



Gloria Masse and Alexandra Dikeakos, installation shot at Charles Scott Gallery, Emily Carr College of Art and Design, Vancouver

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from Euclidean geometry are de-

duced. The idea of the nature-culture pair is more obvious in Spiegel's works when we question the materials and structure of the work. The industrial material, the steel, employed in his public sculpture in Hull evokes the surrounding site in which the work lives: 205 rue Montcalm. A street, used solely by motorists, which is distinguished by its industrial ruins and its consumerism. Taverns, billiard halls, snack bars, barbershops line the street. Abandoned buildings: Hull's Bus Terminal, Outaouais Region Sanitation Services, Canada Packers.

As far as modern industry and architecture are concerned, steel remains a basic material: and rightly so for it brought about industrialization. However it is the constructions built because of this material which became most significant. The shape of bridges, electrical pylons, railways, and picture windows are actually at the origin of industrial forms. These constructions evoke the very spirit of the industrial world since they introduce the idea of standardization, mass production, assembly lines. Despite the essentially industrial nature of steel in Spiegel's sculptures it keeps its primary quality. Let us point out that raw materials, especially wood, copper and glass, are always used in his work. Any wear and tear in a production is an effect of its fabrication, hence the importance of quality materials and of the artist's dexterity.

The maple standing in the middle of the cone, still quite young, in the rough, is the other extreme of the nature-culture pair. The tree also reflects the environment that surrounds the Axe Neo-7 Gallery: a wild and maternal greenery which attempts to camouflage and redress the irreparable traces left by industrial ruins. At another level, the tree's presence, as a living specimen, implies a distinctive structure, that of the ecosystem. The insertion of a living element in a work also requires a self-sufficient system of stability that will allow the survival of this element. If there is a deficiency or an overabundance, all life ceases to exist. Since the tree has been taken

axes which offsets the force of natural energy.

In fact, the steel mass, the constructed part in conflict with the natural part which is the tree, works as an artificial illustration of what happens naturally.

Just as nature is based on an ecosystem, Spiegel's works are also self-sufficient: functional, independent, without superfluity. The very debris is gathered and reused, thus the maple leaves are simultaneously humus and foliage. As for any functional system in terms of its durability and improvement, there is erosion, rectification and rehabilitation. The sculpture works according to this notion which remains a necessary constant when one attempts as Spiegel does, to illustrate the principles of mechanization which are, primarily, taken from nature.

Indeed, Spiegel recognizes the more traditional vision which prevails in his sculpture, especially when compared with the New British Sculpture in which the work is made from leftovers of consumer and industrial society. Here, rather, he wants to bring culture back to its origin.

Lucie Pineau

(translated by Francine Digenais)



Alexandra Dikeakos
Gloria Massé
Charles Scott Gallery
Vancouver
October 5 to 28

Upon entering the large exhibition room one encountered first the suite of pen and ink drawings and the two cycles of recently completed water-

colours. The woman clothed in a voluminous, long-shirted dress that contained references to the notorious life each lead. Eve's skirt branched out from her waist like an overturned tree and among the leaves and branches the artist represented in a finely worked graphic style, appropriate vignettes from the *Temptation and Fall*. In each drawing the Handmaiden's skirt slipped over the fingers of the hand which was presented at the base of the graphic so that the woman became a puppet obedient to the manipulations of the artist/author. These drawings were tight, witty and dense with information, very different in manner from the paintings that followed which were rendered in a loose, simple style that reminded me of Picasso's classicism in such works as his well-known image of *The Lovers* or in his etchings of minotaurs and maidens. Like the Handmaiden Series, the majority of Dikeakos's watercolours had historical themes. They typically represented the head or upper torso of classically inspired figures — Hermes, Calliope etc. — the mythological ancestors of the artist whose cultural origins are Greek.

Dikeakos has caught the grace and energy of the archetypes in the best of these watercolours — mask-like faces tilt to one side, their brilliant overscale eyes burn blue. Hair radiates around them as though plaits have unravelled during a Dionysian dance. The tresses are highlighted by strokes of magenta and electric blue applied graphically with bold strokes in oil pastel. The hair is enlivened with touches of gold paint. These are decorative, pretty paintings that let loose the vitality that was so tightly contained within the handmaiden's skirts. The most recently completed watercolours in Dikeakos's portion of the show are also painted in the loose, free manner described. But the theme moves away from the historical to address the present. A bikiniéd swimmer is the subject of her current series.

The second half of the exhibition space was occupied by the paintings of Gloria Massé. These were suspended from the ceiling in rows so that they hung at approximately the level of the viewer's chest. Even from the doorway of the gallery it was apparent that they were presented in this manner to approximate a herd-like arrangement. Vignettes of the cows sacred to India were the subject of all the oil paintings Massé exhibited here.

Moving between the rows, among the works was to experience something akin to the pleasure and excitement the artist had when she partook in the cow festivals her paintings lovingly recall; when she photographed the animals in their decorated cloaks; when she recorded the hand-patterns, the saffron and pink powder that decorated their skins and the ribbons tied onto their curving horns. One can experience through the hanging as well as through an inspection of individual works, the intimate knowledge, the respect Massé had for her

plentitude goes back to Lascaux and so does the technique of blown pigment that Massé represents as essential to the Hindu's decoration of cows, as the means by which they created the silhouettes of hands on bovine flesh, the means by which they transformed the humps of white cattle into hills of mauve and yellow. The cow, the bull as emblem for nurturing, for strength, is as old as Egypt. In our North American culture the way we take pleasure in our pets, the way we prepare our domestic beasts for public exhibit, the way we costume our circus animals gives us access to Massé's Indian subjects which are also, fundamentally, signifiers of reverence for life. The paintings celebrate celebration and are counterparts to the dancing gods and goddesses Dikeakos painted.

If Dikeakos's style of painting can be described, in general as Picassoesque and graphic, Massé's is representational and solid at first glance. However on close inspection, the paintings of cows reveal that a delicate tracery of interlaced brushstrokes creates an energetic surface patina over the skins of these slow-moving beasts. We discover golden stars and threads of brilliant, unexpected colour. Although the general effect is one that poses contrast to the technique of Dikeakos's drawings and watercolours, there is commonality in the devices these artists use to create their diverse images.

Ann Rosenberg

L'art pense

Galerie Jolliet,

Montréal

du 8 au 22 septembre

Définir la post-modernité demeure une entreprise délicate. Non seulement parce qu'il est toujours malaisé de cerner une tendance sans recul historique, mais également parce que l'emploi du terme varie selon notre critique de la modernité.

Un consensus se dessine pourtant: ce qui lie les post-modernes, c'est leur remise en cause de la notion d'avant-garde définie comme une esthétique motivée par la recherche constante du nouveau et la volonté de rupture entre les générations. Ceci dit, ce type de remise en cause aboutit à différentes conclusions ou "remèdes". Hal Foster distinguait récemment deux types d'attitudes post-modernes: d'une part, la réactionnaire, lieu de l'anti ou de la pré-modernité, qui préconise le retour à la spontanéité de l'imagination, à l'émotion, à l'expressivité; et d'autre part, la post-modernité de résistance, lieu de déconstruction, qui se sert de la modernité comme tremplin pour questionner les traditions artistiques.

L'art pense s'inscrit pleinement dans cette tentative de définir la post-modernité et prend position en faveur