La Musica Maya Quiché, région de Guatémala, de Jesus Castillo, édition Homenaje, 1977 (en espagnol), 125 p., \$2.00



The Encyclopedia Of Jazz In the Seventies, de Leonard Feather et Ira Gitler, New York, Horizon Press, 1977, 303 p., \$20.00

Alfred Cortot (p), de Bernard Gavoty, Buchet Chastel, 318 p., 1977, \$12.00

Jean-Sébastien Bach: **Les Écrits**, Entente, 328 p., \$35.00

Phonographics, contemporary album cover art & design by Brad Benedict and Linda Barton, Collier Books, 1977, 140 p., \$11.00

"By 1967, phonograph records had become a booming billion-dollar-a-year business. The predominantly Rock'N'Roll-oriented audience, like the musicians themselves, shared newly heightened musical, aesthetic and graphic sensibilities. An incredible array of adventurous and imaginative directors, talented artists, and innovative, sophisticated techniques came together to capture the concepts of the sounds in the packaging of new albums and artists. What followed was the evolution and revolution of album cover art — phonographics! Phonographics is a representative collection of the best work from the last decade, one hundred and fifty-eight full-color reproductions..." Notes.

Album Cover Album, edited by Storm Thorgerson & Roger Dean, introduced by Dominy Hamilton, a Dragon's World Book, 1977, New York, 160 p., \$13.00

Monument Eternal, Alice Coltrane, Vedantic Book Press, 1977, \$3.00

George Lewis, A Jazzman from New Orleans, de Tom Bethell, University of California Press — Berkeley 94720, 1977, 336 p., \$12.50

Tell Your Story, A Dictionary of Jazz Titles, de Eric Townley, \$19.00

Fats Waller, His Life and Times, de Maurice Waller, \$14.50

Dictionnaire du blues, de Jean-Claude Arnaudon, éditions Filipacchi, 1978, \$12.00

MAGAZINES

Musique en jeu, no 29, éditions du seuil, 1977, \$8.70

Zweitschrift, No. 2 — New Music: Cage, Bastian, Kaprow, La Monte Young, Mayr, etc..., disponible de Warmbuchenstrasse 26, D-3000 Hannover 1.

Brilliant Corners, "a magazine of the arts", No. 8, Winter 1978, édité par Art Lange. Dans ce numéro, 2 entrevues-musique: John Cage et Joseph Jarman. 1372 W. Estes #2N, Chicago, Illinois 60626.

RAYMOND GERVAIS

MUSIC/CONTEXT: LONDON SUMMER '78

This summer I will be co-ordinating a Festival of Environmental and Contextual Music. The Festival will be based in the new premises of the London Musicians Collective:

42, Gloucester Avenue, London, NW1.

The dates are Friday 14 July through to Saturday 22 July 1978.

The Festival will include performances, environmental events, seminars, tape/record recitals, film/video documentations, open-music sessions and an exhibition. If you wish to participate in any way please send suggestions and/or material to arrive at the address below not later than June 1st 1978. Documentation material can be returned.

David Toop

17, Victoria Road, Alexandra Park,
London, N22 4XA, England.

Téléphone: 01 888 2336

ARTS LAB MUSIC PUBLICATIONS

Birmingham Arts Lab was formed by a small team of dedicated enthusiasts in 1968. The public face of the Arts Lab is that of a Film Theatre and Gallery and a publisher of Comics. But, the Music Department, which has always existed on a small scale, is now expanding, and our activities include **Workshops** in Jazz, Rock and Improvisation, and in Electronic Music; **Evening Classes** in Electronic Music and Ethnic Music, and **Concerts** by our own ensemble ANOMALY and by artists in all fields of jazz, rock and contemporary music from outside the Lab; and —

ARTS LAB MUSIC PUBLICATIONS: our first four published works, are on the theme of music for low brass instruments.

VOX SUPERIUS — for Solo Tuba (1977) by Melvyn Poore

AMBIENCE — for Bass Trombone and Tape (1975) by Richard Orton

VARIATIONS — for Tuba (1976) by Simon Emmerson

DRONES IV — for Tuba (1977) by Lyell Cresswell

Our next scheduled issue includes the following works: —

HEAVY REDUCTIONS — for Tuba and Tape (1977) by Tim Souster

CONCERT MUSICS 1 — 7 and MUG GRUNT by Richard Orton

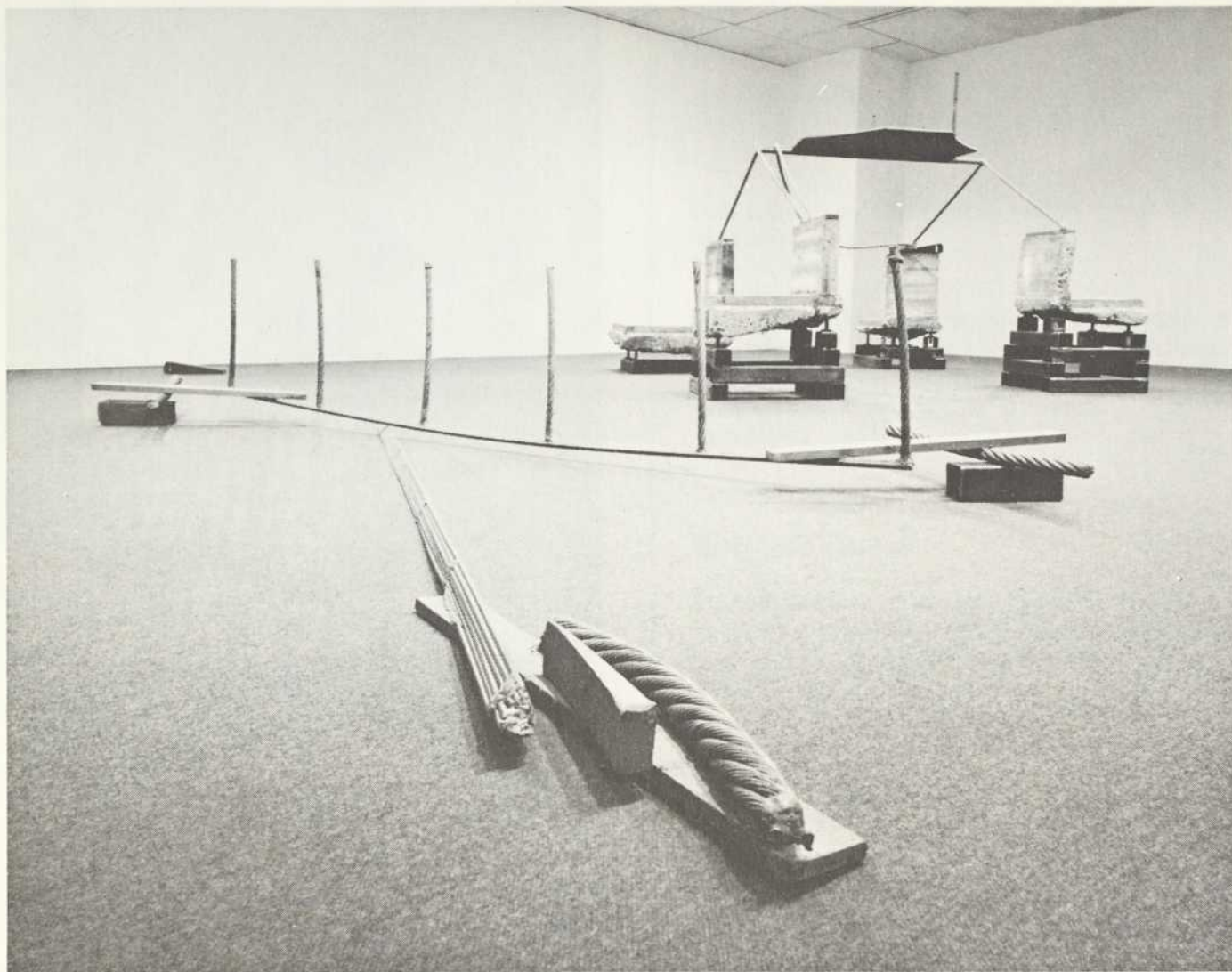
MOMENTELLA — for clarinet solo (1977) by Keith Gifford

Arts Lab Music is run by Melvyn Poore and Jan Steele at the Arts Lab., Holt St., Birmingham, B7 4BA. Tel.: 021 359 4192.

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Ron Martin (1943) London, Ontario
Amourmort-Mortamour
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 Photo: Carmen Lamanna Gallery

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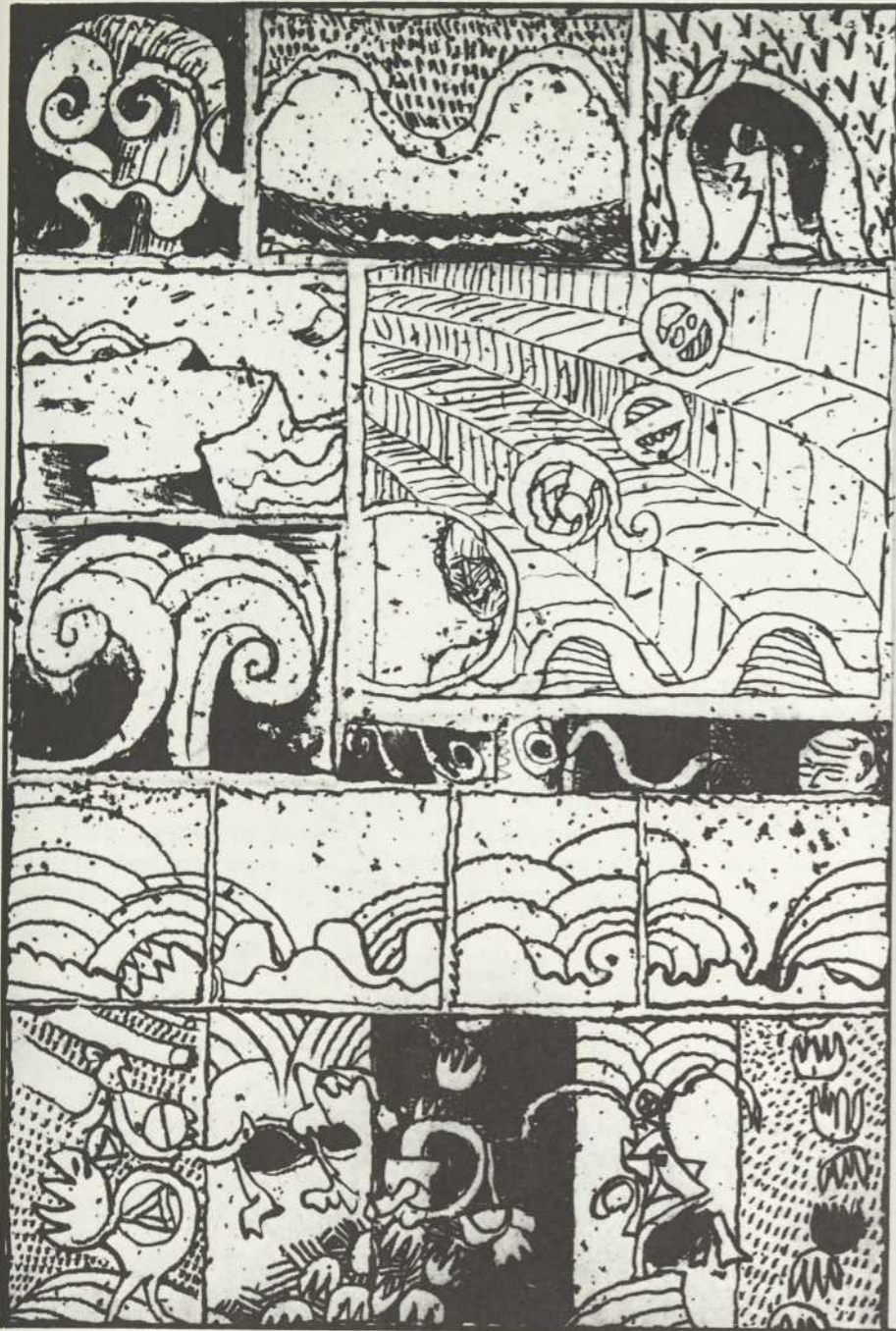
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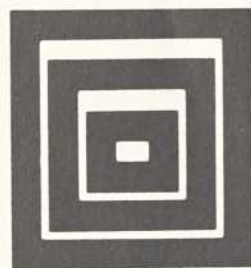
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Renseignements

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Exigences

Diplôme universitaire de 2e cycle ou l'équivalent et expérience pertinente.

Traitement

Selon la convention collective du personnel enseignant

Entrée en fonction

Entre le 1er juin et le 1er août 1978.

Les candidatures accompagnées d'un curriculum vitae doivent être transmises au: **Doyen de la gestion académique, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, 930 est, rue Jacques-Cartier, Chicoutimi (Québec). G7H 2B1. Téléphone: (418) 545-5600**

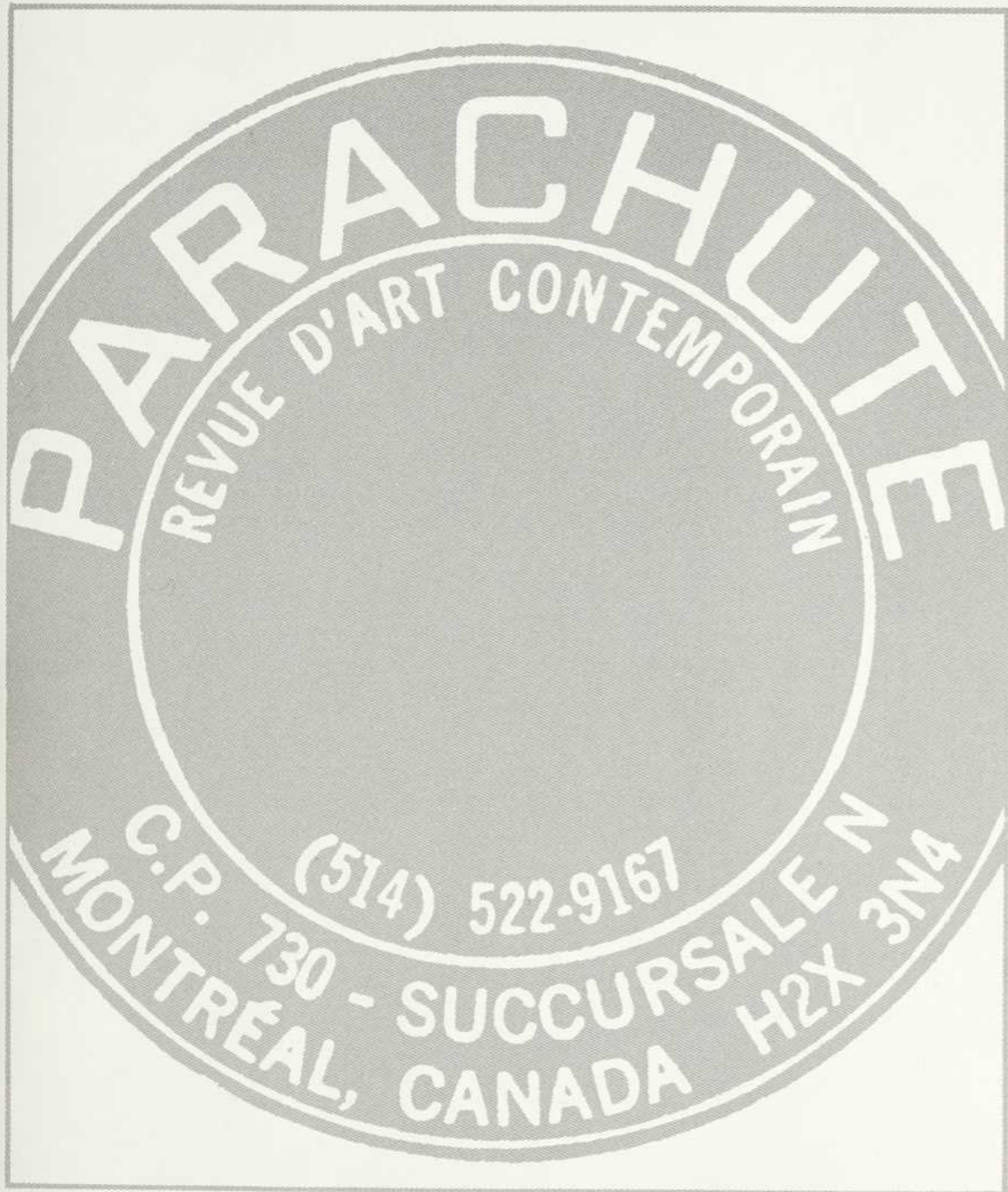


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03 23 03

03 23 03 PROJETS: EVENEMENTS

03 23 03 est une rencontre internationale d'art et d'artistes qui se tiendra à MONTREAL du 3 au 23 mars 1977.
 03 23 03 est une invitation lancée aux artistes de toutes disciplines. Les artistes feront parvenir du 3 au 20 mars (date limite), par la poste (les projets devront être postés au moins un mois avant le début du projet), des projets qui traduisent l'esprit de leurs recherches actuelles. Les projets sous forme de manuscrits, d'esquisses, de propositions visuelles, conceptuelles ou autres, doivent être présentés sur papier dans un format ne dépassant pas 40 cm x 60 cm. A son projet, l'artiste peut joindre des textes supplémentaires, des documents sonores et visuels pour fins de documentation ou d'explicitation. Au cours de la manifestation, selon leur date de réception par la poste, ces projets seront affichés un jour; après leur affichage, les projets seront acheminés dans un système de documentation chronologique qui permettra leur accessibilité auprès du public pendant toute la durée de 03 23 03. Les projets seront publiés dans un journal documentant tout le processus qui définit 03 23 03. Une équipe constituée des responsables de la manifestation et de critiques invités sera chargée de constituer ce journal. Le journal deviendra le catalogue de 03 23 03, publié à 3,000 exemplaires et diffusé internationalement. Prix \$15.00.

03 23 03 retournera à ses frais les projets et ce, au plus tard, six mois après la fin de la manifestation.
 03 23 03 accompagne cette partie de la manifestation de conférences-débats avec les critiques, dont Jean-Christophe Amman, Germano Celant, Annette Michelson, et Caroline Tisdall.

03 23 03 sera en même temps le lieu de plusieurs événements. Nous pouvons déjà annoncer les participations suivantes: Simone Forti, Charlemagne Palestine, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Gina Pane, Klaus Rinke, Michael Snow, Raymond Gervais, General Idea.

Le journal catalogue témoignera aussi des événements, des discussions, des conférences par des textes et photos. Chaque participant recevra une copie du catalogue.

03 23 03 est organisé par France Morin et Chantal Pontbriand de PARACHUTE, et par Normand Theriault de l'INSTITUT D'ART CONTEMPORAIN, Montréal.

Veillez adresser votre projet à: 03 23 03
 c.p. 730 — Succursale N
 Montréal, Canada
 (514) 522-9167

03 23 03 PROJETS: PERFORMANCES

03 23 03: an international encounter of art and artists to be held in MONTREAL from March 3 to 23, 1977.
 03 23 03: an exhibition of projects by artists of all disciplines. Artists are invited to mail in projects on paper related to their current work: performance, video, painting, drawing, sculpture, etc. Maximum format of the presentation: 40 cm x 60 cm. Projects can also be documented with written, visual or sound materials. Projects will be exhibited on their date of arrival by mail (no later than March 20) (the projects have to be mailed at least one month before the opening date) and subsequently filed in a documentation system open to the public. All projects will be sent back to the artists within six months after the closing date.

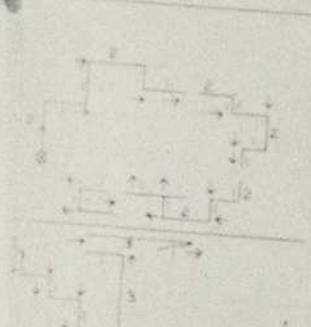
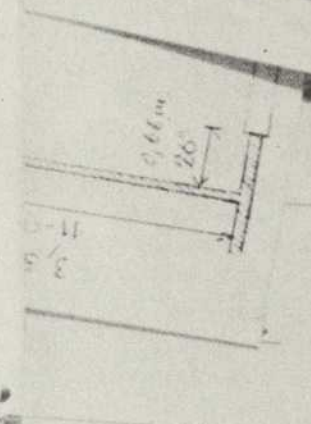
03 23 03: from March 3 to 23 lectures, discussions with critics and artists, and a series of performances are scheduled. Participants to date: critics: Jean-Christophe Amman, Germano Celant, Annette Michelson and Caroline Tisdall; performers: Simone Forti, Charlemagne Palestine, Klaus Rinke, Gina Pane, Pier Paolo Calzolari, Michael Snow, Raymond Gervais, General Idea.

03 23 03: a journal of events including the projects, lectures, discussions, and performances, texts and photos, edited by the four critics and the organizers. Each participant will receive a copy of the catalogue, printed in 3,000 copies and internationally distributed. The catalogue will also be available at the above address for \$15.00.

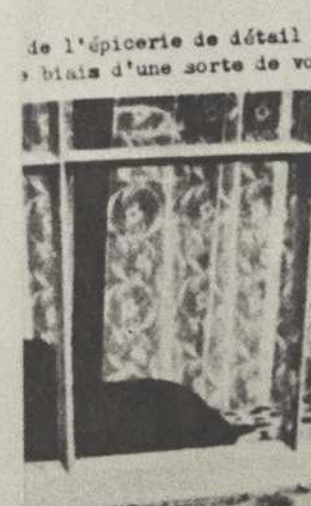
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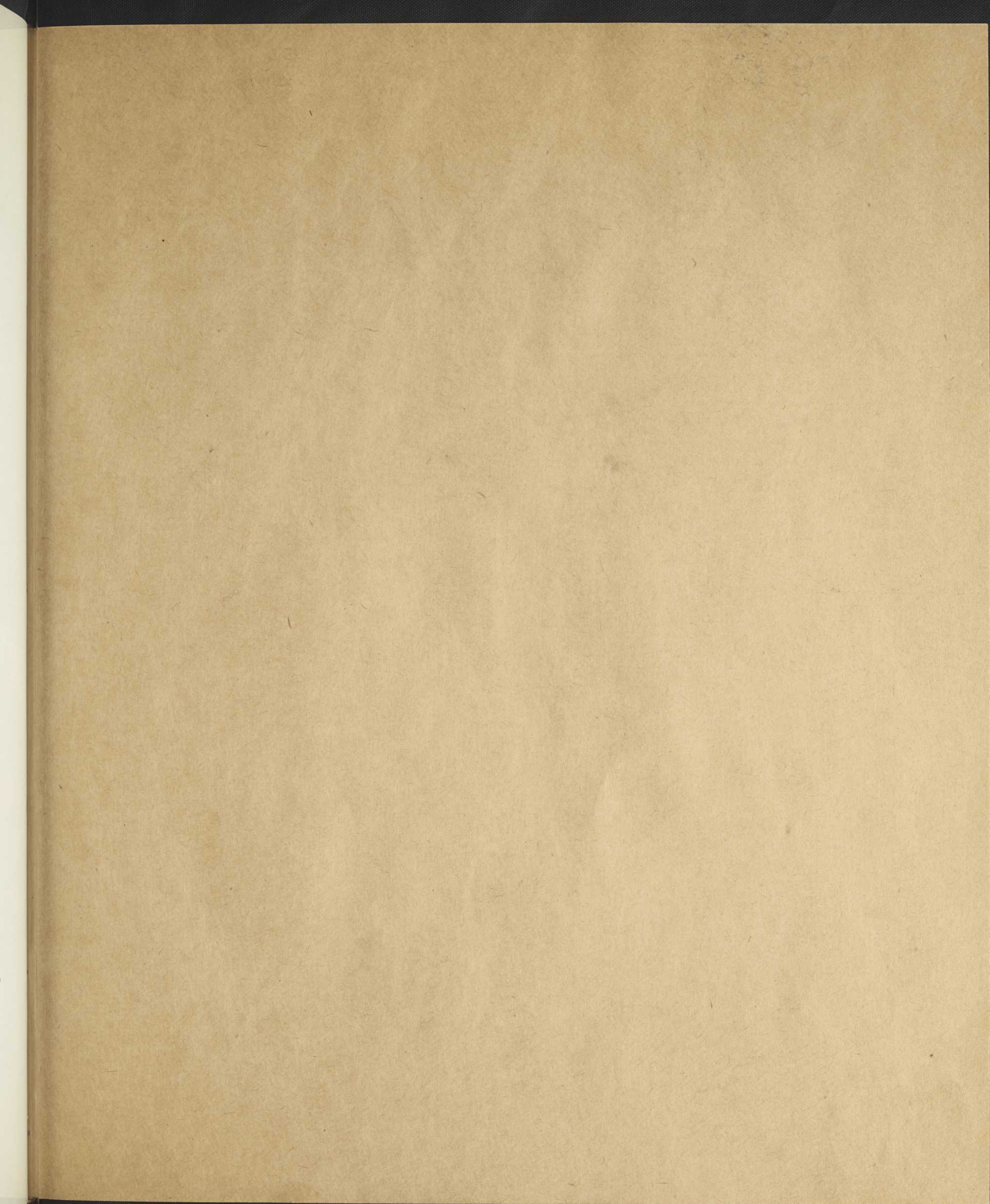
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