Problematizing Identity: The Shift in Quebecois Photography

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ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the shift in the history of Quebecois photography over the last thirty years. Using a socio-historical approach as well as various theoretical models to address the work of three photographers – Michel Campeau, Geneviève Cadieux and Ramona Ramlochand – this thesis argues that the shift in Quebecois photography is rooted in the broader social, political and institutional environment within which it was practised. More specifically this thesis identifies the centrality of identity formation to the shift in Quebecois photographic practice. The theoretical models employed to discuss the work Campeau, Cadieux and Ramlochand – narrative theory, phenomenology and post-colonial theory – are useful in showing how each of them is engaged in problematizing identity formation through photographic practice. Similar to contemporary understandings of the photographic medium, identity is now acknowledged as a multivalent and complex category of representation.

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INTRODUCTION

Il apparaît de plus en plus évident que le domaine de la photographie d'expression tel qu'il se présente à nous actuellement, est un champs marqué par la pluralité. Pluralité des genres, des approches, des démarches. Puralité aussi dans les manières même de traiter la matière photographique comme telle.

Richard Baillargeon.^[1]

1. Shifting Practice: From Documentary to Plurality

The mid-1970s through the early 1980s was a decisive period in the history of photographic practice in Quebec. It was a time when photography was transformed from a practice strongly rooted in a documentary approach into a much more diverse and plural practice, that transcends the mimetic abilities of the medium and reflects among many other concerns feminism and gender, issues of race and class, and notions of identity and the self.^[2] Through a selection of works by three Quebecois photographers whose practices span the last three decades – Michel Campeau, Geneviève Cadieux and Ramona Ramlochand – and through social historical discussions, this thesis will examine that shift in Quebecois photography.

Social documentary photography characterizes both a photographic practice and a period in time in Quebec. As a practice, it encompassed the work of mostly young Francophone photographers, largely self-taught, who combed the province during the 1960s and 1970s capturing in photographs its social, political, economic, and cultural landscape. Their work was informed by the American style of social documentary of the 1930s, particularly that of Walker Evans and Paul Strand. Based on a supposedly

objective and unmediated approach, their photography aimed to reveal and elevate the status of “the everyday life of ordinary citizens”^[3] by providing an allegedly truthful description of the environment in which they lived and which defined them. Questions of collective identity, culturally and spatially defined, are central to the work of these photographers who espoused populist ideals, such as making art readily available to a broad public.

Historically, social documentary photography in Quebec achieved prominence from the second half of the 1960s through the end of the 1970s. Serge Allaire terms this period “documentaire engagé,”^[4] meaning a practice that is socially committed and distinct from the type of documentary practice of government-sponsored agencies of the 1940s through the early 1960s, and the type of representational work that characterized Quebecois photography up until the mid-twentieth century. As well as being bound up with the politics of nationalism, which coloured much of the Quebecois political landscape during that period, social documentary photography was also influenced by the gamut of social and political forces then transforming Québécois society, including counter-culture, feminism and the province’s changing demographics (a result of increased immigration).

With the 1980s the quasi-exclusive use of the documentary photograph among Quebecois photographers gave way to a plurality of practices. As Gaëtan Gosselin remarked “Quebecois photography gradually abandoned its socializing ‘habitus’.”^[5] Or as Philippe Dubois succinctly states, “l’art devient photographique.”^[6] In short, photography was no longer considered merely as a medium of reproduction capable of descriptive

accuracy, but a legitimate form of artistic practice capable of self-expression. At this time, photography became a prominent medium in contemporary art generally, with artists not previously associated with the medium—Melvin Charney, Charles Gagnon, Françoise Sullivan, and Serge Tousignant—turning to it for creative expression.

This change, which occurred according to Serge Jongué “in an astonishingly short time,”^[7] reflected many factors, some of which are external to the practice of photography (political, social or economic factors for example) while others are specific to it and the field of art in general (institutional and ideological factors for example). Without question nationalism was one of the more important external factors. As well, the “Quiet Revolution” of the early 1960s, which transformed society by sweeping away the traditionalism and clericalism of the past, had an impact. The rapid process of social, economic and political reform which accompanied the “Quiet Revolution” had a pronounced effect on artists.

Among the institutional changes specific to photographic practice was increasing support from both the federal and provincial governments for the creation, promotion and dissemination of photography, enabling photographers to explore the expressive qualities of the medium and take more risks. Moreover, by 1980 photography was being taught in post-secondary institutions in the province. Exhibition spaces—notably artist-run-centres dedicated to photography—were being established.^[8] The end of the decade saw the establishment of *Le Mois de la photo*, a biennial event in Montreal that features numerous exhibitions and public talks on photography, the aim of which is not only to increase the visibility of Quebecois contemporary photography but also to better establish its links to

the international scene. All these factors not only contributed to the legitimization of photography as a medium of artistic expression but also to its flourishing as an art practice.

These transformations meant that Quebecois photography was increasingly ensconced in the contemporary art scene. The influx of foreign theoretical discourse, including postmodernism, psychoanalysis, and feminist and post-colonialist theory, on Quebecois arts at the beginning of the 1980s, had a profound influence on the practice of photography. By being informed and infused by a variety of theoretical positions, the practice opened itself to plurality. At the same time a critical discourse around the character of Quebecois photography and its connection to international practice emerged.^[9]

2. Statement of Problem

Using a socio-historical approach as well as various theoretical models to address specific photographers, I will argue that this shift in Quebecois photography is rooted in the broader social, political and institutional environment within which photography in Quebec was practised. More specifically over the course of this thesis, I will argue that this shift reflected changing attitudes toward the construction of identity, both collective and individual, with photography serving as a medium to express and reveal this shift. Questions of identity have been an enduring theme in Quebec (politically and culturally), and over the last three decades attitudes toward identity formation have followed a trajectory from the fixed and given, to the multivalent and complex. Quebecois

photography followed a similar path. In the 1960s and 1970s, photographers embraced documentary as visual evidence and an unproblematic record of the world. By the 1980s, the correlation between the image and its referent was dismantled with photography becoming an efficacious vehicle to question received truths about that world and the self.

By linking practice to society, I draw on T.J. Clark's assertion that, "there is no art history apart from other history."^[10] In his seminal book, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution*,^[11] Clark calls attention to the "connecting links between artistic form, the available systems of visual representation, the current theories of art, other ideologies, social classes, and more general historical structure and processes."^[12] He argues that art and politics cannot escape each other. As Clark points out "the making of a work of art is one historical process among other acts, events, and structures –it is a series of actions in but also on history."^[13] The history of visual culture and its practice can therefore be explicated by examining the social, political and economic contexts within which works are produced and perceived.

This approach is particularly relevant in the context of this thesis. Quebecois Francophone photographers working in the early 1960s through the end of the 1970s used photography as a tool for social and political change. Their social documentary work was woven into the fabric of Quebec history at that time. As the political and social landscape of Quebec changed later in the 1970s, with the emergence of feminism and post-colonialism among other social forces, the use of documentary to unmask these new social conditions was seen as restricted. Documentary photography's limited ability to explore personal concerns, which were becoming increasingly important subjects of

investigation for artists and photographers alike, made it less appealing. Hence photographers' attitudes toward the medium changed and their relationship to the "real," their preferred subject of representation, was recast.

In this context, writings by Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, and John Tagg are particularly informative in a discussion of Quebecois social documentary photography, its evolution and eventual decline from centrality.^[14] Writings by Quebecois visual historians Johanne Lamoureux, Francine Couture and Serge Allaire, analysing art within the specific context of Quebec, are also very relevant.^[15] John Tagg, who wrote extensively on the uses of photography within power relations, persuasively argued that documentary photographs are constructions which take form within certain social, economic, and political contexts.^[16] Documentary photographs thus do not reveal those contexts as much as they impose them. By examining documentary practice and its limitations in conjunction with a discussion of the changing social environment in which photography was produced, I will argue that photographers naturally moved away from the documentary field in favour of other approaches such as photo-conceptualism, photo-installation, abstraction and multidisciplinary works in order to express a wide range of contemporary concerns.

An examination of the shift in Quebecois photography thus entails a discussion of the character of contemporary photography and the circumstances which affected its emergence. First the term "contemporary" needs to be better defined since it marks the point of departure of this thesis. As it is generally regarded as ever changing with various competing definitions, it is difficult to explicate. In its broadest sense, "contemporary"

applies to any art production that is a creation of its time period. However more specifically, it is used to define very recent practice. It is also often employed to describe a type of art that foils traditional representational conventions and practices. In short, it is a term that is constantly renewed.

Sylvain Campeau and Mona Hakim consider that contemporary Quebecois photography began when “photography distanced itself from the documentary, and the subjectivity of the photographer became clearly acknowledged.”^[17] This begins in the second half of the 1980s. For them and other Quebecois art historians, contemporary is synonymous with plurality, a term used to describe a state of various styles and approaches available to artists. The use of the term underscores an unwillingness to ascribe a singular defining characteristic to the field of photography and the desire to leave the field open to multiple meanings and interpretations. At its most basic level, the term “plurality” denotes the rejection of a formally coherent product associated with the modernist project, upon which the documentary approach relied.

This thesis will thus investigate the shift in Quebecois photography and the character of contemporary photography in Quebec by employing a hybrid methodology drawing from social history of art, narrative theory, phenomenology, and post-colonialism. The work of three photographers will be discussed: Michel Campeau, Geneviève Cadieux, and Ramona Ramlochand. Their work speaks of the heterogeneity of practice in contemporary photography in Quebec, and provides visual evidence of a contemporary practice that criss-crosses genres and is informed by a variety of theoretical

positions. At the same time, I will demonstrate how each of these figures is engaged with problematizing notions of identity formation through photographic practice.

3. Literature Review

The literature on Quebecois photography is extensive. Most of the critically engaged writing dates from the early 1970s, at the beginning of the shift. These writings have appeared in exhibition catalogues and contemporary journals as well as in a plethora of monographs on individual photographers.^[18] Much earlier writing on Quebecois photography was published in newspapers like *Le Jour* or *La Presse* in Montreal and sporadically in the arts magazines *Vie des Arts*.^[19] While this literature offers good historical background on the context in which photography was produced, it generally provides limited critical insight and distance. As Suzanne Beauchamp remarks, there were very few exhibitions on photography before 1970.^[20]

One of the first exhibition catalogues on Quebecois photography was produced as part of the exhibition entitled *Camerart*, organized by Gallery Optica in 1974 (December 1974–January 1975). By bringing together 24 artists working with photography,^[21] *Camerart* was intended to bridge the gap between “artist” and “photographer,” and therefore assert photography as a medium of creative expression. However by featuring mostly anglophone Quebecois artists, it prompted a controversy among Francophone photographers. The exhibition and the ensuing controversy highlighted the supposed divide between Anglophone and Francophone photographers. The debate touched upon the stronghold of a documentary approach and identity politics among Francophone

Quebecois photographers, and the supposedly outward-looking approach among Anglophone photographers. This will be discussed in greater length in the next chapter.

Tendances actuelles au Québec, organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montreal, was one of the first survey exhibitions on Québécois contemporary art to include a component on photography. Curated by Sandra Grant Marchand in collaboration with François Desaulniers, it ran from December 1979 to January 1980 and aimed at presenting an overview of current Quebecois photography by showing works by thirty-five photographers, including Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Pierre Gaudard, Gabor Szilazi and Sorel Cohen.^[22] Grant Marchand situated contemporary photography at the junction of three practices (which she terms “trends”): the documentary photograph, the conceptual photograph and the photograph as art object. While she noted the diversity of photographic practice in Quebec, she remarked that realist photography continued to dominate the field. The exhibition highlighted the legacy of documentary photography while acknowledging the emergence of other types of approaches.

The first exhibition by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal dedicated entirely to contemporary Quebecois photography, *Esthétiques actuelles de la photographie au Québec*, was mounted in 1982, and was also curated by Sandra Grant Marchand. It included works by eleven photographers, most of whom were part of the previously mentioned exhibition.^[23] Intended for both a national and international audience, it travelled throughout Quebec and to *Rencontres de la Photographie*, the major photography festival in Arles, France, and to Canadian cultural centres in Paris and Brussels. The exhibition restated many of the positions of the former exhibition. About

the importance of documentary photography in Quebec, Grant Marchand wrote in the catalogue essay,

Au cours de la décennie [les années 1970], cette pratique photographique s'est modifiée de façon décisive. Dans l'évolution de la conjoncture socio-politique, les démarches se sont précisées et le degré d'implication idéologique des photographes s'est diversifié au profit d'un type de rapport subjectif aux réalités qu'ils documentaient.^[24]

Here the term “contemporary” as it applied to photography was defined more precisely than in the previous exhibition. “Contemporary” meant “recent photography” and was interpreted by Grant Marchand as “une oeuvre qui instaure une communication avec le réel qui transgresse la description factuelle et rend compte des possibilités interprétatives du médium photographique.”^[25]

The scope of photographic works presented in Quebec widened with an exhibition held at the Saidye Bronfman Centre in Montreal in 1983. Entitled *Photographie actuelle au Québec / Quebec Photography Invitational*, it was one of the first exhibitions of contemporary photography in which the ratio between documentary photography and other types of photography—notably conceptual photography and photo-based hybrids—changed. This exhibition featured a wide selection of works by twenty-five artists including Michel Campeau, Sorel Cohen, Serge Tousignant, Holly King and Angela Grauerholz.^[26] While it acknowledged the legacy of the documentary style, *Quebec Photography Invitational* proposed an overview of contemporary practices with a view of showing “the plurality of genres.”^[27] Realist images by Gabor Szilazi, regarded by many as the founding father of Quebecois social documentary photography, were juxtaposed with those by young photographers like Raymonde April and Holly King,

who were experimenting with conceptual photography and performative strategies. Jean Tourangeau, who wrote the catalogue essay stated that contemporary photographers “were proposing an alternative to the documentary tradition”^[28] and striving “to go beyond what they [had] inherited, (...) to activate their own presence which then [could] become the sign of a reality invested by a subject which represents the support of the photographic vocabulary.”^[29] This notion that contemporary photography is defined as one that distances itself from the documentary tradition would be borrowed and used by subsequent art historians and critics.

Artist-run centres also made huge contributions to the critical discourse on Quebecois photography. Michel Gaboury, in a catalogue that accompanied the 1988 exhibition *Regards sur la photographie actuelle au Québec*, at Galerie Séquence in Chicoutimi, argued, through the presentation of works by Lucie Lefebvre and Roberto Pellegrinuzzi among others, that the relationship between the photographic image and the “real” was shifting.^[30] He remarked that photographers’ attitudes toward their subject of representation was now no longer exclusively based on mimetic strategies.

Gaëtan Gosselin, in a catalogue for an exhibition on Quebec photography that toured France in 1992, noted that the work of contemporary photographers was a challenge to categorize. Entitled *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec*, the exhibition brought together works by fourteen photographers to present a panoramic view of contemporary photography in Quebec.^[31] About the state of photography in Quebec, Gosselin wrote “ce qui est clair c'est qu'il y a eu une brèche qui s'est opérée dans le domaine de la photographie: un processus de déconstruction au profit d'une plus grande

ouverture des champs des possibilités.”^[32] The fragmentary nature of Quebecois contemporary photography first characterized by Tourangeau in 1982 was now widely acknowledged. Gosselin questioned the existence of a specifically Quebecois photographic practice, and remarked that it was impossible to reunite under a common heading all the artists featured in the exhibition. His text, “Rêver les mirages,” presents a useful overview of Quebecois photography from the 1960s through the beginning of the 1990s by focusing principally on institutional history (including the history of practice and organizations in support of photography).

In “Désirs de Voyage,” the second text in *La Traversée des mirage* catalogue, Denis Lessard wrote about the nature of recent Quebecois photography. Like Gosselin, Lessard characterized it as heterogeneous in style and influence. He discussed the changing cultural landscape of the 1980s and its significance in affecting photographic practice in Quebec. He also noted the establishment in Quebec of artist-run centres dedicated to contemporary photography, and the increasing interest on the part of more mainstream institutions of art, like the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in displaying photographic works.^[33]

In the catalogue *A Certain Presence in the World: Eight Artists from the New Guard*, which accompanied the eponymous exhibition organized for the biennial event *Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal* in 1993, Denis Lessard and Frank Michel discussed very recent Quebec photography through a selection of works by emerging young artists like France Choinière and Devora Neumark.^[34] The curators noted the variety of styles and remarked that younger artists were not longer forced to demonstrate the legitimacy of

their practice. They were “free” to express themselves using the full range of possibilities offered by the photographic medium. Representations of the body and questions about identity were among the concerns frequently expressed by the artists who used a variety of photographic strategies including collage, manipulation and mixed media.

The Frame, The Setting, The Site: Images of Contemporary Quebec Photography, is one of the more recent exhibitions that examined the state of contemporary photography in Quebec.^[35] Sylvain Campeau and Mona Hakim, curators and authors of the catalogue, remarked in a short essay that “at the time when photography was becoming an important medium in Quebec, it was asserting its autonomy from its subject of investigation throughout the Western world.”^[36] The 2000 exhibition “explor[ed] the interpretative trends (or major categories) that seemed to have been most significant in contemporary Quebec photography.”^[37] Campeau and Hakim argued that contemporary photography seemed resistant to historical narration because it “involves various types of narration.”^[38] Twenty-four artists^[39] whose work, according to the curators, provided evidence of the heterogeneous nature of contemporary Quebecois practice were selected to be part of the exhibition. In those works, Campeau and Hakim identified a number of dominant themes that characterized recent photography: post-documentary, self-portraiture, narrative, photography based on archival images, and photographic installation are the main ones. However, like Lessard and Michel, the curators warn the audience against the appeal of categorizing contemporary photography according to theme or style since contemporary practice seems to resist such categorization.

Apart from describing and illustrating the changing nature of photography in Quebec since the 1980s, most of the aforementioned publications and exhibitions do not delve into the broader historical context. Many do not examine in great depth the social, political and institutional context in which Quebec photography evolved in the last three decades of the twentieth century. The aim of this thesis is to shed some light on those elements in order to contextualize the changing face of photography in Quebec over the last thirty years. I will investigate the character of contemporary practice by critically discussing the nature of the shift, examining why and how it occurred, and analysing the conditions that enabled it. What I have identified in this thesis is the centrality of identity formation to shifts in Quebecois photographic practice. Through historical analysis and three case studies, I will demonstrate how Quebecois photography over the last thirty years can serve as a metaphor for attitudes toward identity formation.

4. Chapter Synopses

The thesis is divided into four chapters. The first analyzes the historical, political and social environment in which photography came to its own during the last three decades of the twentieth century. Informed by the concept of a social history of art as articulated by T.J. Clark, the chapter addresses in depth the forces that changed the context within which photography was produced and thus affected its practice.

The second chapter looks at a selection of works by Michel Campeau. In many ways the evolution of his practice mirrors that of the broader field of Quebecois photography. Campeau began his career in the early 1970s espousing a social

documentary approach but later embarked in the early 1980s on a long journey of introspective self-exploration. What threads his work together is an interest in constructing narrative. Narrative theory, as articulated by Mieke Bal in *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*,^[40] comprises the principal theoretical framework of this chapter. The works I have chosen, while not representing Campeau's entire oeuvre, show how his practice has shifted from the documentary to the introspective and personal. In the first part of the chapter, I will examine Campeau's involvement in the documentary project *Disraeli: une expérience humaine en photographie* (1972). The discussion will draw from Jean-Luc Nancy's discussion of community in *The Inoperative Community*^[41] to argue that the pictures comprising the *Disraeli* corpus are depictions of a fantasized Quebecois community and can be read as a narrative of social change in Quebec during the period in question. In the second part of the chapter, I will examine two later bodies of work, *Éclipses et Labyrinthes* (1988-1992) and *Humus* (2001). By drawing from Charles Taylor's *Sources of the Self*,^[42] I will show how these introspective works function as autobiographical narratives.

The third chapter examines a selection of works by Geneviève Cadieux, who has been active since the beginning of the 1980s. Until very recently, her privileged object of representation is the human body, which has been linked to photography since the inception of the medium. While her work has often been discussed using a psychoanalytic and semiotic approach, I propose to use phenomenology, as developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*,^[43] as the main theoretical model. I will show that Cadieux's work locates subjectivity and identity within and through the body.

For Cadieux, one's experience of the world and relation to it are not given, detached or indifferent; rather, they are set up in a reciprocal exchange between subject and animate world. One's sense of identity is thus defined relationally, and it is through meaningful communication with other living bodies, that our sense of ourselves is revealed. It is also as a result of that process, that our understanding of ourselves remains changing and constantly in flux. Contrary to Campeau's earlier social documentary work, Cadieux's exploration of questions of identity situate themselves in and around the subject as individual, rather than part of a collective. In that sense, Cadieux's work is similar to many feminist artists who appropriated the representation of the female body, detaching it from the male dominated collective in order to better deconstruct the political and cultural structures which perpetuated feminine stereotypes.

The fourth chapter considers a selection of works by Ramona Ramlochand, who emigrated to Canada in 1967 from Guyana and whose work has been gaining acclaim since the beginning of the 1990s. Her practice mixes analogue photography and digital media, employing manipulation and collage to piece together landscapes that mirror today's fragmented society where coherent narratives struggle to exist, if at all. Post-colonial theory, particularly that articulated by Homi K. Bhabha^[44] comprises the main theoretical model of this chapter. Ramlochand's places are constructed ones, in which identity has been hybridized (following Bhabha's terms) at the point of contact with the "Other." Identity is no longer bound by territory; rather it is proposed as geographically fluid. What is interesting to note in Ramlochand's work is that there seems to be a return to exploring collective notions of identity and subjectivity. However

contrary to earlier representations of collective identity, which masked difference in order to represent the collective as a unified and unifying element, such representations are now proposed as being constituted in relation to the “Other.”

This thesis adopts both a historical and theoretical approach to discussing the shift in Quebecois photography. More specifically, through critical examination of these three artists, it underlines the centrality of identity formation in the evolution of Quebecois photographic practice.

Endnotes

- [1] "It is more and more obvious that the field of photography is marked by plurality. Plurality of genres, practices and approaches. Plurality as well in the way the medium is considered" (trans. by author). Richard Baillargeon, "Introduction," *Pratiques actuelles en photographie: actes de la table ronde du 9 mars 1986* (Québec: VU, 1986), 7.
- [2] Sylvain Campeau and Mona Hakim, *Le Cadre, la scène, le site: panorama de la photographie québécoise contemporaine* (Montréal: Occurence, 2000); Gaëtan Gosselin, *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec* (Troyes, France and Québec, Canada: Transfrontières and VU, 1992); Guy Mercier, *La Décennie de la métamorphose: 1982-1992* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1992); Serge Jongué, "The New Photographic Order," *Thirteen Essays on Photography* (Ottawa: CMCP, 1990); Saydie Bronfman Centre, *Quebec Photography Invitational* (Montreal: Saydie Bronfman Centre, 1983); Sandra Grant Marchand, *Esthétiques actuelles de la photographie au Québec: onze photographes* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1982).
- [3] Maryse Pellerin, "Photographes, faites vos jeux, rien de va plus! La photographie documentaire," *Le Jour*, 21 February 1976, 32.
- [4] Serge Allaire, *Une tradition documentaire au Québec? Quelle tradition? Quel documentaire?* (Montréal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 1993), 3.
- [5] Gaëtan Gosselin, "Dreaming of Mirages," *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec* (Troyes, France and Québec, Canada: Transfrontières and VU, 1992), 9.
- [6] Philippe Dubois, *L'acte photographique et autres essais* (Paris: Éditions Nathan, 1990).
- [7] Serge Jongué, "The New Photographic Order," *Thirteen Essays on Photography* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Canadian Photography, 1990), 38.
- [8] The most prominent of them are: Centaur Galleries of Photography (later Optica), Dazibao and Gallery Vox in Montreal, VU in Quebec City, Séquence in Chicoutimi, and Espace F in Rimouski.
- [9] For more information see: Guy Bellavance ed. *Monde et réseaux de l'art: diffusion, migration et cosmopolitisme en art contemporain* (Montréal: Liber, 2000); Véronique Rodriguez, "Aurora Borealis," in *Exposer l'art contemporain du Québec: Discours d'intention et d'accompagnement*, ed. Francine Couture (Montréal: Centre de diffusion 3D, 2003), 267-295.
- [10] T.J. Clark, *Image of the people: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 18.
- [11] Ibid.
- [12] Ibid., 12.
- [13] Ibid., 13.

[14] Martha Rosler, "In, Around and Afterthoughts (on Documentary Photography)," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989), 303-340; Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes of the Politics of Representation)," in *Photography: Current Perspectives*, ed. J. Leibling (Rochester: The Massachusetts Review, 1978), 231-255; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[15] Serge Allaire, *Une tradition documentaire au Québec? Quelle tradition? Quel documentaire?* (Montréal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 1993); Francine Couture ed., *Exposer l'art contemporain du Québec: Discours d'intention et d'accompagnement* (Montréal: Centre de diffusion 3D, 2003); Francine Couture, "L'exposition de la modernité artistique, lieu de construction de l'identité nationale," *Revue d'art canadienne - RACAR* 21, no. 1-2 (1994): 32-42; Johanne Lamoureux, *Seeing in Tongues: A Narrative of Language and Visual Arts in Quebec* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, 1995).

[16] John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[17] Sylvain Campeau and Mona Hakim, 75.

[18] For example there are four monographs on Michel Campeau: Michel Campeau, *Si je mens, j'irai en enfer* (Laval: Diffusion Dimedia, 1997); Michel Campeau, *Éclipses et labyrinthes* (Chicoutimi: Séquence, 1993); Michel Campeau, *Les tremblements du cœur* (Québec: VU, 1988); Pierre Dessureault, *Les Images volubiles: Michel Campeau* (Ottawa: Musée canadien de la photographie contemporaine, 1996). There are four monographs on Geneviève Cadieux: Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, *Geneviève Cadieux* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 1999). Chantal Pontbriand, *Geneviève Cadieux* (Montréal: Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal and Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, 1997); Chantal Pontbriand, *Geneviève Cadieux: Canada XLIV Biennale di Venezia* (Montréal: Éditions Parachute, 1990); Gilles Godmer, *Geneviève Cadieux* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1993).

[19] Selected examples: "Description du travail accompli par GAP," *Vie des arts* 70 (1973): 38-42; "Présentation de l'oeuvre de Françoise Sullivan," *Vie des arts* 78 (1975): 28-29; "Présentation et critique de l'oeuvre de Suzy Lake," *Vie des Arts* 80 (1975): 32-33.

[20] Suzanne Beauchamp, "Traveling, Photo-Québec, 1970-79," *Cahiers du département d'histoire de l'art de l'Université de Montréal* (Spring 1987), 80.

[21] Optica, *Camerart* (Montréal: Optica, 1975). The featured artists were: Jan Adriesse, Allan Bealy, Pierre Boogaerts, Eva Brandle, Tom Dean, Jean-Marie Delavalle, François Déry, Jennifer Dickson, Gloria Deitcher, Charles Gagnon, Michael Haslam, Christian Knudsen, Stephen Lack, Michel Leclair, Suzy Lake, Kelly Morgan, Nancy Nicol, Jean Noel, Gunter Nolte, Françoise Sullivan, Serge Tousignant, Robert Walker, Irene Whittome, William Vazan.

[22] Sandra Grant Marchand, *Tendances actuelles au Québec* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain, 1980). The thirty-five featured photographers were: Raymonde April, Lise Bégin, François Carrière, Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Tim Clark, Serge Clément, Sorel Cohen, Marie-Andrée Cossette, Sylvain Cousineau, Eric Daudelin, Gilles Dempsey, Gera Dillon, David Duchow, Michel Gaboury, Marc-André Gagné, Pierre Gaudard, Normand Grégoire, Jorge Guerra, Pierre Guimond, Clara Gutsche, Michael Flomen, Stephan Kovacs, Ronald Labelle, René Lamothe, Jean Lauzon, Brian Merrett, David Miller, Denis

Plain, Normand Rajotte, Robert Slatkoff, Gabor Szilazi, Sam Tata, Serge Tousignant, Robert Walker, and Roland Weber.

[23] Sandra Grant Marchand, *Esthétiques actuelles de la photographie au Québec: onze photographes* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain, 1982). The exhibition featured works by Raymonde April, Claire Beaugrand-Marchand, Michel Campeau, Serge Clément, Sorel Cohen, Charles Gagnon, Normand Grégoire, Gabor Szilazi, Sam Tata, and Robert Walker.

[24] "During the 1970s, photographic practice transformed itself in a decisive manner. With the evolution of social and political circumstances, individual approaches to photography became clearer. The ideological stance of photographers changed resulting in an increasingly subjective relationship to documented realities." (translation by author). Sandra Grant Marchand, *Esthétiques actuelles de la photographie* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain, 1982), 6.

[25] "... a work that communicates with reality while transgressing factual description. It is a work that takes into account the expressive possibilities of the photographic medium." (translation by author). Ibid., 6.

[26] Saidye Bronfman Centre, *Photographie actuelle au Québec / Quebec Photography Invitational* (Montréal: Saidye Bronfman Centre, 1983). The twenty-five featured artists were: Raymonde April, Lise Bégin, Ginette Bouchard, Marik Boudreau, Michel Campeau, Pierre Charrier, Serge Clément, Sorel Cohen, Stéphanie Colvey, David Duchow, Michael Flomen, Michel Gaboury, Pierre Gaudard, Pierre Gosselin, Angela Grauerholz, Pierre Guimond, Clara Gutsche, Holly King, Brian Merrett, Denis Plain, Alain Pratte, James A. Rae, Gabor Szilasi, Sam Tata, Serge Tousignant.

[27] Jean Tourangeau, "Between Reality and Representation," in *Photographie actuelle au Québec / Quebec Photography Invitational*, ed. Saidye Bronfman Centre (Montréal: Saidye Bronfman Centre, 1983), III.

[28] Ibid., V.

[29] Ibid., VI.

[30] Michel Gaboury, *Regards sur la photographie actuelle au Québec* (Chicoutimi: Galerie Séquence, 1988). The artists featured in the exhibition were: Lucie Lefebvre, André Martin, Daniel Dutil, Roberto Pellegrinuzzi and Diane Poirier.

[31] Gaëtan Gosselin, *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec* (Troyes, France and Quebec City: Transfrontières and VU, 1992). The featured artists were: Patrick Altman, Raymonde April, Richard Baillargeon, Céline Baril, Claude Bélanger, Melvin Charney, Denis Farley, Angela Grauerholz, Nicole Jolicoeur, Lucie Lefebvre, Alain Paiement, Roberto Pellegrinuzzi, Reno Salvail and Barbara Steinman.

[32] Gaëtan Gosselin, "Rêver les mirages / Dreaming of Mirages," *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec* (Troyes, France and Quebec City: Transfrontières and VU, 1992), 12.

[33] Denis Lessard, "Désirs de voyage: vingt billets pour la France / Wishes for Travelling: Twenty Fares for France," in *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec*, ed. Gaëtan Gosselin (Troyes, France and Quebec City: Transfrontières and VU, 1992), 28.

[34] Denis Lessard and Frank Michel, *A Certain Presence in the World: Eight Artists from the New Guard*

(Montréal: Le mois de la photo à Montréal, 1993). In the catalogue, the authors talk about “artists,” rather than “photographers.” It is interesting to note that the divide between “art” and “photography” is no longer apparent, suggesting that it is no longer perceived as being relevant.

[35] Sylvain Campeau and Mona Hakim. *The Frame, the Setting, the site: Images of Contemporary Quebec Photography* (Montreal: Occurrence, 2000).

[36] Ibid., 75.

[37] Ibid., 75.

[38] Ibid., 75.

[39] The featured artists were: Raymonde April, Jocelyne Allouche, Richard Baillargeon, Geneviève Cadieux, Michel Campeau, Jean-François Cantin, Nathalie Caron, Serge Clément, Sorel Cohen, Donigan Cumming, Lucie Duval, Denis Farley, Yan Giguère, Angela Grauerholz, Nicole Jolicoeur, Holly King, Lucie Lefebvre, Ron Levine, Alain Paiement, Roberto Pellegrinuzi, Sylvie Readman, Eugénie Schinkle, Andrea Szilasi, Serge Toussignant.

[40] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

[41] Jean-Luc Nancy, “The Inoperative Community” in *The Inoperative Community*, edited and translated by Peter Connor. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, 1-42.

[42] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[43] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, edited by Claude Lefort and translated by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

[44] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

CHAPTER 1

A Social History of Practice

1. Introduction

In 1972, critic Gilles Toupin, upon seeing an exhibition of photographs by several young Francophone photographers working under the collective name “Groupe d’action photographique” (GAP),^[1] declared, “la photo québécoise est née.”^[2] Although photography had been practised in Quebec almost as early as the invention of the medium, its history can be said to have truly began in the postwar era with photographers working for the Office du Film du Québec (OFQ) and the National Film Board’s Still Photography Division (NFB). They “developed a solid tradition of documentary intervention,” and their work, while propagandistic in nature, sewed the seeds of the socially engaged documentary photography of the 1970s that many critics such as Toupin saw as the origins of Quebecois photography.^[3]

This chapter examines the historical, political and social environment in which Quebecois photography existed during the last three decades of the twentieth century. It is broadly divided into two sections. The first section takes a look at the decade of the 1960s through the 1970s and discusses the emergence, practice and decline of social documentary photography within the milieu of contemporary social change. The second section covers the period from 1980 through the end of the 1990s and examines contemporary practice in Quebecois photography.

The decline from a centrality of social documentary photography in Quebec at the end of the 1970s can be explained by examining how photographs were seen to function as signifying systems rather than neutral transcriptions of reality. I will show that photographers naturally withdrew from a social documentary approach in favour of other practices that featured photographic elements, including conceptual photography, abstract photography, photo-installation, and multidisciplinary works. I will further argue that this shift coincided with the acceptance of photography as a legitimate form of artistic expression, the opening up of Quebecois art to aspects of international theory (especially post-structuralism, feminism and postcolonialism), and changing expressions of nationalism as it became infused by social forces like feminism, urbanism, environmentalism, and multiculturalism.

2. The 1960s and 1970s: Social Documentary Practice

2.1 Prelude

Until the 1960s, photography in Quebec was mainly a commercial, governmental and institutional enterprise.^[4] Photographers had few opportunities for exhibiting their craft. They worked in studio photography, as photojournalists or on commission for government-sponsored institutions like the OFQ and NFB.^[5] Publicly-funded museums and galleries also provided little exposure to Quebecois photographers. Unlike painting and sculpture, which were in a rush of creative experimentation since the beginning of the post-war period with artists like Paul-Émile Borduas and Jean-Paul Riopelle, photography was seen as a conservative practice. Subject matter was generally limited to

portraiture and realist representations of views and events.^[6] Throughout this period, photography generally obeyed the mimetic conventions of the medium following popular conceptions of it as an indexical form of representation.

2.2 The 1960s

The 1960s in Quebec began with a whirlwind of change. A new government, headed by Jean Lesage, was brought to power in 1960 with the slogan, “C’est le temps que ça change.”^[7] With the support of intellectuals, politicians and trade unions, change was implemented through a sweeping series of political, economic and social reforms aimed at transforming, modernizing and secularizing society.^[8] Education, social services and health care were the principal targets for these reforms; however the arts also benefited with the creation of the Ministry of Culture in 1961, the province’s first cultural centre in Paris in 1964, and the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal in 1965. Under the previous government of Maurice Duplessis (1944 to 1960), art and culture were largely considered the prerogative of the elite. By contrast, the Lesage government recognized culture as essential to Quebecois society and thus nurtured a new relationship with creators by providing the financial and infrastructure support they required to create and disseminate their work.^[9]

Artists and intellectuals supported reforms, at least during the first half of the 1960s. Since the *Refus Global*^[10] in 1948, they had been expressing their “untamed need for liberation”^[11] and calling for a rejection of the hegemony exercised by the Church and

the socially conservative Duplessis government. Reformism was seen by artists and intellectuals as a way to dispose of the heritage of the past.

The expression “Quiet Revolution,” coined by a *Globe and Mail* journalist in 1963,^[12] is widely employed to describe the period of intense change and activity of the early 1960s. Although the movement for change was not unique to Quebec, it happened so rapidly that it was considered nothing short of a revolution. In its largest sense, the expression “Quiet Revolution” describes the decades of the 1960s and 1970s when the forces of counter culture, sexual liberation, feminism, and neo-liberalism effectively redefined Quebecois society, opening it up to the international stage, the effects of which are still felt today.^[13]

Of all the values associated with the past, only Quebec nationalism persisted with any vigour, although in a significantly altered form. While the clerico-nationalism of the past condemned industrial society, state intervention in social affairs and broadly declared modernity in all its guises to be immoral; the socio-economic nationalism of the 1960s embraced neo-liberal policies where the values of economic growth sustained by planning, technical progress, and universal access to collective services (like health care and education), were viewed as key to social development and prosperity.^[14] The nationalists of the 1960s embraced the state as the only instrument capable of arranging the development of the nation in a scientific and systematic way and of acting as a counterweight to the influence of external forces, namely those of English Canada and the United States. This resulted in the creation of a large and professional bureaucracy with

many facets of the provincial economy increasingly controlled by Francophone Quebecers.^[15]

An important facet of this new nationalism is that it articulated itself in relation to territory. Increasingly, intellectuals, artists and politicians alike talked about Quebec as a nation, and for the first time they used the term “Quebecois” instead of “French Canadian” to describe the people of Quebec. Separatism, which could not be realized without a precise territorial definition, could now be articulated.^[16]

An integral component of this new nationalism was the development of the cultural concept of “Québécoisité,” according to which emancipation could be achieved by valorizing the specificity of Quebec (its folklore, traditions, heritage and social customs). In literature, the concept manifested itself through the use of a constructed dialect, *le joual*, which reached a wide international audience through Michel Tremblay’s play *Les Belles Soeurs* (1968). In popular music—notably Gilles Vigneault’s *Mon pays* (1965), a veritable anthem of Quebec nationalism—it was expressed by the evocation of the virtues of Quebecois traditions and landscapes.

Counter-culture was another force transforming Quebec. It paralleled the emergence of a new leftist political movement and found support among the Francophone elite, the university milieu and the young “Baby Boomer” generation, which became increasingly politicized and activist towards the end of the 1960s. The counter-cultural movement set itself in opposition to the prevailing technocratic ideology and voiced a range of new concerns like pollution, wastefulness, consumerism, and unbridled capitalism, which according to them were the result of the neo-liberalist policies of the

Lesage government.^[17] Counter-culture promoted individual action as a transformative and necessary condition to social reorganization. Dominant themes were involvement, self-governance and participation.^[18] The “revolution” was as much a collective as an individual one.

The defeat of the Lesage government in 1966 by the Union nationale, which had campaigned on the slogan “Égalité ou Indépendance,” was another sign of the people’s disillusionment with reform. Separatism was gaining in popularity, the clearest manifestation of which was the creation of the Parti Québécois a year later in 1967. Social cohesion, which had been a characteristic of the first half of the decade was peeling away, and unions which had generally supported reformism, along with intellectuals and artists, were now reacting against it. Compounding this was a looming economic crisis which emerged as early as 1967, caused in part by world-wide industrial restructuring and a sharp increase in oil prices.

Artists were part and parcel of the movement for change. At the beginning of the 1960s, the field of Quebecois visual arts was dominated by the *Plasticiens* Guido Molinari and Claude Tousignant. Internationally oriented, they were more concerned about form than figurative function and seemed to be largely immune to the movement of Québécoisité that ran throughout most of the arts. However by the mid-1960s, a young generation of visual artists influenced by the counter-culture movement, denounced the hermetic world of Quebecois high art and strove to bridge the gap between art, artist and audience. Multidisciplinary artists’ groups, more or less informal and cohesive, such as

Zirmate and collectives such as *Fusion des arts*,^[19] began to appear. They believed that art could serve as a tool for social emancipation and espoused the counter-cultural ideal to democratize art production and dissemination. In a seminal book about the arts activities of the 1960s, *Quebec Underground: 10 ans d'art marginal au Québec, 1962-1972*, art historian and critic Yves Robillard stated that “l’underground futur sera résolument populaire.”^[20] Through happenings, performances and exhibitions (usually in non-traditional arts spaces), artists advocated social change and strove to mobilize the population to act for change. Their efforts led in part to the creation of artist-run centres in the 1970s.^[21] In photography, the influence of counter-culture and the pioneering work of these groups would be felt most strongly later at the beginning of the 1970s, with the work of groups like Groupe d’action photographique, Groupe des photographes populaires and Photo-Cell.^[22]

In 1968, reflecting the surge of counter-cultural activity rampant in large cities around the western world, disgruntled arts students occupied the École des Beaux-arts demanding improved educational opportunities for arts students. That same year, artists from various disciplines came together during *Opération Déclat*, a five-day event whose purpose was to rethink the role of artists in society and the role of government in supporting artistic creativity.^[23] The event aimed at demonstrating to governments and the public the importance of art and culture to a modern society. Delegates also called for the creation of advocacy groups in order to better organize and coordinate their lobbying efforts. Both events signalled a move towards a professionalization of arts practice.

Throughout the decade in question, photography was generally limited to the documentary form, which has had a long and sustained history in Quebec. Defined broadly, a documentary photograph is an image that provides evidence of the occurrence of events or is used as a means to substantiate identity. Documentary photography claims to be an accurate and unmediated transcription of the world. The function of the photographer is thought to be a passive and technical one: to produce a truthful transcription of what appeared in front of the camera at the moment of exposure. The documentary image claims authority by being investigative and anchored in facts. As William Stott argues: “it defies comment; it imposes its meaning. It confronts us, the audience, with empirical evidence of such nature as to render dispute impossible and interpretation superfluous. All emphasis is on the evidence; the facts themselves speak.”^[24] Stott remarks that there are two types of documentary photographs: those that “inform the intellect” and those that “educate one’s feelings.” While both types of documentary photographs deal with the reporting of facts, Stott defines the latter as “social documentary,” which is different from other kinds of representational photographic practices because it embraces social investigation and focuses the audience’s attention on a particular social problem by eliciting empathy.

Since it privileges a social message, documentary photography is less concerned with aesthetics than with the construction of knowledge. Documentary photography is typically viewed not as a tool for self-expression, but a means for exploring and making known a variety of social issues. As Stott further remarks, “social documentary shows man at grips with conditions neither permanent nor necessary, conditions of a certain time

and place.”^[25] Thus, as he further points out, “social documentary deals with facts that are alterable ... The fact may move the audience to wish to change it.”^[26] In short, the aim of social documentary is the promotion of social action.

Such theorists and critics as Martha Rosler, Allan Sekula, Abigail Solomon-Godeau and John Tagg^[27] have disputed the documentary photograph’s claim to authenticity. They have called into question documentary’s status as evidenciary, neutral and given, and have alerted us to the ways documentary photographs work to construct a reality that they purport to reveal. As Allan Sekula argues “the rhetorical strength of documentary is imagined to reside in the unequivocal character of the camera’s evidence, in an essential realism.”^[28] Inscribed within the documentary photograph is a complex set of cultural and ideological forms that impose order and create particular sets of meaning. As Abigail Solomon-Godeau notes “documentary projects... speak of agendas both open and covert, personal and institutional, that inform their contents and to a greater extent mediate our reading of them.”^[29] Thus, far from being an innocent transcription of the real, documentary photography is a discursive practice.

One of the best known social documentary projects was undertaken by the United States Farm Security Administration, which hired photographers to document the conditions of work and life faced by largely rural Americans over the period 1935-1942. The images, considered by most to be truthful representations of the extreme poverty in which rural communities lived, became emblematic of the US depression. Writing about the US documentary projects of the 1930s, Tagg argues that under the guise of truth in

representation lies a powerful tool in support of government social and economic policy.

He remarks that documentary photography is the United States of the 1930s,

was entirely bound up with a particular social strategy: a liberal, corporatist plan to negotiate economic, political and cultural crisis through a programme of structured reforms, relief measures and a cultural intervention aimed at restructuring the order of discourse, appropriating dissent, and resecuring the threatened bonds of social consent.^[30]

In Canada, the government-sponsored National Film Board Still Photography Division undertook a number of documentary projects from the 1940s to the 1970s. Its mandate, “to tell the public about everyday life,”^[31] was unapologetically propagandistic. In Quebec, the photographic and filmic work of the Service de ciné-photographie (later the Office du film du Québec, OFQ) also produced documentary projects with nationalistic traces. Its mandate was to depict Quebecois activities and lifestyles^[32] in order to promote their specificity by extolling the virtues of the Québécois social landscape through supposedly “truthful” representations. The work of NFB and OFQ photographers like Gabor Szilasi, who was on staff at the OFQ between 1959 to 1971, sewed the seeds of the socially engaged documentary photography which marked the landscape of Québécois photographic practice during the 1960s and 1970s.^[33] Szilasi’s work, often considered archetypal of Quebecois social documentary photography, shaped attitudes towards photography invested in social realities that endured throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

Quebecois photography in the 1960s is generally seen as a prelude to the effervescent photographic production of the 1970s. Throughout this period, photography was vying for recognition as a medium capable of artistic expression. Even though

photographers participated in the many multidisciplinary arts events and happenings organized during this period, including *La Semaine A* and *Les Trente "A,"* their presence is often overlooked.^[34] Painting, printmaking, poetry and music were generally considered the more progressive arts. However, during *Les Trente "A"* held in May 1965, photographer Ronald Labelle noted,

la photographie n'est plus tributaire de la réalité et ne peut guère être réduite à un art de représentation.... La photographie expérimentale devient recherche pure, développe ses propres techniques et exigences graphiques et se hisse au niveau de l'art.^[35]

In spite of his remark which seemed to call for a rethinking of photographic practice rooted in realism, Labelle's own practice was largely based on realist representation. For example, his series depicting a group of bikers between 1967 and 1969, while denoting an interest in counter-cultural communities—of which the clandestine and non-conformist biker gangs were a part—is documentary in nature.

One of the most pressing concerns of artists of the time was the increased commercialization of mass culture, which flourished in urban centres during the 1960s as a result of the expansion of radio, cinema, the press, and television. A large portion of mass media available in Quebec was foreign, notably American. Concerns over the commercialization of culture and the deterioration of traditional customs and culture, inspired a documentary project by Michel Saint-Jean, entitled *l'Amérique québécoise*, to which he devoted a decade (1963-1973). He largely photographed city-scapes and urban dwellers, taking a critical look at the pervasive use of advertising and commodified urban lifestyles.

2.3 The 1970s

The 1970s were ushered in with two main events: the election in April of a new Liberal government headed by Robert Bourassa and the October Crisis, during which two public officials in Quebec were kidnapped (and one was killed) by the terrorist group *Front de libération du Québec* resulting in the invocation of the *War Measures Act* by the federal government and the suspension of civil liberties.^[36] Both symbolized the beginning of a new era.

The economic crisis, the rise of unemployment, and a series of prolonged public worker strikes during the first half of the 1970s put into question the neo-liberal ideology, which dominated the 1960s. This instability and social unrest led many voters to support the social-democratic ideology of the Parti Québécois (PQ) whose popularity had been rising since the end of the 1960s. Its increasing popularity was based in part on its expressed desire to construct a “projet de société,” which resonated as an ideal in the ears of many Francophone intellectuals, trade unions activists and business leaders. When the PQ finally took power in 1976, it was seen as a populist victory.

The nationalist question, which was being coloured with an increasing separatist attitude, polarized most of the political debates during the period in question. The promise by the PQ government to hold a referendum on separation was made for the first time in 1976. The notion of an independent Quebec was predicated on the existence of a Quebec nation whose unifying component was “the fact that we speak French.”^[37] Linguistic rights thus became a priority for the PQ, which affirmed them shortly after

taking office with the passage of the Charter on French language (or *Loi 101*), which made French the official language of work, education, and public life in Quebec.

As evidenced by the number of social issues being debated during this period (the place of women in society, environment, health care, immigration, and urbanization were among the most important), Quebec was becoming an increasingly plural society, ethnically and ideologically. Of all these concerns, the place of women in society captured the public imagination most widely.

While the first women's association in Quebec was created in 1966 (*La fédération des femmes du Québec*), it was really between 1969-1972 that feminism emerged in Quebec as a force charged with social change. The year 1975 was designated as *International Year of Women* and women's issues were placed at the forefront of the political agenda in Quebec (as well as in the rest of Canada). As a result, laws were adopted to recognize equality between the sexes and to help women take their rightful place in society. The exhibition ARTFEMME'75^[38] was organized as part of the *International Year of Women*. Organized by the YMCA of Montreal in collaboration with the Musée d'art contemporain, the Saidye Bronfman Centre and Powerhouse Gallery, an artist-run centre founded in 1973 dedicated to the presentation of women's contemporary art, the exhibition brought together works by 92 women artists. This large exhibition of women artists was accompanied by various presentations, artist talks and performances.^[39]

From 1975 onwards, feminist concerns would be a source of inspiration for numerous artists in Quebec. For example, Denise Boucher's play *Les fées ont soif* (1978) was censored by the Catholic Church prompting months of demonstrations and discussion in Montréal. Very broadly, the work criticized the traditional roles of women in society and provocatively examined the relationship between women and the Catholic Church in contemporary Québec. The work *La Chambre nuptiale*, an installation created by artist Francine Larivée and “Groupe de recherche et d'action sociale par l'art et les médias de communication,” also powerfully questioned gender identities and roles within spousal relationships.^[40] In photography, some of the most subversive and exploratory practices of the 1970s were by such women artists like Suzy Lake and Sorel Cohen, both of whom explored female imagery and questions of identity and body politics in their work, often incorporating performative strategies in their work.

During this period, there were broadly speaking two types of arts practice. One was politicized, activist and in tune with the counter-cultural and emancipatory movements that typified this period.^[41] Conversely, there was also a self-referential modernist art practice, largely concerned with its own existence and drawing its influence from theory and international art trends, mostly French and American.

The politicized arts practice attracted artists and intellectuals, mostly but not exclusively Francophones, who believed in the rallying potential of art. These artists advocated the democratization of arts practice and social change. They typically exhibited outside the established institutions and promoted the collectivization of the arts. They were instrumental in the creation of artist-run-centres like Véhicule (founded in 1972),

Centaure Galleries (later Optica, 1972), and Powerhouse Women's Centre (later La Centrale / Powerhouse, 1973). In Québec City, La Chambre Blanche was established in 1978.

The increased militancy of this group of artists transformed the relationship between artists and government. Although Francophone intellectuals and creators were among the strongest supporters of nationalism and separatism, many spoke against the effects of the government's neo-liberalist policies. Perhaps the clearest manifestation of the oppositional militancy of these artists, was the *Corridart* exhibition organized by the Arts and Culture Programme of the Olympic Organizing Committee in preparation of the Olympic Games of 1976. By transforming Sherbrooke Street, the main artery leading up to the Olympic Stadium, into an outdoors museum for the duration of the Games, *Corridart* aimed at highlighting the social importance of this main street.^[42] However, it only lasted a few days, dismantled in the middle of the night before the opening ceremonies on the order of Mayor Jean Drapeau, who deemed the exhibition too controversial. While the administration believed the exhibition would extoll the virtues and beauty of Montreal, it was in reality a stark criticism of municipal politics and the state of the urban environment.^[43]

These artists also voiced their concerns over air and water pollution and the effects of urbanization on quality of life. Some advocated new lifestyles such as "communal living" and a "return to the land." In Montreal, many artists belonged to heritage preservation groups (like *Save Montreal* founded in 1973) reacted in response to the decision of the municipality to destroy historically sensitive neighbourhoods to make

way for new modern industrial buildings (the demolition of the Van Horne Mansion in 1973 prompted many demonstrations).^[44] For example, photographers Clara Gutsche and David Miller crusaded to save the Montreal neighbourhood of Milton Park from destruction in 1973 and produced a documentary project entitled *“You don’t know what you’ve got till it’s gone: The destruction of Milton Park.”*^[45]

The second type of arts practice, which emerged in the mid-1970s, was essentially concerned with its own existence. Arts-centred, it was concerned with the formal potentials of the medium for artistic expression and was characterized by individualist practices. Quebec’s social make-up was changing, which made it increasingly problematic for artists to pursue extolling the virtues of a singular Quebecois reality. At an exhibition on current art at the Musée d’Art contemporain de Montréal in 1975, curator Normand Thériault proclaimed: “Quebecois art doesn’t exist, only Québécois artists exist.”^[46] He commented that since the beginning of the decade, “Québécois art suddenly stopped centering on the problem of its cultural identity and became more concerned with affirming its own existence.”^[47] By bringing together artists of diverse linguistic origins, Thériault aimed at sparking a debate on the definition and character of Quebecois contemporary art. As Véronique Rodriguez remarked, Thériault proposed, “le transfert d’une définition de l’art québécois reposant sur la langue, associée à une identité nationale francophone, à une définition déterminée par le territoire, où seul le lieu de résidence de l’artiste compte.”^[48] Thériault was in effect proposing a notion of contemporary art that was based on inclusiveness and cultural diversity.

In the field of photography, the shift from a “politicized” practice, rooted in the documentary field, into a practice that was less activist and centred more on exploring the expressive qualities of the medium, also characterized this decade. During the first half of the 1970s, Quebecois photography was often described as “analogous to the American photography of the 1930s.”^[49] It was in the work of Paul Strand and Walker Evans particularly that the new generation of Quebecois photographers found inspiration. The comparison was first made by Michel Campeau in an article he wrote for OVO magazine in 1975 about the project, *Disraeli: une expérience humaine en photographie*, in which he acknowledged the influence of the work of Walker Evans and the work of the Farm Security Administration on his work. He further remarked that “throughout the history of photography, the desire of many people has been felt to favour social documentary as the photographic form most liable to awaken in people a social conscience.”^[50]

The work of young, mostly Francophone photographers at the beginning of the 1970s (of which Campeau was a part) were concerned with critical reporting. While in 1967, Michel Saint-Jean had lamented the absence of critical reporting in the mass media, noting that, “le reportage photographique à caractère social demeure trop absent de notre journalisme,”^[51] in 1970 a critically and politically engaged photographic practice emerged. Serge Allaire described documentary photography of this period as “documentaire engagé,”^[52] meaning socially and politically involved and different from the documentary tradition championed by the NFB and OFQ. The term “engagement politique” was first used by Michel Campeau in a 1976 newspaper article to describe the

role of photography. He argued that “la photographie peut-être un puissant outil de prise de conscience et d’intervention sociale et politique.”^[53]

Serge Jongué contends that, “the new generation of Francophone photographers in the 1970s were “part of the general renewal of Francophone culture that accompanied Quebec's political effervescence in the 1960s and 1970s.”^[54] Although their work is often discussed as being bound up in the politics of identity, it was also influenced by the counter-culture movement in which identity politics was one of many components. As Allaire points out, the rise of nationalism and its ideals was one factor among a confluence of many others.^[55] He argues that, “l’insistance sur la dimension nationaliste, sans nuances, met en veilleuse d’autres aspects, non moins importants, qui déterminent alors les pratiques photographiques.”^[56] Gutsche and Miller, mentioned above, for example were interested in questions of urbanization and its corollary, heritage preservation, recording according to Pierre Dessureault, “the architectural wealth and cultural diversity of the city.”^[57] Other examples include Pierre Gaudard, who produced a documentary series on workers (1969-1971), Serge Luring, who produced *Parc Lafontaine* (1972-1974), and Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, who documented senior citizens (1972-1974). All these projects share a documentary aesthetic, but differ in subject matter, showing thus the variety of issues that interested these young photographers.

Following the general movement in art towards collectivization, a number of artists groups dedicated to the practice of photography were created such as Groupe d’action photographique (GAP)^[58], Groupe des photographes populaires (GPP)^[59] and

Photo-Cell.^[60] The better known was GAP, founded in 1971 by Michel Campeau, Roger Charbonneau and Serge Laurin, and later joined by Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Gabor Szilasi and Pierre Gaudard. The stated purpose of the group was to “mettre les gens du Québec en image, découvrir et documenter visuellement notre propre environnement quotidien. Pour ‘nous,’ l’exotisme n’est pas au but du monde, il est à la porte de notre demeure.”^[61] Its members viewed photography as a tool for social and political change. Their images find root within the Québécois movement that ran through most of the arts during the 1960s. In keeping with the democratization ideals of arts groups in the 1970s, members of GAP exhibited in public spaces (like in the Milton Park neighbourhood or in the village of Disraeli). However, they also exhibited in formal gallery spaces.^[62]

Members of GAP produced one group project (although not considered a GAP project), which is considered archetypal of Quebecois social documentary, *Disraeli: une expérience humaine en photographie*. For four months during the summer of 1972, four photographers (three of which were members of GAP: Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Michel Campeau and Roger Charbonneau) moved into a farmhouse and photographed the people they encountered and the environment in which they lived. These images, like *M. Gouin et son fils travaillant à la récolte* (1972, figure 1) and *Pierre Vaillancourt* (1972, figure 2) “give us a visual representation of the village, its people, their homes, their stores, their works and their belongings.”^[63] The project caused a stir because the people of Disraeli considered the images derogatory.^[64] The project and the controversy it sparked will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter; however, it is important to

note that the project sparked a debate among photographers on the role of photography in representing reality and raised questions about the pervasive use of the documentary in the field of Québécois photography.

GAP disbanded in 1976 at a time when friction appeared between “tenants du documentaire social à ceux d’une photographie dite formaliste ou expérimentale.”^[65] The divide between the two groups is probably best exemplified by the exhibition *Camerart* organized by Optica^[66] in 1975. According to William Ewing, the curator, the exhibition was,

an attempt to focus further attention on [the relationship between artist and photographer] by bringing into a gallery of photography a number of artists who incorporate photographic ingredients, yet do not consider themselves to be photographers.^[67]

The purpose of the exhibition was therefore to showcase the creative potential of the photographic medium beyond a documentary approach. Pierre Vallières in his essay for *Camerart* remarked that “the painter and printmaker who uses the photograph to renew both his art and his perception of the world, offers to the photographer an alternative route for the photograph until now too comfortably documentary.”^[68] He further noted that the artists featured in the exhibition^[69] were mostly Anglophone, which prompted stark criticism among Francophone photographers. The divide between documentary photography and other forms of photography was being cast as a linguistic one. Art critic Claude Gosselin explained that,

au Québec, bien peu d’artistes francophones ont été jusqu’ici touchés par les mouvements de l’art international.... L’artiste québécois réagit peu à tout cela, d’une part parce qu’il n’est pas au courant de ce qui se fait, et d’autre part parce qu’il cherche dans ses origines son identité, plutôt que

de se tourner vers l'avenir et posséder le présent pour faire son identité nouvelle.^[70]

In addition, critic Gilles Toupin of *La Presse* wrote,

Les valeurs véhiculées par les 24 artistes québécois de *Camérart* répondent dans la plupart des cas ... à des préoccupations qui s'inscrivent beaucoup dans le contexte international de l'art que dans celui d'une tentative de définition d'une autonomie de l'art québécois.^[71]

Both of these statements suggest that Francophone photographers tended to be seen as more politicized and activist, while Anglophone photographers tended to rub themselves against international trends in contemporary art, which meant that they experimented with the full range of possibilities offered by the medium.

Towards the end of the decade the divide between the two types of practice subsided, as the politicized arts practice gave way almost entirely to an “arts-centred” practice. Other factors that contributed to the shift in practice was the increasing professionalization and institutionalization of photography. While the student protests of 1968 outlined the need for improved arts education at all levels, it took another ten years before photography entered university.^[72] It was in 1978 that Concordia University established a photography department with Gabor Szilasi as its first director. While it favoured a documentary style in the first years of its existence, the program rapidly opened itself to the full spectrum of photographic practices. With the inception of a university programme, it meant that a new generation of photographers would be trained as professional artists and that a theoretical discourse on Quebecois photography could begin. Along with the networks of dissemination dedicated to photography (e.g. artist-run centres) and increased government funding for photography, the establishment of a

university program in photography confirmed the medium's claim to institutional legitimacy.^[73]

3. 1980s and 1990s: Beyond the documentary

During the first half of the 1980s, an economic crisis hit Quebec and as a result, the entire concept of the welfare state inherited from the Quiet Revolution was put into question. The failed referendum on national sovereignty in 1980 and the repatriation of the constitution –without Quebec's consent– put separatist aspirations on hold. The 1980s marked the end of a period of strong political and economic nationalism and state interventionism.

The 1980s were generally marked by a rise in individualist arts practices. Collective endeavours disappeared as artists, including photographers, sought a reasoned aesthetic practice. Photography became increasingly personal and introspective. “Genre and style were replaced by the shattering of disciplines or points of view,”^[74] commented Jean Tourangeau in one of the first major retrospectives of Québécois contemporary photography at the Saydie Bronfman Centre in 1983.

Another event that signalled the decline of social documentary in the field of Québécois photography was the demise of *OVO* Magazine. *OVO* was the first magazine entirely dedicated to photography. It was created in 1970 and focused on social documentary photography. While the magazine gained an international reputation, its focus on documentary photography to the exclusion of other practices sparked heated debates within the community of photographers. In 1981, a group of photographers

including Michel Campeau, Serge Clément, and Alain Pratte disputed the editorial policy of the magazine as they wanted it to “ensure a democratic point of view of Quebecois photography.”^[75] As the editorial board refused to change its editorial policy, the two groups argued over the future of the magazine. The Canada Council, which funded the periodical, was convinced by the rebellious groups to cease its support, and as a result The magazine folded in 1988. This event is symbolic of the confrontation between those who wanted to continue supporting documentary photography, and those who believed that contemporary photographic practice should be inclusive and able to transcend the medium's indexical abilities. Serge Jongué described the dispute as a “symbolic form of parricide, a settling of accounts, as artists desperately tried to free themselves from the political constraints of the 1970s.”^[76]

The characteristics of contemporary photography in Quebec are difficult to outline. Many contemporary works are distinguished by their capacity to eliminate “mimetism” in representation. In 1986, at a colloquium held at VU in Québec city and entitled *Pratiques actuelles en photographie*, photographer Richard Baillargeon remarked that “la photographie, ou plutôt son usage comme moyen de création, ne peut plus être exclusivement considéré comme un moyen simple de prélèvement fait à partir du réel/visible.”^[77] The themes of the post-documentary (evident for example in Donigan Cumming's work), the autobiographical narrative (as in the work of Raymonde April and Michel Campeau), the self (as in the work of Geneviève Cadieux) and post-colonial identity (as in the work of Ramona Ramlochand) are among the many diverse themes that are explored using the photographic medium. Installation, juxtaposition of images and

text, collage, manipulation, use of archival images and inter-disciplinarity, are among the many different strategies used by artists that work with the photographic image. As cited earlier Baillargeon also contends that “le domaine de la photographie d’expression tel qu’il se présente à nous actuellement est un champ marqué par la pluralité.”^[78]

Photography thus became a much more diverse field of practice. The seeming cohesion of practice that characterized much of the 1960s and 1970s has been replaced by plurality of practice; from being socially engaged, photography became theoretically engaged. As Denis Lessard remarked,

the fragmentary nature of photography has been extensively stressed -not without reason -making it the contemporary medium par excellence alongside installation, if we limit ourselves to the generally static objects, compared to film, video and performance art.^[79]

Institutionally, photography benefited from increased exposure by the establishment of Dazibao in 1980, a second artist-run centre in Montreal dedicated exclusively to photography. In 1985, Vox Populi was established, first as a contemporary arts centre and then later in 1987 as a centre devoted to the dissemination of photography. Outside Montréal, VU in Québec City (1980), Séquence in Jonquières (later in Chicoutimi, 1983), and Espace F in Rimouski (later in Matane, 1987) were also founded. In terms of the formal gallery system, the Musée d'art contemporain of Montréal increased its exhibition programme on photography. At the end of the decade, in 1989, was held the first *Mois de la Photo* in Montreal, a important biennial event organized by Vox Populi (the first edition focusing on the legacy of documentary photography). All

these events contributed to cementing photography's position in the field of art. As Michel Lessard put it, "la photographie passe de la brasserie au musée."^[80]

4. Conclusion

Photography in Quebec has undergone a remarkable change in the last three decades resulting in the disappearance of the divide between art and photography. While photographic practice in Quebec has historically been dominated by social documentary practice, the fragmentary nature of contemporary photography now marks the field. Photography, once regarded as the medium par excellence of descriptive accuracy and long considered to be an objective witness of reality, currently finds itself resisting that label. Contemporary photography observes increasingly sophisticated modes of relating to reality and addresses the full range of concerns that artists want to explore.

As Cheryl Simon noted, "realism is no longer currency. Here, now, reality shifts easily. ... There are no constants, nothing fixed. And truth is neither inside nor outside of what is representable. It firmly adheres to each of our instances of reality, finally retrieved from the zone of conventional practice."^[81] The next three chapters will illustrate that more precisely. At the same time the discussion of each specific artist will reveal in much more detail how Quebecois photography is engaged with problematizing the notion of identity formation. While this chapter has demonstrated the interlocking links between society and photographic practice, pointing to the fact that the category of identity (collective and individual) has permeated the field of photography throughout the

period, the next chapters will articulate that point much more precisely and show how this category is a shifting one.

Endnotes

[1] The exhibition was held at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from 10 December 1972 through 31 December 1972. The photographers featured in the exhibition were: Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Roger Charbonneau, Michel Campeau, Pierre Gaudard, Sege Laurin, and Gabor Szilasi.

[2] "Quebecois photography is born" (translation by author). Gilles Toupin. "Le Québec en image," *La Presse*, 12 December 1972, D-15.

[3] Gaëtan Gosselin, "Rêver les mirages / Dreaming of Mirages," *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec* (VU: Québec, 1992), 8.

[4] For good accounts of early photography in Canada, see: Ralph Greenhill and Andrew Birrell, *Canadian Photography, 1839-1920* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1979); Lilly Koltun, *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1939-1940* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1984); Michel Lessard, *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes* (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995); Michel Lessard, *The Livernois Photographers* (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1987); Stanley Triggs, *William Notman Studio: The Canadian Picture* (Montréal: McCord Museum of Canadian History, 1992).

[5] For more information about the National Film Board and Office du Film du Québec, see: Martha Langford, "Introduction," *Contemporary Canadian Photography from the Collection of the NFB* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1984), 7-16; Carol Payne, *A Canadian Document* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1999); Antoine Pelletier, "L'aventure de l'Office du film du Québec," *Cap-aux-Diamants*, 8 (1994): 46-52; Melissa Rombout, "Imaginary Canada: Photography and the Construction of National Identity," *Views: The Journal of Photography in New England* 12, (Spring 1991): 4-9; Renate Wickens-Feldman, "The National Film Board of Canada's Still Photography Division: The Griersonian Legacy," *History of Photography* 20 (Autumn 1996): 271-277;

[6] Pierre Dessureault, *Exchanging Views. Quebec 1939-1970* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1999); Michel Lessard, *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes* (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995).

[7] "It's time for change" (translation by author). Paul-André Linteau ed., *Histoire du Québec contemporain* (Montréal: Les éditions du Boréal, 1986), 648.

[8] Among the many reforms were the creation of a provincial hospitalization scheme (1961), Department of Education (1964), Société Générale de Financement- SGF (1962), Quebec Pension Plan (1965), Caisse de Dépôt et de Placement (1965), and a provincial family allowance plan (implemented in 1967). For more information: Michael Behiels, *Quebec Since 1945: Selected Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd. 1987); Yves Bélanger et al. *La révolution tranquille: 40 ans plus tard. Un bilan* (Montréal : VLB éditeur, 2000); Léon Dion, *La révolution déroutée : 1960-1976* (Montréal: Boréal, 1998); Paul-André Linteau ed., *Histoire du Québec contemporain* (Montréal: Les éditions du Boréal, 1986).

[9] Linteau ed., 713. An important event during this decade was *Expo 67*, which included a cultural component.

[10] The *Refus Global* manifesto was signed by fourteen artists led by Paul-Émile Borduas. With its

anticlerical and denunciatory bent, it was considered an incendiary document at the time. For more on the *Refus Global*, see: André Bourassa and Gilles Lapointe. *Refus global et ses environs* (Montréal: l'Hexagone, 1988); Patricia Smart, *Les femmes du Refus global* (Montréal: Boréal, 1998).

[11] André Bourassa, and Gilles Lapointe, *Refus global et ses environs*, 23.

[12] Anne MacDermott, "Paradox in Law Confronts Woman Minister," *Globe and Mail*, 21 February, 1963. The sentence read: "Many of its laws have been outdated by the not-so quiet revolution that is now sweeping the province," and it appeared in an article about the first woman Cabinet minister in Quebec.

[13] Linteau ed., 393.

[14] Ibid., 393-403.

[15] Ibid., 579-588.

[16] Jacques Pelletier, "L'avant-garde culturelle et littéraires des années 70 au Québec," *Les Cahiers du département d'études littéraires de L'Université de Montréal* 5 (1986): 5-6.

[17] Linteau ed., "Part 3: Sous le signe de la Révolution tranquille": 393-720.

[18] Ibid.

[19] For a very good and comprehensive account of artist groups and collectives in the 1960s: Yves Robillard ed., *Quebec Underground: 10 ans d'art marginal au Québec 1962-1972* (Montréal: Mediart, 1973).

[20] "Underground art will be an art of the people" (translation by author). Yves Robillard ed., *Quebec Underground: 10 ans d'art marginal au Québec 1962-1972* (Montreal: Mediart, 1973), n.p.

[21] For more on the collectivization of arts practice see: Yves Robillard ed., *Quebec Underground: 10 ans d'art marginal au Québec 1962-1972* (Montréal: Mediart, 1973). Also see: Serge Allaire, "Montréal 1970-1980: la ville revendiquée," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 171-187.

[22] Allaire, 171-187.

[23] "Rapport de l'Opération Déclat" in *Quebec Underground, 1962-1972* (Montréal: Médiart, 1973), Volume 1: 361-374. No author.

[24] William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 14.

[25] Ibid., 20.

[26] Ibid., 26.

[27] Martha Rosler, "In, Around and Afterthoughts (on Documentary Photography)," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*, ed. Richard Bolton (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 303-389;

Allan Sekula, "Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes of the Politics of Representation)," in *Photography: Current Perspectives*, ed. J. Leibling (Rochester: The Massachusetts Review, 1978), 231-255; Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 1991); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988).

[28] Sekula, 234.

[29] Solomon-Godeau, 182.

[30] Tagg, 8.

[31] Pierre Dessureault, *Exchanging Views. Quebec 1939-1970* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1999), 31.

[32] Antoine Pelletier, "L'aventure de l'Office du film du Québec," *Cap-aux-Diamants*, 8 (1994): 46.

[33] Pelletier, 46.

[34] These events, among many others, featured performances, readings, and other type of arts-centred activities. They brought together artists and social activists as well to discuss the role of the arts and artists in society. Yves Robillard in an article for *La Presse* explained that these "happenings" were organized in order to democratize art practice and appreciation. Yves Robillard, "Le Happening: un événement d'importance," *La Presse* 22 October 1966, n.p. Reproduced in *Québec Underground, 1962-1972* (Montréal: Médiart, 1973), Volume 1, 143.

[35] "Photography is no longer dependent on reality and cannot be reduced to simply a representational art form.... Experimental photography is about investigation, and the developments of its own techniques and representational choices, as it pulls itself up to the status of art" (translation by author). La direction des Trente 'A,' Peter Gnass, Serge Lemoyne, Claude Paradis, *La Semaine des Trente A* (Montréal : Galerie Soixante, 1965). Reproduced in *Québec Underground, 1962-1972* (Montréal: Médiart, 1973), Volume 1, 135.

[36] Linteau, 393.

[37] René Lévesque, *Option Québec* (Montréal: les Éditions de l'Homme, 1989), 19.

[38] Fernande Saint-Martin, Gail Klauzzana et al. *ARTFEMME'75. Une exposition d'oeuvres de femmes artistes / ARTFEMME'75. An Exhibition of Women's Art* (Montréal: Centre Saidye Bronfman, Musée d'art contemporain, Galerie Powerhouse and YMCA, 1975).

[39] Rose-Marie Arbour, "Les expositions collectives de femmes artistes et leurs catalogues: 1965-1990," in *Exposer l'art contemporain du Québec*, edited by Francine Couture (Montréal: Centre de diffusion 3D, 2003).

[40] Rose-Marie Arbour, "Dissidence et différence : Aspects de l'art des femmes," in *Déclics : Art et société. Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970*, edited by Francine Couture (Québec and Montréal: Musée de la Civilisation and MACM, 1999): 122-133.

[41] For more on the politicization of arts practice in the 1970s: Musée du Québec, *Art - Société 1875-1980*, (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1981).

[42] Francine Couture "Expositions collectives et montréalaises de l'art contemporain," in *Exposer l'art contemporain du Québec*, ed. Francine Couture (Montréal: Centre de diffusion 3D, 2003), 69.

[43] Ibid. For additional information on *Corridart*, also see: Charlotte deKoninck and Pierre Landry (eds.), *Déclics: art et société. Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970* (Québec: Musée de la Civilisation et Montréal: MACM, 1999).

[44] Serge Allaire, "La ville revendiquée," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 175.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, *Québec 75: Manifesto of an Exhibition* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1975), 8. The exhibition featured works by 18 artists: Pierre Ayot, Edmund Alleyn, Jean-Serge Champagne, Melvin Charney, Yvon Czic, Christian Knudsen, Suzy Lake, Real Lauzon, Gilles Mihalcean, Claude Mongrain, Gunter Nolte, Leopold Plotek, Roland Poulin, Garfield Smith, Serge Toussignant, William Vazan, Robert Walker, Irene Whittome.

[47] Ibid., 7.

[48] Véronique Rodriguez, "Québec 75 / Arts, Cinéma, Vidéo: pour une nouvelle vision de l'art contemporain au Québec," in *Exposer l'art contemporain du Québec*, ed. Francine Couture (Montréal: Centre de diffusion 3D, 2003), 17.

[49] Michel Lessard, "Introduction," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 22. Also see: Pierre Dessureault, *Exchanging Views. Quebec 1939-1970* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1999).

[50] Michel Campeau, "Walker Evans and Disraeli," in *OVO 21* (1975): 8.

[51] "Social reporting is too often absent from photojournalism" (translation by author). Quoted in Jean Lauzon, "La ville internationale," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 108.

[52] Serge Allaire, *Une tradition documentaire au Québec: quelle tradition? Quel documentaire?* (Montréal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 1993), 3.

[53] "Photography can be a powerful social and political tool" (translation by author). Campeau, Michel, Maryse Pellerin and Michel Sénécal, "Pour une photographie progressiste au Québec," *Le Jour*, 6 March 1976, 31.

[54] Serge Jongué, "The New Photographic Order," in *Thirteen Essays on Photography* (Ottawa: CMCP, 1990), 49.

[55] Serge Allaire, *Une tradition documentaire au Québec: quelle tradition? Quel documentaire?*

(Montréal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 1993), 6.

[56] "To insist on nationalism obscures other aspects, that are just as important in influencing photographic practice" (translation by author). Ibid., 7-8.

[57] Pierre Dessureault, *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1990), 54.

[58] Groupe d'action photographique comprise: Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Michel Campeau, Roger Charbonneau, Pierre Gaudard, Serge Laurin, and Gabor Szilasi.

[59] Groupe des photographes populaires comprise: Alain Chagnon, André Sénécal, Jean Fiorito, Marc Brosseau.

[60] Photo-Cell was comprised of Clara Gutsche and David Miller.

[61] "Photograph the people of Quebec; to discover and document our own environment. For us the exotic is not at the other end of the world it is at our doorstep" (translation by author). Cited in Gilles Toupin "Groupe d'action photographique," *La Presse*, 23 December 1972, D-15.

[62] Interestingly, the first exhibition of photographs by GAP was organized in 1972 by the Photo Gallery of the National Film Board's Still Photography in Ottawa. Other exhibitions include: *L'imagerie Populaire de Disraeli* and *The Destruction of Milton Park* by the Centaur galleries of Photography in 1973. As well, members of GAP exhibited at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in 1972.

[63] Galeries du Centaur, *Disraeli: une expérience en photographie* (Montréal: Galeries du Centaur, 1974), VII.

[64] The controversy surfaced when the pictures were published in *Perspectives* in 1974, an illustrated Quebec weekly inserted in the weekend edition of many Quebec newspapers. "Disraeli en images," *Perspectives* 16 (9 February 1974), 1-4, 7-8.

[65] Serge Allaire, "Montréal 1970-1980: la ville revendiquée," in Michel Lessard ed. *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 173.

[66] *Optica* is one of the first artist-run centres in Quebec. Created in 1970 as *Galeries de photographies du Centaur*, it was renamed *Optica* in 1972. The centre, whose initial activities were devoted exclusively to photography, had its first home in the Old-Montreal building occupied by the Centaur Theatre. Soon after its opening, *Optica* expanded the range of its activities to include contemporary painting, sculpture, video, performance and installation. For more on the history of the Centre see: *Optica*, "Brief History," *Optica*, <http://www.optica.ca/mandeng.html> (accessed September 2003).

[67] William Ewing, "A Point of View," *Camerart* (Montréal: Optica, 1975), 2.

[68] Pierre Vallières, "L'absurde fonctionnel" in *Camerart*, 56.

[69] The exhibition featured twenty-four artists: Jan Andriesse, Allan Bealy, Pierre Boogaerts, Eva Brandl, Tom Dean, Jean-Marie Delavalle, François Dery, Jennifer Dickson, Gloria Deitcher, Charles Gagnon, Michael Haslam, Christian Knudsen, Stephen Lack, Michel Leclair, Suzy Lake, Kelly Morgan, Nancy

Nicol, Jean Noel, Gunter Nolte, Françoise Sullivan, Serge Toussignant, Robert Walker, Irene Wittome, William Vazan.

[70] "In Quebec, very few Francophone artists have been concerned with the context of international art. ... The Quebecois artist does not react much to these trends because he seeks out his identity in an original source, instead of looking to the future to renew his sense of identity." (translation by author). Claude Gosselin, "L'exposition Camérart," *Le Devoir*, 11 January 1974, 20.

[71] "The ideas presented by the twenty-four artists of Camerart broadly address preoccupations that are in line with art in an international context. These artists are not concerned with defining a Quebecois practice that is self-contained and autonomous from what is done elsewhere" (translation by author). Gilles Toupin, "L'exposition Camérart," *La Presse* 21 December 1974, C-14.

[72] While photography had been taught at the college level (both at Loyola College and the Cegep du Vieux Montréal) since the end of the 1960s, those programs aimed at providing professional training in photography rather than a fine arts education. Serge Allaire, "La ville revendiquée, 1970-1980," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 179.

[73] Lise Gagnon, "La Ville plurielle, 1980-1990," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 252.

[74] Jean Tourangeau, "Introduction," in *Photographie actuelle au Québec / Quebec Photography Invitational* (Montréal: Saidye Bronfman Centre, 1983), VI.

[75] Lise Gagnon, "Montréal 1980-1990: la ville plurielle," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 253. Translation by author.

[76] Jongué, "The New Photographic Order," 43.

[77] Richard Baillargeon, "Pluralité du faire, pluralité du dire: quelques jonctions, in *Pratiques actuelles en photographie: actes de la table ronde du 90 mars 1986*. (Québec: VU Centre d'animation et de diffusion de la photographie, 1986), 13.

[78] "The field of photography is marked by plurality." (translation by author). Ibid., 13.

[79] Denis Lessard, "Wishes for Travelling. Twenty Fares for France," in *La Traversée des Mirages: la Photographie du Québec* (Troyes, France and Québec, Canada: Transfrontières and VU, 1992), 21.

[80] Michel Lessard, "Introduction," in *Montréal au XXe siècle: regards de photographes*, ed. Michel Lessard (Montréal: les éditions de l'homme, 1995), 22.

[81] Cheryl Simon, "The Zone of Conventional Practice" in *The Zone of Conventional Practice and Other Real Stories*, ed. Cheryl Simon (Montréal: Optica, 1989), 14.

CHAPTER 2

Michel Campeau: Narratives of the collective and the Self

Désormais, je ne me contente plus d'être le témoin d'une subjectivité dirigée sur la réalité donnée à voir, mais d'être l'acteur principal sondant la complexité de mes sensations, commémorant et célébrant mon existence, défiant la mort.^[1]
Michel Campeau.

One is a self only among other selves.^[2]
Charles Taylor.

1. Introduction

Born in 1948, Michel Campeau emerged in the 1970s as a photographer concerned with the representation of “the people of Quebec.”^[3] He wrote in 1972 that, “photography for me is the extension of my musings on mankind and the experience of life. It allows me to meet the people in their everyday life.”^[4] His first projects, *My neighbourhood, Montreal* (1971-1972), *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie* (1972), and *Sur les aveugles* (1973-1975), attest to his interest in using photography as a tool of social investigation. The images in those series are characteristic of social documentary photography which, as elaborated in the preceding chapter, was a prominent approach among young Francophone photographers working in Quebec in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Campeau distanced himself from social documentary with the project *Week-end au Paradis terrestre* (1972-1982) which although rooted in realist representation offered a subjective and personal perspective on the weekend social rituals of Montrealers. About

these photographs, Campeau has noted that, “elles ont été produites en réaction à la conception du documentaire social, qui voit la photographie uniquement comme un moyen de transformer le monde extérieur.... Mes photographies sont un commentaire fondé sur ma propre subjectivité.”^[5] Since that time, Campeau has embarked on a long journey of introspection in works such as, *Les tremblements du coeur* (1988), *Éclipses et Labyrinthes* (1988-1992), “... *Si je mens, j’irai en enfer*” (1994-1996) and most recently *Arborescences* (2000) and *Humus* (2001). This journey continues today.

This chapter examines Campeau’s photographic transformation through the discussion of three bodies of work: *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie*, *Éclipses et Labyrinthes*, and *Humus*. While the trajectory of Campeau’s practice in many ways parallels the broader changes that have operated in the field of photography in Quebec, the various pieces of his work are threaded together by an interest in exploring narrative construction. What has changed over his career though is the way he has woven narrative into his work.

A narrative work can be conceptualized as any form of telling, where a telling involves a narrator, an audience, and a text. Literary theory has been the most concerned with narrative as story, but as Roland Barthes has argued, narrative is “able to be carried by articulated language, spoken or written, fixed or moving images, gestures, and the ordered mixture of all these substances.”^[6] Therefore, photographs also can have a narrative structure.

Theorist Mieke Bal provides us with a definition of narrative from her seminal study *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*,

A narrative text is a text in which an agent relates ('tells') a story in a particular medium, such as language, imagery, sound, buildings, or a combination thereof. A story is a *fabula* that is presented in a certain manner. A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. An *event* is the transition from one state to another state. *Actors* are *agents* that perform actions.... To *act* is defined here as to cause or to experience an event.^[7]

Bal separates what is being told (the telling) and how it is being told, both of which comprise and influence the narrative work. Content, medium and reception are thus all elements that structure how the work will be interpreted by the reader (or interpreter). Narrative is therefore more than mere description; it is the creation, expression and unfolding of “events.”

For Bal, “the narrator is the most central concept in the analysis of narrative texts. The identity of the narrator, the degree to which and the manner in which that identity is indicated in the text, and the choices that are implied lend the text its specific character.”^[8] We might ask, does the story have to include a visible narrative agent, or can the telling be independent of a physical body? In general, a point can be made that the manifestation of a physical narrator is entirely dependent on the audience's interpretation of that presence. Put more simply, “if [an audience] feels it is being told something, it presumes a teller.”^[9] Moreover, some of the power of narrative can come from the seeming absence of a “teller” in that the story told is naturalized by that absence.

The notion of subjectivity is central to considerations of content and reception. This is best explained by considering the concept of “focalization” in Bal’s analysis of narrative. For Bal there is a distinction between who speaks (who produces the words) and who sees (who orients the story) – although in some narrative works they can be one

and the same. An analysis of focalization answers the question, “Who sees?” It is an important element of narrative analysis because it considers whose point of view orients the story. “Focalization is the relation between the ‘vision,’ the agent that sees, and that which is seen.”^[10] Bal’s analysis of narrative is relational; it brings together actors, those who orient the story, and the narrator. Moreover this relationship is directed by the author and ultimately interpreted by the reader, who implicitly for Bal has agency in making sense of the narrative work. According to Bal, “it is the reader who makes the meaning.”^[11] Interpretation is thus a productive, not a passive act.

In the documentary project *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie*, the narrative is a complex and layered one. In its simplest formulation, it is a narrative of the small rural community of Disraëli, its people and their occupations. The narrative is realized through the collection of images augmented with text in the form of an introduction, which introduces the people and places depicted in the images, but also presents the corpus of images as akin to a “family album.”^[12] However unlike a family album, the narrators (the four photographers: Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, Roger Charbonneau, Cedric Pearson, and Campeau) are visibly absent from the photographs.

Disraëli is also a narrative of social change in Quebec, and it is through an examination of the changing social landscape in Quebec that this narrative is revealed. In discussing Campeau’s involvement in the *Disraëli* project, I will examine aspects of the Quebecois social and political contexts within which the images were produced and received. The discussion will be augmented with an exploration into the idea of

community and the search for inter-relatedness, as articulated by Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperative Community*,^[13] to argue that the pictures are depictions of a mythical and fantasized Quebecois community.

While *Disraëli: une expérience humaine en photographie* is, in its broadest sense, a depiction of the social landscape of Quebec that is grounded in presumptions of objectivity and truth in representation, *Éclipses et Labyrinthes* and Campeau's most recent work *Humus*, are explorations of Campeau's interior landscape, where truth is immaterial and subjectivity prevails. Although as noted earlier the images in these later series are realist in character, Campeau no longer emphasizes the medium's indexical quality. Rather, they function as fragments of his intimate universe, one that is nourished by emotion and subjectivity. Through an examination of the theories of self as articulated by Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self* and James Olney in *Memory and Narrative*, the second part of this chapter will show that Campeau's recent work functions as an autobiographical narrative.

2. Narrative of the Collective

Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie

Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie (hereafter termed *Disraëli*) is an important body of work in the history of Quebecois photography and is generally regarded as emblematic of the Quebecois social documentary style.^[14] In 1972, at the invitation of Cedric Pearson, a young photographer from Ottawa, Michel Campeau, Claire Beaugrand-Champagne and Roger Charbonneau spent a summer in Disraëli, a small village in the Eastern Townships in southern Quebec. Under the name *L'Imagerie*

populaire de Disraëli, the photographers moved into a farmhouse along with two researchers, Maryse Pellerin and Ginette Laurin, and over the course of four months photographed the people of Disraëli “in their everyday life.”^[15] According to Doreen Lindsay Szilasi, the resulting images including Michel Campeau’s *M. Gouin et son fils travaillant à la récolte du blé* (1972, figure 1) and *Pierre Vaillancourt* (1972, figure 2), “give us a visual representation of the village, its people, their homes, their stores, their works and their belongings.”^[16] They were edited into an album of 120 black and white photographs entitled *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie*.^[17]

At the time, Campeau, Charbonneau and Beaugrand-Champagne were members of Groupe d’action photographique (GAP), formed a year earlier in 1971 by the first two and Serge Laurin. Claire Beaugrand-Champagne joined the group shortly thereafter along with Gabor Szilasi and Pierre Gaudard. The mandate of the group, created in the wake of an increasing collectivization of arts practice in Quebec, was simply “to photograph the people of Quebec.”^[18] Its members, socially committed and activist, viewed photography as a tool capable of prompting social and political change.^[19] The *Disraëli* project (although not a GAP project) fit well within their populist and activist agenda.

As discussed in Chapter 1, *Disraëli* was undertaken at a fateful time in Quebec’s social and political history. Reflecting the contemporary counter-culture movement and Marxist-Leninist ideologies which underpinned it, this young generation of Québécois artists was attempting to make art and culture a democratic and proletarian ideal. Young Francophone photographers like Campeau and his colleagues at GAP endorsed that ideal

and found in the photographic medium, and the social documentary genre in particular, a useful means to express it.

Photography offered the possibility for them to challenge what they perceived to be the elitism of high art, which during the late 1960s and early 1970s in Quebec had been largely unconcerned with social and political activism. As Walter Benjamin posited in 1936, the reproducibility of the photograph made it a potentially more democratic medium because it undermined the “aura” of the singular handcrafted art object (like painting) and its value in the marketplace.^[20] The reproducibility of photographs also meant that they could be made widely accessible. Public accessibility was among the principal goals of GAP whose members, Campeau among them, usually chose to exhibit in public spaces –including taverns, community centres and pool halls as well as the communities where the images were made– outside the formal confines of galleries and museums. One of the stated purposes of the *Disraëli* project, as described by Campeau, was “to make photography more readily accessible to the people of Disraëli.”^[21] As a result, the project was first exhibited in the village itself with a print given to everyone who was photographed.^[22] *Disraëli* was later presented in Montreal at the artist-run centre Galerie de photographies du Centaur and at the Musée d’art contemporain. It was also featured in a controversial article in *Perspectives*, a weekend supplement to Quebec’s major daily newspapers which will be discussed below. ^[23]

As an example of social documentary, *Disraëli*, in the words of William Stott aspires to be “a radically democratic genre.”^[24] It is democratic because most often the subject is an “ordinary person” and “when it is not, the subject is looked from the

common man's point of view."^[25] The *Disraëli* project has often been compared with photography produced in the 1930s United States under the auspices of the *Farm Security Administration*, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Campeau acknowledged the FSA as a source for the *Disraëli* project in an article he wrote for *OVO Magazine* in 1974. He noted that, "seeing side by side, pictures made in different times and places, depicting rural areas in Alabama, USA, and Disraëli, Quebec, the reader can hardly fail to notice certain analogies."^[26] Campeau added, "they only exist in the wishes of the authors to use social documentary as a means of describing the living conditions of the agricultural working class."^[27] Thus, while there may be similarities in approach and subject matter between the two projects, the social and political contexts in which the images were produced and received were very different. Comparisons between the two projects should therefore be drawn cautiously. What is important to keep in mind is that, in terms of the *Disraëli* project, the social documentary approach was well suited to expressing a range of social and political issues that were specific to Quebec in the early 1970s, as well as in Maryse Pellerin's words, to "démystifier la photographie et exprimer une réalité négligée, celle du quotidien, dans le but de valoriser cette réalité."^[28]

2.1 Contexts

It is against the backdrop of Marxist-influenced counter-culture, activism in the arts, the Québécois movement, rural depopulation and a "return to the country" movement that the *Disraëli* corpus of images should be examined. As outlined in the first chapter, the 1960s were marked by the concept of "Québécoisité," a nationalist attitude

according to which emancipation could be achieved through the valorization of Quebecois culture.

“Québécoisité” manifested itself through the evocation of the virtues of rural traditions and landscapes. However, the valorization of what some considered a “traditional” way of life, can be also read as a nostalgic commentary on modern Quebec society. The images comprising *Disraëli* conjure a picture of a community where the traditions of the past are still alive and seemingly untouched by either industrialization or the modernization policies of the Quiet Revolution. For example, Claire Beaugrand-Champagne’s image “*Henri Gosselin, rang des Breeches*” (1972, figure 3), shows an agricultural worker driving down an unpaved road in his horse-pulled cart. What the image does not indicate is that Henri Gosselin, sometimes preferred using his old cart instead of his modern-day tractor because the latter “s’enfoncent quand le terrain est mouillé.”^[29] While the reason for using the cart was therefore more pragmatic than nostalgic, the picture is nonetheless devoid of any sign of modernity.

Campeau remarked that *Disraëli* was an attempt “to re-valorize the daily life of the silent majority, crushed under all types of advertizing propaganda.”^[30] The association of the “ordinary” individual with the rural worker was not a new configuration. This was first registered in nineteenth century French Realist painting, which exalted the virtues of the peasant worker and associated the countryside with healthfulness in order to counterpoint the ills and apparent alienation of modern urban society.^[31] What counted was not the accuracy of such rural visions, but rather their mythic significance for modern society.

In the case of *Disraëli*, there was an added component. Like many other young and politicized artists of his generation, Campeau was concerned about the dehumanizing effects of advertising and consumer culture on Québécois contemporary life. Both were seen as linked to the neo-liberal policies stemming from the Quiet Revolution.

Campeau's specific concern was directly related to the pervasive use of photography in service the of consumerism, which he lamented. In an newspaper article about photography, he wrote,

la photographie dans notre société de consommation a largement contribué au développement massif des techniques de vente. Elle est un moyen privilégiée de manipulation sociale.... À l'opposé du rôle qu'elle joue en publicité, la photographie peut être un puissant outil de prise de conscience sociale.^[32]

Campeau therefore actively promoted photography as a tool for raising social awareness in opposition to its prominent role in spectacularized consumer culture. *Disraëli* can thus be understood as an exercise in demonstrating photography's social uses.

Many of the images of *Disraëli* are landscapes works. W.J.T. Mitchell argues persuasively that landscape is not "an object to be seen or a text to be read but ... a process by which social and subjective identities are formed."^[33] Susan Gibson Garvey in *Rephotographing the Land* further contends that, "the land is not an abstract physical location but a place, charged with personal significance, shaping the images we have of ourselves."^[34] In *Disraëli*, rosy images of peaceful rural life and sympathetic rural workers (as in Cedric Pearson's *Foins chez les Langueux*, 1972, figure 4) not only express the virtues of rural life but also embody Campeau's attitudes toward modern

society. It is worth noting that *Disraëli* was undertaken at a time when the “return to the country movement” in Quebec was in full swing. Many issues of the popular weekly magazine *Perspectives*, for example extolled the virtues of country living and featured articles about families moving back to the country.^[35] Rural subjects and rural environments, depicted as calm, idyllic and untouched by modernization, like those of *Disraëli*, signalled an escape from the city, the seedbed of modernity and all its guises.^[36]

2.2 The search for community

A longing for “togetherness” and the revival of past traditions imbue images like Michel Campeau’s *M. Gouin et son fils travaillant à la récolte du blé* and Roger Charbonneau’s *Famille Vaillancourt*, both from *Disraëli*. This longing reflects a nostalgic belief that people once lived in a harmonious and intimate community that has subsequently been eroded by modernity. The belief that we have lost something today which was present in the past is a recognizable paradigm within our everyday life. As Serge Jongué remarked, *Disraëli* was a nostalgic attempt at depicting “a rural Quebec that people unconsciously realized was lost forever.”^[37]

The search for community, a sense of inter-relatedness and belonging, has endured as a key theme of social and political life in Quebec. The idea of community, according to Jean-Luc Nancy, emerged out of the Christian ritual of communion and, according to him, expresses a sense of something that has now been lost. Nancy calls this the “lost community.”^[38] He further contends that quests for community are always nostalgic attempts to return to some fantasized moment of union and unity. Moreover

according to Nancy, the longing for an original community is not a reference to a real period in our history, but rather an imaginary picture of the past.

The lost or broken community can be exemplified in all kinds of ways ..., always it is a matter of a lost age in which community was woven of tight,, harmonious and infrangible bonds and in which above all it played back to itself, through its institutions, its rituals, and its symbols, the representation, indeed the living offering, of its own immanent unity, intimacy, and autonomy.^[39]

Although this imaginary picture of the past can be “innocent,” Nancy urges caution of the retrospective consciousness of the lost community and its identity. As he argues further,

whether this consciousness conceives of itself as effectively retrospective or whether, disregarding the realities of the past, it constructs images of this past for the sake of an ideal or prospective vision. We should be suspicious of this consciousness first of all because it seems to have accompanied the Western world from its very beginnings: at every moment in history, the Occident has rendered itself to the nostalgia for a more archaic community that has disappeared, and to deploring a loss of familiarity, fraternity and conviviality.^[40]

The images of *Disraëli* produce a picture of a mythical “natural” Quebecois community. It is a harmonious one of common norms and values shared by people with the same identity and background. Politically this inclination is not far removed from the logic of nationalism. The solution proposed, implicit in the images of *Disraëli*, is to fight against social disintegration by returning to the period when traditional customs and rituals supposedly existed and where communal ties still bound.

2.3 The Family Album of Disraëli and the Controversy

The four photographers engaged in the *Disraëli* project adopted a similar style and approach which, according to Serge Jongué, was “based on immediacy of contact with

the subject through a sympathetic confrontation.”^[41] The introduction to the album, entitled “Family Album of a Village” and written by Doreen Lindsay Szilasi, states that the photographers participated in the daily lives of their subjects and took part in the social rituals of Disraëli. The photographers saw themselves as “a part of the place they had set out to document.”^[42]

Moreover, Szilasi’s introduction describes the corpus of images as a family album,

[The images] are continuation of the documentary undertaken by the people of the town, when they fixed images of their own families in snapshots in family albums, and talked about them on special occasions. These people are making their own pictures. They stand before the photographer and his camera, consciously recording themselves. In fact the people of Disraëli considered the project a kind of family album of the village.^[43]

Like the images in most family albums, many of the photographs of *Disraëli* are of people, either portrayed as families or individually. As in *Famille Vaillancourt*, the subjects are generally smiling and seemingly at ease in front of the camera. The relaxed poses of the subjects suggest that the relationship between themselves and the photographers was based on friendship and trust.

Usually, the narrator of a family album is a member of the family and has a personal stake in representing the family unit in a positive light. However in the case of *Disraëli*, the narrators are absent from the album, and although they described themselves as integral members of the community, they were in effect foreigners. The people of *Disraëli* therefore did not have complete control over their representation.

A family album is generally constructed of photographs of happy memories, presenting people at their best and in situations which highlight the most positive aspects of their condition.^[44] However, as Marianne Hirsch remarks, “[family] photographs locate themselves precisely in the space of contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life.... Photographs can more easily show us what we wish our family to be, and therefore what, most frequently, it is not.”^[45] For the photographers, the expression of family-like cohesion, manifest in rural life, perfectly symbolized the type of community they longed for. The concept of family as Julia Hirsch notes, promotes “the triumph of community over self, of history over moment, of the ‘haven in a heartless world’.”^[46] Therefore by extension, these images can be interpreted as a criticism of modern urban life where such cohesion supposedly no longer existed. Moreover, as Martha Langford has pointed out, “a family album is not by a family, but about it and its reason for continuance.”^[47] In that context, the *Disraëli* album can be interpreted as an appeal on the part of the photographers for the preservation of the traditions and lifestyle practices depicted in their images.

The inhabitants of *Disraëli* interpreted the images quite differently. In them, they saw the representation of a community stuck in the past, struggling to enter the modern era championed by the Quiet Revolution. They considered the images derogatory and “condemned what they felt was an abuse of trust that presented [them] as caricatures.”^[48] The mythical and idealized country existence captured by the photographers was largely incompatible with the subjects’ perception of their own lives.

In response to the public outcry, Pierre Vallières of *Le Devoir* wrote that,

The social duty of the artist is to bring out the truth in all things - a truth that is often hidden by a host of political, cultural and promotional techniques aimed at maintaining the status quo. The artist must always choose the truth, even at the risk of being condemned for his choice.^[49]

Photographs are of course more than mere factual representation. As Victor Burgin has persuasively argued, “a fact of primary social importance is that the photograph is a place of work, a structured and structuring space within which the reader deploys, and is deployed by, what codes he or she is familiar with in order to make sense.”^[50] *Disraëli* and the stir it subsequently prompted is evidence of, in Allan Sekula’s words, “the way in which photography constructs an imaginary world and passes it off as reality.”^[51]

3. Narratives of the Self

Shortly after *Disraëli*, Campeau produced a series entitled *Sur les aveugles* (1973-1975) which documented the blind in Montreal. Although rooted in a documentary approach, the series goes beyond the conventions of that mode by addressing the paradox involved in the absence of the look. The series therefore can be read as a commentary on the gaze, the visual and objective function of the camera. Pierre Dessureault aptly remarked that, “the negation of the gaze sounded the death knell to Campeau’s previous conception of photography as a tool of description and identification, the mirror of the person and his situation within the social universe.”^[52] Interestingly, Campeau commented in an interview in 1997 that “il s’agit d’un travail inachevé ... qui n’a vraiment véritablement été montré à personne.”^[53]

Campeau’s project, *Week-end au Paradis terrestre* (1972-1982), further signalled a shift in his work. It marked the end of his cycle of documentary works and the

beginning of a long period of introspection, which he is still engaged in today. *Week-end au Paradis terrestre* chronicled over a ten year period the social, cultural and sports events and rituals of various communities in Montreal. Although embedded in a realist approach, the images are no longer uncritical and do not assume objectivity. Rather as Campeau noted, “they are a reflection of the photographer. They are also the mirror of the invisible, of what remains at the level of the unconscious. They are a point of view, a vision of the world, a way of seeing; they crystallize the unique encounter between internal and external space.”^[54] Campeau termed this work, “social commentary,” and further commented that, “[les photographies] ont été produites en réaction à la conception du documentaire social, qui voit la photographie uniquement comme un moyen de transformer le monde extérieur.”^[55] From that point onward, Campeau would use photography as a means for self-expression.

3.1 Eclipses et Labyrinthes

After *Week-end au Paradis terrestre*, Campeau distanced himself even further from the social documentary genre and the direct depiction of the world around him.^[56] He turned the camera onto himself and became the central focus of his own work. In 1988, he produced *Les tremblements du coeur*, the first in his cycle of autobiographical sketches, and shortly after, *Éclipses et Labyrinthes* (1988-1993), and “... *Si je mens, j'irai en enfer!*” (1994-1996).

Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* presents a historical narrative of the development of modern identity. He demonstrates that there are

strong connections between one's sense of identity and one's notion of the good. Values that have a central significance for persons and how they live their lives must be considered key factors in the formation of identity. Taylor explains that our everyday world is not a neutral or value-free reality. We inevitably experience it in terms of value. We live in a moral space rather than a neutral space. He argues that, "to know who you are is to be oriented in moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good or bad, what is worth doing and what not, what has meaning and importance for you and what secondary."^[57] Our identities are thus constituted in large measure by the "strong evaluations" we make about what is good and significant to us (people, events, places, ideas, desires, etc.) and how that understanding will direct our lives. It is with the help of narratives that our implicit conceptions of good can be made explicit to ourselves and communicated to others. Taylor says that, "In order to have a sense of who we are, we have to have a notion of how we have become, and of where we are going."^[58] The crucial role of narratives is to construct life as an organic whole and disclose the various values (or purposes) that both guide and define us as human beings.

Taylor further posits that questions of moral orientation cannot be answered in universal terms. In short, he rejects the Cartesian notion of a unified and bounded self. Taylor contends that, "our identity is deeper and more many-sided than any of our possible articulations of it."^[59] He further states that "the human agent exists in a space of questions."^[60] Therefore, "I" is not a simple referential and designatory utterance. When we are asked what "I" refers to, the "I" points to itself without coinciding with it. In the same way photography references the real without being "the real." While "I" references

the person expressing it, “I” is subjective, ever-changing and inseparable from the story it constructs for itself.

The notion of subjectivity is central in this context. Within this formation, the subject is neither fixed nor unified; instead it is complex, multiple and often ambiguously defined. Henri Bergson wrote, “my body ... is then ... [a place] of passage of the movements received and thrown back, a hyphen, a connecting link between the things which act upon me and the things upon which I act”^[61] Identity is therefore continually re-constructed, re-invented and re-interpreted in the light of the body’s interaction with the world.

The concept of the construction of the self, which Taylor discusses, is at the core of *Éclipses et Labyrinthes*. This series constitutes a collection of slightly over thirty photographs ranging from self-portraits, snapshots of Campeau’s family, landscapes, images of objects and stills of televised news reports. The images are interspersed with text excerpted from newspaper articles. Together the images form a sort of family album, revealing various personages (the artist’s son, daughter and life partner), places, and events that have marked Campeau’s self. The inclusion of portraits of immediate family members in the series is significant. It emphasizes that the self is constructed relationally and in an intersubjective manner. As Marianne Hirsch remarks,

the familial look is not the look of a subject looking at an object, but a mutual look of a subject looking at an object who is a subject looking back at an object. Within the family, as I look I am always looked at, seen, scrutinized, surveyed, monitored. Familial subjectivity is constructed relationally, and in these relations I am always both self and other(ed), both speaking and looking subject and spoken and looked at object.^[62]

Unlike the typical family album, the images of *Éclipses et Labyrinthes* do not follow a logical or chronological order. Contrary to a traditional narrative format, the structure is neither linear nor continuous. Rather it moves back and forth in time, and between people, places and events. By freely associating the various elements depicted in the images, Campeau portrays a self that is fragmented and moves invariably from one state to another.

Éclipses et Labyrinthes is an autobiographical narrative because Campeau is the narrator of his story. The inclusion of self-portraits (like *Gribouillage sur la photographie: Autoportait à la table lumineuse*, 1988, figure 5) prompts the viewer to perceive Campeau as the author-narrator. In the preface to the catalogue which accompanied the 1993 exhibition *Éclipses et Labyrinthes*, Michel Campeau wrote: “d’emblée, je ressens la photographie comme acte d’écriture. J’expérimente ses potentialités, ses enjeux, dans la contiguïté du quotidien, à la périphérie de la documentation et de l’autobiographie.”^[63] Campeau is therefore weaving a story and urging the audience to recognize that the images constitute elements in that story. The invitation to read the images is made much more explicit by the inclusion of text as in the image entitled *Texte: “Moi aussi j’avais envie de voir ...”* (1990, figure 6). In this way, Campeau adheres to what theorist Linda Hutcheon terms postmodernist photography’s mixing of the verbal and the visual, a combination that “points to the coded nature of all cultural messages.”^[64] The interplay of text and image offers up the process of exploring the self as an operation in interpretation and fabrication.

However it is Campeau who establishes contact with the viewer and decides what is being told, how it is being told and *what is to be left out*. These decisions are revealed in the image *Gribouillage sur la photographie: Autoportrait à la table lumineuse* where we see the artist sitting at a light table in his studio sifting through slides, sorting and selecting those that will best reveal the story that he wants to tell. The image makes it clear that chronicling one's own life story involves a process of selection, editing and classification, which is ultimately done according to personal criteria. Moreover, this process is inherently reflexive. Self-narration is an interpretative activity and not simply a mirroring of the past. The answer to the question "Who is Campeau?" cannot be made outside such a mediated environment. As French theorist and philosopher Paul Ricoeur remarked, "our own existence cannot be separated from the account we can give of ourselves. It is in telling our own stories that we give ourselves an identity. We recognize ourselves in the stories that we tell about ourselves."^[65] The self therefore does not exist prior to its expression.

Memory plays an important role in the creation of identity since to explore the self is to recall memories. As Annette Kuhn remarks, "telling stories about the past, our past, is a key moment in the making of our selves."^[66] The title of the collection, *Éclipses et Labyrinthes*, suggests the processes of the mind and the memories it contains. Memories are fragmentary non-linear recreations of things past recalled in the present. The process of recalling memories is similar to the process of selecting images, as depicted in *Autoportrait à la table lumineuse*. The term *Eclipses* suggests that

fragmentary nature of memories and the difficulty of striving to make order of the past. The mind is often thought of as a *labyrinth*, a maze of knowledge where the beginning of one thing and the end of the next is not clearly marked, and where unexpected turns and twists can lead to unexpected directions. Moreover, memories are very selective and are never complete reconstructions of moments past. As Bal remarked, “the ‘story’ the person remembers is not identical to the one she experienced.”^[67]

Several images of Campeau and his family are blurred or altered, sometimes nearly unrecognizable, like *Nicole et Léandre, Estuaire du Saguenay* (1989-1991, figure 7), which suggests that memories are never fixed or permanent; rather they change as life and circumstances progress. The meaning of the past is thus continually refigured and updated in the present. Campeau alludes to this process of reconfiguration by using the same image, like *Autoportrait à la table lumineuse*, more than once. With each appearance, it takes on a different form. It is either cropped differently, printed in negative, or juxtaposed with other images. In this way, a similar image takes a different meaning as they are placed alongside a contrasting image or in a different sequence of images (as in *Planche-témoin reconstituée*, 1990, figure 8). As James Olney contends,

the notion of identity can be reconstructed repeatedly. Memory, at least in part is an adaptive function, with a self-adjusting and self-defining plasticity about it turning back to the past so as to position itself and us for what is to be dealt with in the future: it adapts continuously to changing circumstances, external and internal, to constitute the self as it is at any given moment.^[68]

As Charles Taylor argues, a sense of belonging to larger wholes or to histories that extend beyond one's own life span can provide meaning for one's own life. He

remarks that “one is a self only among other selves.”^[69] Thus it is not only through his relationship with his family, but also by evoking places and events of significance to him, that Campeau’s subjectivity, or construction of self, is revealed. In that sense, landscapes like *Quai, Port-au-Persil* (1989, figure 9) become charged with personal meaning. The landscape, named so that they become recognizable views, are intimate spaces carrying the weight of memories.

Even public events in which he is not directly implicated provide Campeau with characters and plots that he identifies with and which disclose his self. Snapshots of the Gulf War taken off the television screen, and texts borrowed from newspaper magazines provide a spatio-temporal context in which Campeau’s self evolved. They also contribute to making the point that his self is anchored in the world around him. If Campeau were to re-articulate his self at another moment in the future, the spatio-temporal markers and his moral evaluations would be inevitably be different.

3.2 *Humus* (2000)

Most recently, Campeau produced *Arborescences* (2000), a multi-part series of photographs made in an urban garden. This reflexive and introspective series takes the form of an eponymous Web project which incorporates images, sounds and digital manipulations such as fade-ins and fade-outs.^[70] *Humus* (2000-01) is the latest in Campeau’s projects and is included as the last part of the Web project *Arborescences*. *Humus* is a series of black and whites images of a seemingly untamed urban garden and

self-portraits staged in it. The images address questions of subjectivity and identity even more starkly than his earlier work.

The series *Humus* signals another part in Campeau's prolific career.^[71]

Landscapes, which have always featured prominently in his work, are here the principal subject of representation. In the past, his landscapes were often familiar ones, those inhabited by people or that had specific significance for him. However rather than the rural landscape usually depicted in his images, this one is an urban garden, a space that has been created and shaped by human intervention even though the presence of human phenomena is not obvious as vegetation is wild and seemingly untamed (*Sans titre*, 2001, figure 10). Furthermore, the garden in *Humus* is not named. Unnamed and unrecognizable, these places become symbolic, acting as a figuration of Campeau's interior landscape.

Although the ostensible subject of his work—landscape—differs from that of *Eclipses et Labyrinthes*, here again Campeau is chiefly engaged with representing the complexity of "self." Simon Schama remarked that, "landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock."^[72] Imprinted with Campeau's body (*Sans titre*, 2001, figure 11), the land becomes an intimate space where land and artist meet. The natural landscape is a centre of meaning; it is inhabited by him and only him and thus takes on autobiographical meaning.

The series articulates the connections between death and renewal. Humus means "the organic constituent of soil, usually formed by decomposition of plants and leaves by soil and bacteria."^[73] The artist, eyes shut and lying down on the earth, is giving himself

up in a process of decomposition. Rebirth is possible in the same way plants, flowers and trees come back to life every year (*Sans titre*, 2001, figure 12). If there is rebirth, then the “self” continues beyond death.

The images in *Humus* seem to allude to the presence of a certain kind of spirituality which encourages the viewer to look beyond the simple physicality of the subject matter. By placing himself in the natural world, Campeau’s reveals his fragility as a human being and temporality in the landscape he occupies (and in following, the world around him). However, Campeau also makes the viewer realize the timelessness of his existence as it reflected through the natural world.

There is a performative element in this series which is much more strikingly more evident than in any of his previous work. In *Humus*, Campeau’s presence in the land is staged and carefully constructed. Amelia Jones argues that performance stresses the lack of fixity of meaning. She states that the term performative, “questions the continuing assumptions of a reified conception of the artwork as a static object whose meanings are inherent in its form or structure and easily disclosed to the knowing interpreter.”^[74] Hence by using performative methods, Campeau is inviting us to read the landscape as a site of personal significance, a generator of meaning for himself, rather than a fact. As well, he is reminding us that we are not entirely in control of our lives, and certainly not of our deaths.

4. Conclusion

Michel Campeau's work has broadly followed a trajectory of interrogation into questions of identity, as they relate first to the collective and more recently to his self. It is through narrative that Campeau investigates and explores those questions. Campeau has said that, "la photographie est une forme d'écriture spécifique, aussi je me considère comme un écrivain visuel."^[75] While narrative threads the work together, it rarely appears in a straightforward linear or chronological form. In *Disraëli*, the narrative is of a community and, implicitly, of Campeau's relationship to that community. The juxtaposition of images in *Éclipses et Labyrinthes* marks Campeau's self as a construct, a personal one where his memories, fragmented recollections of things past, are windows to his interior landscape. In *Humus*, the narrative is much more subtle than in any of his previous works. It is also more spiritual as it proposes the self as inter-temporal.

Campeau has said that, "les photographies sont des transpositions du réel, mais beaucoup plus qu'une fenêtre sur la réalité, elles sont inévitablement le reflet de qui les réalise."^[76] His practice in the last thirty years has shifted, much like the field of photography in Quebec, moving from a direct relationship to reality to a much more personal and subjective one. Having emerged first as a social documentary photographer, focused on truth in representation, Campeau is now an artist who uses photography to explore his myriad subjectivities. Truth and realism are no longer panaceas.

In this way, Campeau's career crystallizes aspects of a broader shift in Quebecois photographic practice away from social documentary. Since *Disraëli*, he has been engaged with problematizing both social documentary's presumed indexical status and its

humanitarian heritage. For the artists discussed in the following chapters –Geneviève Cadieux and Ramona Ramlochand– the reconfiguration of documentary would lead in other directions. While both centrally address questions of identity and subjectivity, their work highlights the ambiguous nature of those categories much more profoundly, albeit each in very different ways.

Endnotes

[1] Michel Campeau, "Les tremblements du coeur," in *Marques et Contrastes: la photographie actuelle*. Proceedings from a symposium put on by Galerie Séquence and held in Chicoutimi on 27 and 28 November 1987 (Jonquière: Édition Sagamie / Québec, 1988), 149.

[2] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 35.

[3] The purpose of GAP, of which Campeau was a founding member, was to document the people of Quebec in their everyday life. National Film Board of Canada, *Communiqué: Le Groupe d'action populaire*, Ottawa: National Film Board, August 1972, n.p.

[4] Michel Campeau, Statement of intent (unpublished), in *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau*, ed. Pierre Dessureault (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1996), 54.

[5] "They were produced in reaction to the social documentary form which sees photography simply as a means to represent reality. ... My photographs are a commentary of my own subjective reality." (translation by author). Michel Campeau, "À Propos des photographies de Week-end au Paradis terrestre," Presentation delivered at the Conférence nationale "Du documentaire au commentaire," held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, 16-17 January 1982.

[6] Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" in *Image, Music, Text: Essays*. (London: Fontana Press, 1987), 79.

[7] Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 5.

[8] Bal, 19.

[9] Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 147.

[10] Bal, 146.

[11] Bal, 11.

[12] La Galerie de photographies du Centaur, "Introduction," in *Disraëli: une expérience humaine en photographie* (Montreal: Galeries de photographies du Centaur, 1974). page?

[13] Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Inoperative Community" in *The Inoperative Community*, edited and translated by Peter Connor. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991, 1-42.

[14] Serge Allaire, *Une tradition documentaire au Québec? Quelle tradition? Quel documentaire?* (Montréal: Le Mois de la Photo à Montréal, 1993).

- [15] National Film Board of Canada, *Communiqué: Le Groupe d'action populaire*, Ottawa: National film Board, August 1972, n.p. (translation by author). Furthermore, the project was funded by a grant from the Opportunities for Youth, a Canadian government employment programme.
- [16] Doreen Lindsay Szilasi, "Introduction," *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie* (Montréal: Galeries de photographies du Centaur, 1974), VII.
- [17] Galerie de photographies du Centaur, *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie* (Montréal: Galeries de photographies du Centaur, 1974).
- [18] Pierre Dessureault, *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1996), 54.
- [19] Maryse Pellerin, "Photographes, faites vos jeux, rien de va plus! La photographie documentaire," *Le Jour*, 21 February 1976, 32.
- [20] Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt and translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 221.
- [21] Michel Campeau, "Walker Evans and Disraëli" *OVO Magazine* 21 (1975): 8.
- [22] Ibid., 8.
- [23] "Disraeli en images," *Perspectives* 16 (9 February 1974): 1-8. *Perspectives* was a weekend supplement to a number of Quebec's major newspapers; it was published between 1959 and 1982.
- [24] William Stott, "What Documentary Treats," in *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 49.
- [25] Ibid., 49
- [26] Michel Campeau, "Walker Evans and Disraëli" *OVO* 21 (1975), 8.
- [27] Ibid., 8.
- [28] "To demystify photography and express a neglected reality, that of the everyday in order to show its worth" (translation by author). Maryse Pellerin, "Photographes, faites vos jeux, rien de va plus! La photographie documentaire," *Le Jour*, 21 February 1976, 32.
- [29] "Tears up the soil" (translation by author). Galerie de photographies du Centaur. *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie* (Montréal: Galeries de photographies du Centaur, 1974), III.
- [30] Campeau, 8.
- [31] T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).
- [32] "In our consumer society, photography has largely served the needs of merchandising and advertising. It is a privileged means of social manipulation. ... However contrary to its role in advertising, photography

can play a powerful role in raising social consciousness" (translation by author). Michel Campeau, Maryse Pellerin and Michel Sénécal, "Pour une photographie progressiste au Québec," *Le Jour*, 6 March 1976, 31.

[33] W.J.T. Mitchell, "Introduction," in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W.J.T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 1.

[34] Susan Gibson Garvey, *Rephotographing the Land* (Halifax: Dalhousie Art Gallery, 1992), 13.

[35] *Perspectives* was a richly illustrated and popular weekly magazine distributed as a weekend supplement to most of Quebec's major newspapers, notably *La Presse*.

[36] For more on this: Simon Pugh (ed.), *Reading Landscape: Country, City, Capital* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[37] Serge Jongué, "The New Photographic Order", in *Thirteen Essays on Photography* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1990), 39.

[38] Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Inoperative Community" in *The Inoperative Community*, edited by Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 12.

[39] *Ibid.*, 9.

[40] *Ibid.*, 10.

[41] Jongué, 39.

[42] Doreen Lindsay Szilasi, "Introduction," in *Disraëli, une expérience humaine en photographie* (Montréal: Galeries de photographies du Centaur, 1974), VII.

[43] *Ibid.*, VII.

[44] For more on family albums see: Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001); Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981); Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

[45] Marianne Hirsch, 8.

[46] Julia Hirsch, 32.

[47] Langford, 95.

[48] Pierre Dessureault, *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1996), 56.

[49] Pierre Vallières, quoted in Pierre Dessureault, *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1996), 56.

[50] Victor Burgin, "Looking at photographs" in *Thinking Photography* (London: MacMillan, 1983), 143.

[51] Alan Sekula, "Reading an Archive," in Brian Wallis (ed.) *Blasted Allegories: An anthology of Writings by Contemporary Artists* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987) 114.

[52] Dessureault, 57.

[53] "The work is unfinished And has never really been publicly exhibited" (translation by author). Joanne Legault, "États d'âme sur pellicules: l'oeuvre photographique de Michel Campeau," *Le Droit, Section Arts Visuels*, 25 January 1997.

[54] "Artist statement," reproduced in *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau*, (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 1996), 58.

[55] "The photographs have been produced in reaction to social documentary, which sees photography merely as a means to record the exterior world" (translation by author). Michel Campeau, "À Propos des photographies de Week-end au Paradis terrestre," Presentation delivered at the *Conférence nationale: du documentaire au commentaire*, held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, 16-17 January 1982.

[56] Campeau produced three smaller scale documentary projects during this time (similar in approach to *Week-end au Paradis terrestre*): "Rituel masculin au centre-ville" (1982), "Pologne, 1983" (1984) and "Les tournages publicitaires" (1985).

[57] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 28.

[58] Ibid., 47.

[59] Ibid., 29.

[60] Ibid., 29.

[61] Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 152.

[62] Marianne Hirsch, 9.

[63] Michel Campeau, *Éclipses et labyrinthes* (Chicoutimi: Séquence, 1993), 3.

[64] Linda Hutcheon, "Text / Image Border Tensions," in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 135.

[65] Paul Ricoeur, "History as Narrative and Practice," *Philosophy today*, (Fall 1985): 214.

[66] Annette Kuhn, *Family Secret: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 2.

[67] Bal, 147.

[68] James Olney, *Memory and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 343.

[69] Taylor, 35.

[70] The Web project can be found at: www.voxphoto.org/mvp/campeau, accessed September 2003.

[71] In addition, Michel Campeau received in 1994 the Higashikawa Overseas Photographer Prize, presented at Hokkaido, Japan. A retrospective of his work, *Eloquent Images: Michel Campeau*, was organized by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in 1996.

[72] Simon Schama. *Landscape and Memory* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1995), 7.

[73] *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, 1998, s.v. "Humus."

[74] Amelia Jones, *Performing the Body / Performing the Text* (London: Routledge, 1999), 7.

[75] Photography is a form of writing; therefore I consider myself a visual writer" (translation by author). Michel Campeau, "À propos des photographies de Week-end au Paradis terrestre," Presentation delivered at the Conférence nationale "Du documentaire au commentaire," held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, 16-17 January 1982.

[76] "Photographs are transpositions of reality. However more than merely a window on reality, they are inevitably a reflection of their maker" (translation by author). Michel Campeau, "À Propos des photographies de Week-end au Paradis terrestre," Presentation delivered at the Conférence nationale "Du documentaire au commentaire," held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, 16-17 January 1982.

CHAPTER 3

Geneviève Cadieux: Of Being-in-the-World

My body ... is what opens me out upon the world and places me in a situation there.^[1]

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

Cadieux reveals a body shored up by its own incoherence, its accidents and collisions with the world, the Other, its traumas, injuries and marks.^[2]

Laurence Louppe

1. Introduction

Québécois art historian and critic Johanne Lamoureux wrote in 1990, “there is a rumour that any pertinent art being produced in Montreal is sexually determined; specifically, it is made by women.”^[3] She noted that Quebecois art of the 1980s was often presented as feminine in opposition to for example the masculinist art of Vancouver. Although Lamoureux challenged this conception of “the feminization of the image of Quebec,”^[4] and posited instead that visual artists in Quebec were more concerned with issues of language, she acknowledged the effervescence of art produced by women in Quebec at that time.

During the 1970s, feminism in Quebec captured many social and political agendas. While the advocacy efforts of post-war feminism in Quebec were concerned largely with emancipatory rights,^[5] this wave of feminism was focused on “women’s liberation.” More radical in its demands, it involved itself with dismantling patriarchal ideology and redefining gender roles within society. It called for and obtained the

decriminalization of abortions, the establishment of daycare, and the right to maternity leave.^[6]

The year 1975 was an especially auspicious one. Designated International Year of Women by the United Nations, it was marked by a large number of exhibitions in Quebec (and in the rest of Canada) to showcase art made by women. In Quebec one of the most significant exhibitions was ARTFEMME'75 organized by the YMCA of Montreal in collaboration with the Musée d'art contemporain, the Saidye Bronfman Centre and Powerhouse Gallery, which brought together a selection of works by 92 Quebecois women artists. The exhibition catalogue of ARTFEMME'75 highlighted the innovative nature of their practices and noted that artists like Françoise Sullivan and Sorel Cohen tended to use non traditional materials and approaches in their work often focusing on their own experiences in their creative process.^[7] In these works, the body became a site for political struggle.

Rose-Marie Arbour notes that the number of collective exhibitions dedicated to art made by women substantially increased between 1975 and 1990. She also remarks that feminist issues were the principal undercurrent in all of them. Artists represented in these exhibitions were largely concerned with identity politics as related to gender issues. According to Arbour, these exhibitions helped to legitimize the role of women artists and their practice as well as to affirm feminist concerns in a male dominated art world.^[8] Certainly the success of these collective exhibitions contributed to what Lamoureux terms the "perceived feminization" of Quebecois visual art. After 1990 however, Arbour notes that the number of collective exhibitions dedicated to art by women declined. She

explains that, “à partir des années 1990, il apparaît que les femmes artistes et les commissaires ont délaissé une perspective féministe qui risquait d’être globalisante.”^[9]

Geneviève Cadieux is one of the most prominent artists in Quebec to emerge out of this environment of rich feminist activity. While Cadieux rejects the prefix “feminist artist,” the success of her work is produced in and around a subject marked as feminine, in which issues surrounding the possessive function of the gaze, central concerns of feminist artists, arise.

Born in Montreal in 1955, Geneviève Cadieux’s career dawned and developed during the late 1980s and 1990s. She works primarily with photography; although she has also used video and installation. Since 1985, Cadieux's work has been exhibited both nationally and internationally. She has represented Canada in five major international exhibitions: the Montreal Biennale (2000), the Venice Biennale (1990), the Sydney Biennale in Australia (1988, 1990), and at the Sao Paulo Biennale in Brazil (1987). One of her pieces *La Voie lactée* is on permanent display on the roof of the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal.

Cadieux’s practice is central to the historiography of the last twenty-five years in the Quebecois field of visual arts, and much has been written about it. A good deal of the literature focuses on the possessive nature of the gaze and its connotation of gender, drawing on a psychoanalytic reading of her work filtered through feminist theory.^[10] The use of language, both the written and spoken word, to explore the inevitable gaps in meaning and difficulties of interpersonal communication, has also been discussed.^[11] Finally, the body, the principal object of representation, with its insistence on the skin,

bruised, scarred and marked by the touch of the “other,” has been examined in terms of its relationship to trauma, violence and desire.^[12]

This chapter proposes another reading of Cadieux’s work. The notion of subjectivity, according to which identity is not historically, culturally or sexually determined or fixed, but rather constantly reconfigured, is central to her work. Cadieux sees identity as naturally multifaceted and shifting; its inherent instability therefore renders it difficult to configure wholly. Drawing on phenomenology, I will suggest that her work locates subjectivity and identity within and through the body. Through an embodied dialogue between the viewer, the artist and the work itself, object and subject positions in Cadieux’s work are invariably changing and in flux. Her use of the over-size, the close-up, the interplay of text and image, and the evocation of desire and violence implicate the viewer actively in the construction of identity. In phenomenological terms, the body is reflexive, posing the subject in relation to other subjects in a reciprocal relationship made conscious through the body. Cadieux’s work presents the body in a manner that is analogous to David Abram’s description of the “real world,”

not as a sheer ‘object,’ not a fixed and finished datum from which all subjects and subjective qualities could be pared away, but rather [as] an intertwined matrix of sensations and perceptions, a collective field of experience lived through many angles.^[13]

By proposing that identity is located in and through the body, Cadieux’s work critically engages with the implications relevant to identity in a Quebecois context. Contrary to the direct and unproblematic social documentary work in which identity is presented as a “fact” (following Stott’s terms), identity in the work of Cadieux is no longer understood

nor presented as a fixed and complete category of representation. It is experienced relationally and in interaction with other bodies; it is fluid and constantly renewed.

2. The sensuous body

French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues in *Phenomenology of Perception* that the body is a site through which we mediate our sense of ourselves in relation to the world around us.^[14] He posits, “my body ... is what opens me out upon the world and places me in a situation there.”^[15] Merleau-Ponty developed the notion of subject as a “being-in-the-world,”^[16] meaning that human experience is achieved from a subjective or first person point-of-view. As David Abram explains in *Spell of the Sensuous*, a study which draws on Merleau-Ponty’s theoretical work to explore human beings’ connections to the world, “the living body is thus the very possibility of contact, not just with others but with oneself – the very possibility of reflection, of thought, of knowledge.”^[17]

While it is equally important to locate lived experiences within perceptive and cognitive functions, Merleau-Ponty resists the traditional Cartesian separation of mind and body. He claims that our lived experience denies the detachment of subject from object, mind from body. According to him, the body is both object and a lived reality, and thus body and mind are inherently indivisible and interrelated. Therefore, the object of the body is one with the experiences of the sensory world, the subject, and it is at their juncture that embodied consciousness emerges.^[18] To live and coexist with the world, therefore is to use one’s full potential as both a thinking and experiencing being.

An important concept that Merleau-Ponty develops is the intertwining of the senses, a process by which the senses criss-cross one another.^[19] He writes, “the senses communicate with each other. Music is not in visible space, but it besieges, undermines and displaces that space. The two spaces are distinguishable only against the background of a common world and can compete with each other only because they both lay claim to total being.”^[20] An exercise of vision can also be a discovery into tactile relationships, and whenever an object crosses one sensory field into another (vision into touch for example), the experience of that object changes.

Complementing Merleau-Ponty’s description of phenomenology is Charles Taylor’s contention—as noted in the previous chapter—that we are selves in and among other selves.^[21] The subject is never really complete within itself but always contingent on others. It is thus through the body’s interaction and affiliation with other bodies, that the subjective field of appearance opens itself up to many other fields. Communication with other living bodies is what enables experience and knowledge to remain changing and in constant flux. The phenomenological field is therefore one of intersubjectivity, in which that subjects are interdependent and function in reciprocal relationship to one another. It is thus a collective landscape of multiple centres of experience.

Perception for Merleau-Ponty is necessarily reciprocal; it involves the experience of interplay between the perceiving body and that which it perceives.^[22] Since it is through the body that we have access to the world, perception involves the perceiving subject in a situation, rather than positioning herself or himself as a spectator who is abstracted from the situation.

He who looks must not himself be foreign to the world that he looks at. As soon as I see, it is necessary that the vision ... [is] doubled with a complementary vision or with another vision: myself seen from without, such as another would see me, installed in the midst of the visible, occupied in considering it from a certain spot ... he who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he is of it, unless ... He is one of the visibles, capable by a singular reversal of seeing them – he who is one of them.^[23]

There is hence an interconnection of action and perception and a reciprocal exchange between the perceiving subject and the animate world in Merleau-Ponty model.^[24] The body is thus reflexive; to see is by implication to be seen. Merleau-Ponty terms this “creative receptivity,” meaning that the relationship between perceiving subject and the object perceived is not one of exclusion. As Merleau-Ponty enigmatically concludes, “Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself.”^[25]

In *The Visible and the Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty elaborates further on this notion of reciprocity. He explains that, “my body is made of the same flesh as the world (it is a perceived), and moreover that this flesh of my body is shared by the world, the world reflects it, encroaches upon it and it encroaches upon the world.”^[26] In effect, *Flesh* is the point of contact between sentient and sensible bodies; it is where the experience of being-in-the-world is located. Abram aptly describes “*flesh*” as,

the mysterious tissue or matrix that underlies and gives rise to both the perceiver and the perceived as interdependent aspects of its own spontaneous activity. It is the reciprocal presence of the sentient in the sensible and of the sensible in the sentient, a mystery of which we have always, at least tacitly, been aware, since we have never been able to affirm one of these phenomena, the perceivable world or the perceiving self, without implicitly affirming the presence of the other.^[27]

3. Vision

For generations, vision has been elevated in the West as the dominant sense. Even Merleau-Ponty tended to privilege vision among all the senses. He stated that, “it is as though our vision were formed in the heart of the visible, or as though there were between it and us an intimacy as close to us as between the sea and the strand.”^[28]

Vision is the act of seeing and engages cognitive, physiological and behavioural responses from the body. Within a phenomenological context, the aim of examining visual experience is to emphasize the role of the perceiver in making sense of the world beyond its simple visibility and materiality. Therefore, sight is never simply optical, as the entire body is implicated in the experience of vision. Embodied visual experience as it relates to photography, a medium that places sight at the very centre of experience, can be thought of as the reciprocal exchange that links the viewer, the work of art and the artist in an experience of being-in-the-world.

One way Cadieux’s photography works to encourage an embodied visual experience is by promoting the active participation of viewers. Often the inclusion of the viewer in the space of Cadieux’s work is a result of oversize photographs engulfing the viewer. As Laurence Louppe notes,

the dimensions of the image, its enlargement and expansion, play a role here –as does the use of the close-up. There is a reciprocal interpenetration of physical space, and it is by virtue of the close-up that our gaze intrudes upon the intimacy of the body... The image invades our personal sphere”^[29]

The participation of viewers is further invoked through the use of diptychs, common throughout her oeuvre, which as Chantal Pontbriand explains, “turns on the connections between the two images.”^[30] The coupling of photographs, as in *Amour Aveugle* (1992), suggests that the images are not only related to each other, but also in dialogue with each other. Moreover, while the privileged subject of representation in Cadieux’s work is the human body, it is often presented in fragmented form. The body is never presented as a complete whole. In that sense, Geneviève Cadieux's pieces, ambiguous at times, generally exist at the boundary between the visible and the invisible; it is up to the viewer to bridge the gaps where possible. The process is a productive one which engages the viewer through his or her own body.

Another way Cadieux engages the viewer in active participation is by making the viewer aware of his or her own visual perception. For example, in the diptych *Amour aveugle*, the right panel shows an extreme close-up of a pair of eyes, staring directly at the viewer. The left panel depicts a mouth, its lips open. To see another pair of eyes looking into our own is to become aware of the effects of our own sight. We recognize our participation in the effects of seeing. Often termed colloquially “the windows to the soul,” the eyes are not simply the site of vision but are often characterized as a gateway to the entire body. Staring into some other person’s eyes is to engage not only with our own entire body in the experience of vision, but also with the entire body of the person perceived.

Psychoanalytic readings of Cadieux’s work have emphasized the possessive function of the camera and the male gaze and have remarked that much of Cadieux’s

work strives to destabilize the power of the gaze by reversing it.^[31] The result is a displacement and a re-negotiation of the act of looking in such a way that the viewer's visual experience is characterized as active, rather than passive. As Chantal Pontbriand remarks about Cadieux's efforts to manipulate the gaze, "within this chain of gazes, viewers are simultaneously hostages and voyeurs, analysing and being analysed."^[32] Moreover in this work, the title is important to consider as it invites the viewer to challenge the primacy of vision. The importance of titles in engaging the viewer in a multi-sensory experience through the displacement of one sense to another is discussed in more depth later in this chapter.

In *Amour aveugle*, the viewer looks at a pair of eyes looking directly back at the viewer. The viewer is thus at the same time subject of his or her viewing experience and object of the image's own vision. The operation is thus not simply unidirectional; it is reciprocal. In phenomenological terms, the reversal of the gaze, such as in *Amour aveugle*, enables the viewer, to constitute himself as an embodied subject in relation to another embodied subject.

In *Amour aveugle*, the presence of the artist is evoked. Indeed, it is not simply the eyes in the image which meet those of the viewer, it is also those of the artist. Therefore, through the eyes in the image, both viewer and artist meet in an active conjoining. By promoting an active participation in the act of looking, Cadieux works to question the viewer's responses to her images, and thereby encourages a more complete embodied experience that links the viewer to image and artist in an experience of "being-in-the-world." At the juncture, there is an exchange of object and subject positions

in such a way that new subjectivities take root. As embodied vision and communication rely on a reciprocal relationship with the other, Cadieux's work points to the particularities of how the process of intersubjectivity takes place. In effect, she puts into question how we form impressions of identity by offering an exploration into the movement of identity and subjectivity emerging out of the power dynamics in relations of looking.

As mentioned above, vision is for Merleau-Ponty a modality of "being-in-the-world." The experience of vision is inherently reciprocal and therefore participatory and open-ended. Seeing therefore entails the possibility of being seen. Abram points out, "when my body responds to the mute solicitation of another being, that being responds in turn, disclosing to my sense some new aspect or dimension that in turn invites further exploration."^[33] At the juncture where vision meets, is a space for exchange and therefore a renegotiation of the looking relationship. Phenomenology thus offers a way of examining how looking relationships can be displaced as the reciprocal exchange of visual perception within and through the body in effect subverts the power of the gaze.

The left panel of the diptych *Amour aveugle* is an extreme close-up of a mouth. The lips open slightly apart inviting a kiss. We imagine the eyes belonging to the same body as the mouth. But this is not necessarily so. They could belong to a different body. While the eyes in the right panel engage vision, the mouth engages taste, smell and touch. The eyes (vision) and the mouth (taste and smell) are brought together photographically

which provokes a riddling of the senses further layering object and subject positions. As Abram notes, “each sense is a distinct modality of this body’s existence, yet in the activity of perception these divergent modalities necessarily intercommunicate and overlap.”^[34] By inviting a synesthetic experience, through the interplay of the sense, Cadieux transposes qualities from one domain to the other, actively engaging the viewer in an embodied experience.

In returning the kiss, the viewer becomes the object of the lips’ desire. At the same time, the viewer is both object and subject of the eyes’ vision. As Abram writes, “my senses connect up with each other in the things I perceive, or rather each perceived thing gathers my senses together in a coherent way, and it is this that enables me to experience the thing itself as a centre of forces, as another nexus of experience, as an Other.”^[35] What is proposed is that we are constituted as embodied subjects in relation to other embodied subjects. This alerts us to the process of constructing identity as it is constituted through one’s experience of “being-in-the-world.” Cadieux’s work is therefore highly intersubjective. As viewers become aware that they are never complete within themselves but always contingent upon others, they realize that they are both part of the world and coexistent with it. The glue of intersubjectivity is thus the desire to make contact with the other in order to make sense of our experience of being-in-the-world.

In *Blues* (1992, figure 14), the viewer is faced with an extreme close-up of a bruise. Its location on the body and cause are left unknown. The bruise is the single detail in the image, and in that sense engages the viewer most directly. The monumental

scale of the image further engulfs the viewer in the work. The body, marked by the touch of the other, references the animate world in which it lives. This touch is a painful one since it has left a blue tinted mark on the skin. In this way, the bruised skin recalls the sometimes violent nature of being-in-the-world as it is felt on and through the body.

The extreme close-up, as Laurence Louppe notes, “invades our personal sphere and amplifies the physical sensation of proximity.”^[36] Viewers therefore cannot help reacting to this image. However the reaction will be different for each viewer: one viewer may shudder at recalling his or her own experience of being bruised and the situation which caused it; someone else may react by being confronted with the intimacy that such a mark evokes. In each instance, the point of contact is the bruise, and it is there that viewer, work and artist come together in an experience-of-the world.

However the interconnectedness of the world and the body is not only made evident by the bruise itself, but also in the reciprocal engagement between viewer and artist mediated through the image. *Blues* suggests the subject’s own embodied experiences within his or her own body since in seeing the bruised skin the viewer is made aware of the effect of touch on the body of the other. This increased awareness is felt within his or her body through the intertwining of senses, as vision crosses into touch. Again, this points to the intersubjective nature of the experience of being-in-the-world as the viewer realizes that his or her own experiences of being-in-the-world inevitably has an impact on the experiences of the other. The photograph then becomes a means of access to this intersubjective engagement that constitutes us as bodies within the social arena.

Roland Barthes' idea of the *punctum*, "this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me,"^[37] is very relevant to consider in the context of this work. Barthes defines the concept of the *punctum* in terms of the particularity of a photograph, the single detail of the image that affects the viewer most profoundly. The recognition and experience of such a detail, *punctuates* our engagement with the image. As we've noted above, *Blues* provokes a reaction within the body as the experience of the object of representation is felt as a reflection of the viewer's own experiencing and sensing body. Following Barthes' phenomenological reading of photographs, as articulated in *Camera Lucida*,^[38] vision for Barthes is necessarily embodied since seeing photographically implies a bodily reaction.

As in many of Cadieux's works, the body depicted in *Trou de mémoire, la beauté inattendue* (1988, figure 15), is not obviously gendered. The photograph shows an extreme close-up in monumental scale of a scar which shoots diagonally across the entire picture-plane (335 x 208 x 14 cm). The scar is elongated and terminated by its own reflection in an adjoining mirrored panel. Accordingly, this work is much more sculptural than the others discussed in this chapter. Although Cadieux works principally with photography, she often incorporates installation strategies to engage the viewer beyond simple visuality. The viewer can walk around and into the space the piece occupies. As Chantal Pontbriand writes, "you enter this piece feeling that you are breaking in on some great intimacy."^[39] What part of the body is it, near the eye, the genital area? Is it a man's

or a woman's body? The questions as well as the answers will probably be different for each viewer.

In *Blues* and *Trou de mémoire, la beauté inattendue*, skin occupies the entire picture field. It forms the screen on which the subject is projected. Skin becomes the meeting place of two subjects, the artist and the viewer, as well as point of intersection of many other possible axes, including the viewer with himself and the artist with herself. As noted above, Merleau-Ponty introduces the notion of "*flesh*" to describe the medium of exchange which envelops embodied subjects in an experience of being-in-the-world. Merleau-Ponty writes, "the Flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance ... The Flesh is in this sense an element of being."^[40] *Flesh* is therefore not the same thing as the skin, which physically exists and separates subject positions. *Flesh* is what binds subject positions. In a way, the marks on the skin in Cadieux's work (for example, the bruises, the scars, the scratched out faces) can be thought of in terms of the *Flesh*, the substance that envelops viewer and the artist in an experience of being-in-the-world. It is through the marks on the skin that viewer, artist and image engage one another in an embodied experience. The inter-subjectivity which results from this reciprocal relationship links them into corporeal being.

4. Voice (*spoken and written word*)

While, as noted above vision is today generally regarded in the West as the dominant sense, speech (and by extension language) is another way in which knowledge of the world is articulated. Speech is important to consider because it is the principal way

we communicate with the lived world. For Merleau-Ponty, language is embodied, meaning that language is not isolated from the sensuous reverberations of speech felt within the body. Speech is produced by the body and thus is an extension of it.

Cadieux's work has been discussed in terms of its engagement with language. Chantal Pontbriand for example has noted that Cadieux's work denotes gaps in, or the impossibility of communicating, often pointing to the imposed muteness of the feminine subject.^[41] Feminist theorists such Luce Irigaray^[42] purport that language is structured in such a way as to exclude women from participating in discourse. According to Irigaray, language is male-centric and omits women's voices and experiences. For this reason, the utilization of voice has been important to feminist artists who have recognized that they need to speak from that space of silence in order to articulate women's identities and subjectivities. For Merleau-Ponty, language cannot be severed from the sensory and emotional field. Abram explains that,

communicative meaning is always, in its depths, affective; it remains rooted in the sensual dimension of experience, born of the body's native capacity to resonate with other bodies and with the landscape as a whole. Linguistic meaning is not some ideal and bodiless essence that we arbitrarily assign to a physical sound or word and then toss out into the external world. Rather, meaning sprouts in the very depths of the sensory world, in the heat of meeting, encounter, participation.^[43]

Therefore, not only does language gives access to the world of experience, it is the whole sensuous world that provides the deep structures of language. Moreover language, like the experience of being-in-the-world, is an evolving bodily field. It is never fixed, nor determinant.

The written word, in the form of evocative titles, figures prominently in Cadieux's work offering the viewer both a visual and linguistic journey. The written word is utilized to promote communication between viewer, artist and image. It promotes a dialogue that insists on giving the depicted body a voice, and as a result manipulates the viewer's bodily response to the image.

A key feature of Cadieux's work is the disconnect between text (or voice) and vision. For example the image *Trou de mémoire, la beauté inattendue* and its title don't obviously coincide. Meaning must be deciphered by the viewer and this process is embodied as the sentient body draws on its capacity to engage with its senses to produce meaning through reciprocal exchange with the image. This disjunction between text and image is subversive as it displaces the power of the verbal tool to give the objectified body in the image the opportunity to speak to the viewer. It also offers the possibility for the bodies (that of the viewer and the image) to come into a subjectivity that includes many different possible identifications and expressions, as meaning can be deciphered in many different ways. It is the riddling between voice and vision that enables the viewer and the artist to move within subject and object positions, never wholly defined by one look or word.

Elle et Lui (avec main de femme) (2000, figure 16) illustrates that phenomenologically speech is lived and shared by humans through social interaction. This diptych features an image of a woman on the left (*Elle*) and an image of a man on the right (*Lui*) facing each other. Her hand appear *Lui*'s portrait, and his outstretched hand

appears in *Elle*'s. Although the title of the piece only references her hand, there is an inter-penetration space by both characters.^[44] Both their gazes look away from each other to somewhere outside the picture plane. The viewer's gaze vacillates between the woman and the man, never meeting either one of their gazes and never fixing it entirely on either one of them.

Space is critical to this work. It can be viewed as the setting where one lives in the world, but also the co-habitation between object and subject positions where one shares experiences of the lived world. Here the coupling of images is very obviously fraught with gaps and impossible reconciliations while the two still remain in dialogue with one another. The protagonists appear in two distinct visual fields, two different experiential spaces, each seemingly in their own world. It illustrates the uniqueness of each of their experiences. There is an inter-penetration of space by both characters. However, this inter-penetration is tentative at best. Only the hand is allowed to enter directly into the other's space. The gesture expresses, shows, and exposes but cannot initiate communication by itself. Without the participation of the other senses, communication between bodies is problematic. This divided universe could be united through the embodied sensual experience of the viewer, but in this case the meeting space is difficult to locate making this union problematic.

The viewer witnesses the awkward silence on the part of both *Elle* and *Lui* in spite of the insistence (illustrated by the gesture) in trying to communicate. The conversation staged by the artist betrays a certain unease. There is a feeling that something has just happened or is about to happen, which the viewer cannot decipher. There is a narrative

that the viewer has to decipher. While the gesture could be interpreted as the voice in its capacity to communicate, it is cut off from being anything else than vision because it doesn't engage the other senses in an experience of being-in-the-world.

Tension is created in the photograph as a result of the lack of dialogue and the uncertainty about the context in which the two protagonists situate themselves. The photographer has not provided the answer. Both *Elle* and *Lui* are photographed against a neutral white background. In that manner, the body is isolated and is unable to engage the other in an experience of being in the world. The lack of dialogue and contextual references emphasize the need for reciprocal dialogue in order for subjects to make sense of the world.

5. Touch

An interesting aspect of Cadieux's work is the use of anti-ocular devices to displace the primacy of sight. As Merleau-Ponty points out, our experience of the world is mediated through a reciprocity of senses and thus requires the support and interplay of all the senses. I have already noted that Cadieux's work actively calls on the interplay of the senses, often displacing sight as the primordial sense in order to create a multisensory embodied experience.

The experiences of touch allow for a communication that reaches beyond visual and auditory exchanges. Touch is a sense located on the surface of the skin whose physicality enables and encourages a link with the lived world over the surface of the body. The ability to feel an object and be felt by that object enables us to expand our

sense of being-in-the-world. Touch can be also felt from within the body. To be touched spiritually or emotionally is to use the body as a dwelling place to house one's inner thoughts and feelings within the surface of the skin.

À Fleur de peau (1987, figure 17) deals with the absence of the power of the look by engaging directly the power of the touch through the use of Braille. It features two very large, identically sized framed pieces, placed side by side. The panel on the left contains a lead sheet, engraved with a message in Braille. The panel on the right is a mirror that has been cracked and tarnished. The piece offers a paradox as the viewer who is able to see his reflection will probably never be able to decipher the Braille caption and inversely, the inscription will be deciphered only by those who are unable to see themselves in the mirror.

To touch the bumpy skin of the Braille caption is to feel our own tactility. The Braille caption reads: "Here is the best portrait that, later on I was able to make of him." The caption is used in another piece, *La Blessure d'une cicatrice ou Les anges*, thus inviting the viewer to connect the two pieces through sensory perception. The result is a riddling of subject and object positions between artist and viewer that changes through the experience of both works. This makes the viewer conscious of the construction of subjectivity through layered interventions and aware that the subjective field of experience can naturally open itself up onto other subjectivities.

The paradox with which the viewer is faced is similar to the gap with which he is presented in *Elle et Lui (avec main de femme)*. As the senses of sight and touch cannot obviously interplay with each other, the viewer is left with a feeling of incompleteness.

Vision and touch occupy two distinct sensory fields. In a way, the viewer becomes increasingly sensitized to the fact that the field of experience and communication is one of sensory complementarity and interplay. By handicapping one sense for the other, the viewer becomes aware of alternatives: to hear with the eyes, to lip read. Cadieux relies on the viewer's experiences and ability to transpose one sense for the other. The result is that she adeptly invites the viewer to question normalized notions of sensory experience in and through the body.

Other works engage the sense of touch much differently. The marks on the skin, bruises and scars are recurring motifs in Cadieux's work. The marks on the skin are a domain where experience exists. They are both the imprint and the witness of the body's experience of being in the world, as well as being the immediate point of contact between the perceived subject and that which is perceived, the viewer and the artist.

In *Blues* and in *Trou de mémoire, la beauté inattendue*, the marked skin invites the healing touch of the viewer while at the same time suggests the violent touch of the possessive gaze. For the viewer the sense of touch is experienced through vision as well as felt within the body. As Edmund Husserl noted, "by an associative empathy, the embodied subject comes to realize the other bodies as other centres of experience, other subjects."^[45] It is through subjective experience that we can, as bodies, recognize the reality of other experiencing bodies. The marks on the skin of the body in the image parallel those of the viewer's body. By identifying with the body in the image, the viewer

directly engages with it through sensory perception. Inter-corporeality results from this reciprocal exchange.

6. Conclusion

Cadieux's work is implicated in contemporary debates of subjectivity and identity, and in discussions of how we conceive ourselves in the contemporary world. David Abram writes "if the body were truly a set of closed pre-determined mechanisms, it could never come into genuine contact with anything outside of itself, could never perceive anything new, could never be genuinely startled or surprised."^[46] Merleau-Ponty offers a framework from which we can understand the construction of identity and its relationship to the world by thinking of the body as being part of the sensory world. By drawing on phenomenology, we can understand in which ways Cadieux's work reveals how the self and the other, subject and object, are constituted in relation to an experience of being-in-the-world. As Chantal Pontbriand remarks, "this incessant interaction of the Self and the Other – their shifts failures and encounters – is essentially the plane on which her work operates."^[47]

Her work offers itself as an example of the type of art practice that emerged in Quebec at the beginning of the 1980s, which is centred around the artist-as-individual rather than artist-as-part-of-the-collective. Her work is political since it reconfigures photography's privileged relationship to reality and undermines the authority of the image. However at the same time it is not as directly engaged with the quest for social and political change as Campeau's earlier work. As well, we will see in the next chapter

that notions of identity and subjectivity in a post-colonial world can be problematized in relation to the “Other.” That discussion, through the examination of Ramona Ramlochand’s work, will further underscore the mutability of the category of identity, a central concept in Cadieux’s oeuvre.

Endnotes

[1] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962), 164-165.

[2] Laurence Louppe, "Entre-Corps," *Geneviève Cadieux*, ed. The Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art (Vancouver and Montréal: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art, 1999), 37.

[3] Johanne Lamoureux, "French Kiss from a No Man's Land," *Arts Magazine* 65, no. 6 (1991): 49.

[4] *Ibid.*, 49.

[5] A good general source: Paul-André Linteau, *Histoire du Québec contemporain* (Montréal: Les éditions du Boréal, 1986).

[6] Linteau ed., 556.

[7] Rose-Marie Arbour, "les expositions de femmes artistes et leurs catalogues: 1965-1990," in *Exposer l'art contemporain au Québec*, edited by Francine Couture (Montréal: Centre de diffusion 3D, 2003): 99-166.

[8] "At the beginning of the 1970s there was an attempt to affirm sexual difference in art. At the same, there was a focus to inscribed art produced by women within the mainstream. The purpose of the collective exhibition was to legitimize art made by women and mark its difference" (translation by author). Arbour, 104.

[9] "From the 1990s, it seems like artists and curators moved beyond a feminist perspective which they feared was totalizing" (translation by author). Arbour, 105.

[10] Chantal Pontbriand, "Voix Off / Voice Over," *Geneviève Cadieux* (Vancouver and Montréal: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art, 1999); Pontbriand, Chantal, "Language is a Skin," *Geneviève Cadieux: Canada XLIV Biennale di Venezia* (Montréal: Montréal Museum of Fine Art and Éditions Parachute, 1990).

[11] Chantal Pontbriand, "Voix Off / Voice Over," *Geneviève Cadieux* (Vancouver and Montréal: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art, 1999); Scott Watson, "The Near and Distant" *Geneviève Cadieux* (Vancouver and Montréal: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art, 1999); Chantal Pontbriand, "Language is a Skin," *Geneviève Cadieux: Canada XLIV Biennale di Venezia* (Montréal: Montréal Museum of Fine Art and Éditions Parachute, 1990);

[12] Laurence Louppe, "Entre-Corps," *Geneviève Cadieux* (Vancouver and Montréal: Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery and The Montreal Museum of Fine Art, 1999); Gilles Godmer, "Bruises of Photography," *Geneviève Cadieux* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1993); Jacinto

Lageira, "Of the Place and the Absence of the Body," *Geneviève Cadieux* (Montréal: Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1993); Peggy Gale, "Skin Deep," *Canadian Art* 7, no. 1 (1990): 58-65.

[13] David Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous* (New York: Random House, 1996), 39.

[14] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962).

[15] *Ibid.*, 165.

[16] *Ibid.*, viii.

[17] Abram, 45.

[18] Source: Merleau-Ponty.

[19] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 134.

[20] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith (London and New York: Routledge, 1962), 232-234.

[21] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[22] In *Phenomenology of Perception* much weight is given to the sense of sight over the other senses. However, the term perception here is not applied exclusively to sight but is meant to encompass all the senses.

[23] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*. Edited by Claude Lefort. Translated by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 134-135.

[24] Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, 39.

[25] *Ibid.*, 407.

[26] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 248.

[27] Abram, 66.

[28] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 130-131.

[29] Louppe, 38.

[30] Chantal Pontbriand, "Voix Off / Voice Over," 33.

[31] A pivotal essay on the male gaze is: Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" in *Visual and other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).

[32] Chantal Pontbriand, "Language is a Skin," *Geneviève Cadieux: Canada XLIV Biennale di Venezia* (Montréal: Montreal Museum of Fine Art and Éditions Parachute, 1990), 70.

[33] Abram, 52.

[34] Abram, 54.

[35] Abram, 62.

[36] Louppe, 38.

[37] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 26.

[38] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981).

[39] Chantal Pontbriand, "Language is a Skin," 75.

[40] Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 139.

[41] Chantal Pontbriand, "Language is a Skin," in *Geneviève Cadieux: Canada XLIV Biennale di Venezia* (Montréal: Montreal Museum of Fine Art and Éditions Parachute, 1990).

[42] Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which is Not One* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[43] Abram, 75.

[44] This piece contrasts with another similar one entitled simply *Elle et Lui*, 2000, in which only the *Lui's* hand appears in *Elle's* portrait.

[45] In Abram, 37.

[46] Abram, 49.

[47] Chantal Pontbriand, "Language is a Skin," 67.

CHAPTER 4

Ramona Ramlochand: A Sense of Locale

The image is no longer a thing belonging to reality, it is a paradigm, but a shifting paradigm, one that is constantly evolving.^[1]

Richard Baillargeon

My artwork is all about filtering light into a dialogue about place, 'being here' and 'being there,' thus creating 'virtual non-places' in which to exist.^[2]

Ramona Ramlochand.

1. Introduction

As a result of immigration,^[3] Quebecois society has become increasingly heterogeneous and diverse with 7% of its population belonging to an ethno-cultural minority group (a notable increase from 6.1% in 1996).^[4] In Montreal the proportion is much higher with one person out of three belonging to a visible minority group.^[5] It comes as no surprise therefore that themes of belonging and displacement have become prominent in the field of visual art in Quebec over the last two decades.

Feminism was arguably the first social movement in the province to fully articulate and conceptualize the question of difference, opening up the field of "identity politics" in its broadest sense. Queer and visible minority communities rapidly engaged themselves in tackling and combating the various biases of dominant systems of knowledge and thought. In Canada, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, enacted in 1982 recognized and entrenched the rights of the individual throughout Canada. In Quebec, a tension has endured ever since the Quiet Revolution between the

emancipatory demands of various identity communities (gendered, queer and visible minorities) and the nationalist project, which supports the articulation of a collective identity built around the notion of a common sense of belonging.

Such questions of place, homeland and identity are central to Ramona Ramlochand's work. Born in Guyana in 1958, Ramlochand immigrated to Canada in 1967. Having lived in Cyprus and England as well as travelling throughout Africa and Southeast Asia, her work is infused by these experiences. She describes her practice as “the coming to terms of change and displacement experienced as a child.”^[6] Ramlochand is a photo-based artist who often works with installation, sometimes incorporating video and sound. Her work has been exhibited across Canada since the beginning of the 1990s. Critical writing on her work is sparse owing to the fact that her practice is relatively recent.^[7] Nonetheless her work is valuable to assess as it reflects both recent photographic practice in Quebec and the province's changing cultural makeup. At the same time, Ramlochand's work – like that of Campeau and Cadieux – signals the centrality of questions surrounding identity for Quebecois photography. But here those questions are framed within the context of post-colonial discourse.

In Quebec (as well as in the rest of Canada), landscape and identity have long been closely intertwined. While Johanne Lamoureux contends that language, rather than landscape, has played a significant role in the shaping of Quebecois national identity in recent visual culture,^[8] there is ample evidence that landscape has also been an enduring icon of Quebecois nationalism (as it has of Canadian identity). The Quebecois landscape and its inhabitants have been the subjects of visual art, popular music and literature for

generations. In the introduction of a largely uncritical study of Quebecois landscape painting, Jacques-Yvan Morin writes, “Il n’est jamais si innocent qu’il puisse omettre d’établir, en même temps que l’histoire du paysage, celle de notre identité et de nos aspirations, celle de notre destin comme peuple.”^[9] Landscape operates discursively in the construction of Quebecois identity within the collective and the nation.

However as literary critic Sherry Simon writes, “l’hétérogénéisation accrue des populations et l’éparpillement de leurs allégeances portent un défi aux images et mythes de la spécificité de la culture nationale; partout en Occident, l’idéal d’une culture nationale monolithique se révèle de plus en plus difficile à actualiser.”^[10] Postcolonial discourse has been instrumental in rethinking the way that land and place are regarded. The influential theorist Homi K. Bhabha for example rejects the representation of the nation through unity, origin and totality in which all differences (between past and present, minorities and majorities, empowered and disempowered) are lost.^[11] In a post-colonial world, the culture of common signs is very problematic. The nation-state can no longer be thought of as a fixed or singular entity. Geographical boundaries are easily traversed, and populations are increasingly cross-fertilized. The concept of a national culture that claims authority through the supposedly consensual transmission of historical traditions and customs has been questioned profoundly.

This chapter will provide an analysis of Ramona Ramlochand’s photo-based work with particular attention to the themes of identity and homeland in the face of displacement. I will argue that in Ramlochand’s work, the concept of identity is proposed as spatially fluid and mutable. Identity is not contained within a defined unit of space or

geography; rather it is experienced across national boundaries. Ramlochand's "places" are shifting ones, often constructed by the juxtaposition and collage of images from disparate locations. By incorporating postmodernist photographic strategies, Ramlochand reconfigures space in order to address the problematic of postcolonial geography and identity. Like many other recent art practices, Ramlochand's transgresses the landscape tradition by repudiating representational practices that support singular and hegemonic national ideologies. For Ramlochand, the nation (and by extension identity) is not seen as a 'given' natural entity. It is a constructed place which can take on diverse and polymorphous forms. The role of landscape in supporting identity politics thus has greatly changed since *Disraeli, une expérience humaine en photographie*. As with the later work of Campeau and Cadieux's production as a whole, Ramlochand's work signals a dramatic shift in Quebecois photography from the direct and somewhat unproblematic realism of *Disraeli* to a more referentially ambiguous form that highlights the mutability of identity.

2. Postcolonial Identity

We have seen in the previous two chapters that the concept of "identity" is not static or pre-given, but always constituted relationally. Not only is our "self" multifaceted and ever-changing, but our gendered identity is similarly fluid. Postcolonial theorists have added another dimension to the politics of identity by alerting us to the cultural exclusions which have confirmed the authority and hegemony of the Western world. They have also been instrumental in reasserting the value and agency of non-Western

systems of knowledge. According to Homi K. Bhabha “the move away from the singularities of 'class' or 'gender' as primary conceptual and organizational categories, has resulted in an awareness of the subject positions –of race, gender, generation, institutional location, geopolitical locale, sexual orientation– that inhabit any claim to identity in the modern world.”^[12]

Bhabha argues that cultural identities cannot be ascribed to pre-given, irreducible, and ahistorical cultural traits. Ethnic conventions of “colonizer” and “colonized” cannot be viewed as separate entities that define themselves independently. Instead, Bhabha suggests that it is through the interface and exchange of various subject positions that the recognition of cultural difference is produced. According to Bhabha, “what is theoretically innovative, and politically crucial, is the need to think beyond narratives of originary and initial subjectivities and to focus on those moments or processes that are produced in the articulation of cultural differences.”^[13] It is in that negotiation of subject positions, or what Bhabha famously termed “hybridity” or cultural translation, that dominant discourses in western culture can be challenged.

Bhabha’s concept of the liminal space, which he also refers to as an interstitial space, is crucial to postcolonial identity. It is there that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nation, community interest, and cultural values are negotiated. In its broadest sense, he describes the interstitial as a passage that sits between fixed domains of identities, for example between that of the “colonizer” and the “colonized.” It is—in Bhabha’s words—an inderterminant, or as he terms it “hybrid” space, where “the construction of a political object that is new, neither the one nor the other, properly

alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics.”^[14] It is a space of agency because it is where the hegemonic Western systems of knowledge are disrupted and displaced. Bhabha explains that “it is the ‘inter’—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture.”^[15] Thus it is in these “in-between” places that new signs of identity and cultural meaning are located. Following Bhabha, “these ‘in-between’ spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.”^[16]

Nation, a concept central to Bhabha’s work, is not an easy term to define. Although Bhabha does not provide a theory of the nation, he shares the view that the nation is not a given natural entity but rather—following Benedict Anderson’s famous formation—an “imagined community.”^[17] Bhabha argues that national subjects are produced in a “double time” that simultaneously draws on “the past” and actively develops “the present.” He writes,

We then have a contested conceptual territory where the nation's people must be thought in double-time; the people are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority that is based on the pre-given or constituted origin *in the past*; the people are also the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principles of the people as contemporaneity: as that sign of the present through which national life is redeemed and iterated as a reproductive process.^[18]

Bhabha demonstrates that the rhetoric of nationhood tends to assume social homogeneity and unity, tensions arise naturally as the reference to a fictitious homogeneous past is differently constituted in the real heterogeneous present. Bhabha outlines how within the nation, the discourse of minority communities contests the appeal to “origins” that authorize and legitimate dominant ideologies. The nation is in reality a heterogeneous grouping that is split by otherness and vacillates, according to Bhabha, between different kinds of nationalism. At the place of contact, the nation becomes hybridized and it is there that the nation is located. Bhabha concludes with the remark that “it is by living on the borderline of history and language, on the limits of race and gender, that we are in a position to translate the differences between into a kind of solidarity.”^[19]

Ramona Ramlochand’s work raises notions of hybridity and vacillating cultural identity. Her work addresses what Bhabha terms, “the wandering people who will not be contained within the *Heim* of the national culture ... but are themselves the marks of a shifting boundary that alienates the frontiers of the modern nation.”^[20] Her photograph *In Conversation* (2000, figure 18) exemplifies this strategy. Part of a larger body of body of the same name, this piece was presented as part of the exhibition *Shifting Sites* organized by the Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography in 2000.^[21] Ramlochand projected one of her South Asia travel snapshots onto the living room wall of home and re-photographed it. The travel picture features two Indonesian men dressed in bright coloured traditional clothing, seated on a patterned carpet. The image is projected in such a way that they seem to be seated on Ramlochand’s bright red living room chair, which

has been placed between the camera and the living room wall. An unidentified person wearing a dark cloak, which in many ways seems similar to the clothing the men are wearing, is sitting on the chair. Visually, Ramlochand has created an image where the three individuals occupy the same space.

Through the use of juxtaposition, Ramlochand makes a connection between her intimate sense of locale, symbolized by the domestic interior of her home, and her experience of foreign locations. However, this connection is rendered visually vague as the juxtaposition blurs the borderlines of each image and breaks apart the natural delineation between the different geographical places that make up the composite photograph. While the photograph bears the traces of Ramlochand's different experiences, it does not bear the quality of clarity and definition which we tend to expect from photography. By collapsing her various experiences of peoples and places into one image, she constructs a sense of place and identity that is at once transitory and incomplete. Curator Andrea Kunard remarked that "a sense of place and identity must be garnered through the imperfect assembling of fragments, a process that allows for provisional knowledge, at best."^[22] *In Conversation* explores the fragmented notion of postcolonial identity, where one's sense of belonging is increasingly transnational and multicultural.

As Richard Baillargeon remarks, the images are "evocations of an elsewhere in a kind of vague here."^[23] Interior and exterior become one. As the Other is brought into the home, the distance between "us" and the "Other", and between "here" and "there," dissipates. Ramlochand's relationship to place and geography is thus rendered unstable,

and the nationalistic connection of a nation-state to a bounded territory is problematized. In her vision, the geographical places are multiple and linked logically only by her own experience of them. In many ways the new place that is constructed through juxtaposition recalls Bhabha's notions of hybridity and liminal space.

Ramlochand's *Journey to Nowhere* (1997, figure 19), a photosculpture produced as part of the exhibition *The Night has a Thousand Eyes*, a collaboration with British artist Keith Piper, also represents liminal space. About the piece, curator Sylvie Fortin writes, "the interconnectedness of the exotic and the familiar, of the experienced and the mediated is reiterated by the juxtaposition of disparate images treated identically."^[24] The photo-installation was installed in the centre of a darkened room at the Ottawa Art Gallery. It consisted of a triangular shape comprising of two old vertical wooden doors whose large window panes had been replaced by back light transparencies. These transparencies showed layered images of "exotic" landscapes projected into the corridor of a stale nondescript modern office corridor, which could be found in any institutional environment in the Western world. One window displayed an image of Zaire, the other one of Cambodia. The third door, which completed the triangular photosculpture, was left blank and functioned as a space where visitors could cast the shadow of their bodies. This device recalls Geneviève Cadieux's diptych *À Fleur de peau* where the right hand pane featured a tarnished mirror in which the viewers could see their reflection. In both Cadieux's and Ramlochand's installations, the viewer becomes a part of the work through having his or her reflection incorporated into the installation. In this way, Ramlochand's

work engages an active viewing experience as the viewer's own body and experiences of the world become intertwined with those produced by the artist.

Fortin remarks that, "*Journey to Nowhere* brings us back to the here and now, [generating] an examination of 'history' not as a fixed authoritative text, but as a fluid, transitory, and subjective discursive space open to interpretation based on position, memory and vision."^[25] This space is a hybrid one, which implicates the viewer in its construction through the experience of viewing and reconstituting the fragmented vision into something comprehensible. The space is located through the negotiation of various states: the here, the there, the familiar and the exotic. What Ramlochand does is to insist upon the indeterminacy of categories of identity. Signs of alterity (us/them) are not bounded photographically but instead are presented as overlapping and fluid. In this way the viewer is prompted to recognize that we constitute ourselves in relation to others in contemporary society. Therefore, identity is not a pre-given substance but always constituted through reciprocal exchange. As theorist Trinh T. Minh-ha writes, "not quite the same, not quite the other, she stands in that undetermined threshold place where she constantly drifts in and out."^[26]

3. Postmodern Geographies

There has been a historical convergence between landscape and identity in the visual field in Quebec. Landscape has been instrumental in articulating national identity and a sense of belonging.^[27] Simon Schama's writing on the cultural and historical significance of land has been concerned with the role of landscape in figuring identity,

home and belonging. He remarks that, “the cultural habits of humanity have always made room for the sacredness of nature.”^[28] Like an extension of the body, identification and bonds to the land evoke, according to Schama, a profound sense of cultural identity. The photography project *Disraeli, une expérience humaine en photographie* is an example of an attempt to use landscape “to express the virtues of a particular political or social community.”^[29] The traditions and values of the rural landscape and its inhabitants depicted in the images came to define Quebec’s national identity.

We have seen that landscape was a privileged subject of representation among Quebec’s documentary photographers. They believed that the land perfectly symbolized the specific character of Quebecois society. In the 1970s, when nationalist impulses encouraged the connection of the nation-state to a bounded territory, the “land” was viewed as a symbolic place around which a culture of collective memory and common signs could be nurtured. Therefore there has long been a relationship with the land in Quebec that is inscribed within the politics of nationalism.

It comes as no surprise that the role of landscape in figuring identity, home and belonging has been placed under great scrutiny in the last twenty years. Landscape is understood as an ideologically loaded site, or as W.J.T. Mitchell posits, “an instrument of cultural power”^[30] that implicitly bears the codes of both inclusion and exclusion. Documentary photography of the 1960s and 1970s tended to ignore differences within the nation in order to better represent the collective “we.” Representations of the land and “its people” as idyllic, ahistorical and homogeneous are now understood as problematic since

they dismiss the competing claims of the different communities that naturally comprise society.

Informed by postcolonialist theory, Ramlochand uses the tools of photography, film and installation to communicate alternative readings of the historical convergence between landscape and identity. Like many artists of her generation, Ramlochand has adopted a postmodernist critical stance toward place and identity adopting the representational strategies of juxtaposition, irony and collage. The merger of postcolonialist and postmodernist theories is apparent in Ramlochand's work. It is through that merger that she creates hybrid places where identity transcends geographical boundaries making the convergence between the two impossible.

In today's practice, photography has various states. I have been arguing throughout this thesis that photographs are not neutral depictions of a world frozen in time and in space. Photographs do not speak for themselves. Postmodernism offers a framework with which to discuss the substantial changes that have transformed the field of photography, both in terms of practice and critical discourse. The result is that old beliefs in the verisimilitude of the photograph have been cast aside and replaced by an understanding that images have transformative power. Both Linda Hutcheon and Abigail Solomon-Godeau have observed that postmodern artists often use photography as their preferred medium of expression because of its privileged relation to the real, its potential for manipulation and its wide-reaching use in popular culture, advertizing and the

media.^[31] Both authors argue that photography is well-suited to postmodernist art since it is rooted in realist representation but is in a position to confront its documentary nature.

One of the tasks postmodernism sets for itself is to interrogate received truths and call attention to the structuring forces of dominant ideologies and hegemonic systems of thought. Linda Hutcheon in *The Politics of Postmodernism* defines postmodernism as a practice with an “initial concern to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we may unthinkingly experience as ‘natural’ (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact ‘cultural’; made by us.”^[32] Following Jean-François Lyotard, postmodernist theory is dedicated to problematizing the status quo. It rejects the master-narratives of modernity, which Lyotard explains are a system with,

the goal of legitimating social and political institutions and practices, laws, ethics, ways of thinking ... They look for legitimacy, not in an original founding act, but in a future to be accomplished, that is, in an Idea to be realized. This Idea (of freedom, ‘enlightenment,’ socialism, etc) has legitimating value because it is universal. It guides every human reality. It gives modernity its characteristic mode: the Project.^[33]

The existence of what Lyotard labels ‘metanarratives’ and their effect of eradicating heterogeneity, has been identified as very problematic by postcolonialist writers.

Lyotard’s criticism of universalizing theory calls for a representation of different positions, therefore acknowledging cultural diversity and difference. John Storey believes that “postmodernism has enfranchised a new body of intellectuals; voices from the margins speaking from positions of difference: ethnic, gender class, sexual preference.”^[34]

Postcolonialism dialogues with postmodernism as both theoretical positions mark as a point of departure the dismantling of Western systems of knowledge.

Ramlochand's work can be read as a breaking-down of the meta-narrative of convergence between landscape and identity in a Quebecois context. In their temporal and spatial fragmentation, her images acknowledge that what is important is neither the verisimilitude of the places depicted nor their aura of reality. Difference and ex-centricity replace homogeneity and centrality as the foci of representation in her work.

Among the recurring techniques in Ramlochand's work is the postmodernist strategies of juxtaposition, collage and montage. These are all devices that mark the image with heterogeneity and highlight the fragmentary nature of today's society. Similar to the work of Geneviève Cadieux, and to some extent the later work of Michel Campeau, Ramlochand also adopts a *mise-en-scène* of the pictorial space. By constructing her images, Ramlochand transgresses expectation and tradition and allows no confusion over what constitutes the imaginary.

In *Once upon a time ... Ever After* (2001, figure 20), for example, the artist depicts an altered landscape where the range of symbols that have been used in the past to signify national identity no longer have their place. By doing this, she undermines the historical and conventional association between landscape and national identity. *Once Upon a Time ... Ever After* employs collage to produce surprising new places. She has reconfigured the world by reorganizing and piecing together images that are seemingly unrelated: a man and a woman kissing, a wandering dinosaur, a potted ficus plant, a propped-up vinyl

swimming pool. The couple, in a loving embrace, have been placed in the middle of discarded objects human beings create for themselves and that are symbolic of the contemporary age. In the background of the image, an ancient creature runs away, seemingly screaming. The image is made up of elements whose normal proportions have not been respected. Pieced together, these fragments make up a new geographical place, which she describes as “an apocalyptic landscape that evokes a sense of memory, wavering in and out of focus.”^[35] By presenting a world that is fragmented, Ramlochand invites an active viewing experience. As Fortin remarks, “in the bombardement of fragmentary images ... reading is forced to partiality and subjectivity is intensified; illusions of mastery or objectivity are revoked.”^[36] By provoking thought, Ramlochand’s work subverts the power of the photograph to naturalize ideology.

The process of construction of *Once a Upon a Time ... Ever After* is ultimately a personal one. This process underlines the constructed nature of any personal relationship to the land and problematizes the supposedly naturalized equation between landscape and national identity. More than non-places, Ramlochand’s constructed landscapes are what Bhabha would call “liminal spaces,” where different discourses surrounding identity and nationalism are negotiated.

Ramlochand’s images point to the notion that, as W.J.T. Mitchell posits, “landscape is both a representation and a presented space, both a signifier and a signified, both a frame and what a frame contains, both a real place and a simulacrum, both package and the commodity inside the package.”^[37] Landscape representation is thus a socio-political cultural process through which social and subjective identities are

constructed. Mitchell further remarks that landscape operates discursively in the construction of identity within the individual, the collective or the nation: “landscape as a cultural medium thus has a double role with respect to something like ideology; it naturalizes a cultural and social construction, representing an artificial world as if it were simply given and inevitable.”^[38] By breaking-up the narrative and homogeneity within the photograph through the assembly and collages of disparate images (like the potted ficus plant and the older car), Ramlochand undermines the way landscape representation privileges dominant values in society.

Juxtaposition as deployed by Ramlochand serves as a tool to negotiate the space between “here” and “there.” Time and space are collapsed. Through the arrangement and combination of disparate elements, Ramlochand in effect reflects the heterogeneity of today’s existence. In the end Ramlochand is proposing that linear narrative, where one thing follows another in a supposedly “natural” sequence, no longer adequately describes our relationship to the world and to culture. In the image, this relationship is redefined so as to propose new configurations of identity and nationalism that are based on diversity. Social documentary photography, which relied on photography’s seemingly privileged relationship to the real, is thus rendered problematic since it masks heterogeneity and difference.

Ramlochand’s landscapes are notably unnamed places. Alan Trachtenberg explains that the act of photography is an act of appropriation and control since it fixes thematically and historically that which is in front of the camera at the time of exposure. By relating photographic images to points on a map, photographs have historically

functioned as devices of control over the land. As Trachtenberg remarks, “the name lays claim to the view. By the same token, a photographic view attaches a possessable image to a place name.”^[39] By being neither named nor recognizable, Ramlochand’s photographs lose their possessive function. Ramlochand’s images suggest that the landscape cannot be owned; it is an indeterminate space characterized by difference and subject to multiple readings.

4. Conclusion

Informed by postmodernist and post-colonialist discourse, photography has taken on a new social documentary position emphasizing critique, one in which the previously disregarded or misrepresented contradictions on Quebecois history and society have come under scrutiny. One of the foremost elements of postmodernist and postcolonialist discourses is the shifting notion of geography that play in the fragmentation of the subject. Angelika Bammer writes,

our sense of identity is marked by the postmodern geography of identity: both here and there and neither here nor there at one and the same time. It is in the sense and for this reason that marginality and otherness increasingly figures as the predominant affirmative signifiers of (postmodern) identity. Indeed, it would appear, almost by definition that to “be” in the postmodern sense is to be an Other: displaced.^[40]

Ramlochand critically engages with postcolonial discourse, particularly its discussion of nation and identity. She proposes that the singular body and the collective bodies are no longer one of completeness. The borders of the individual body are fluid and shifting, thus the collective body can no longer be simply the sum of the individual.

The collective body is as undefined as the individual; however as social beings we remain linked to our community. Ramlochand has said that, “there is no stable, real self under these constant changes. Only the feeling that there are a bunch of ‘us’ who feel and act the same way. Self-identity is not lodged solely in the individual but is shared within a community.”^[41]

The landscape in Ramlochand’s work is, like the body, malleable and changeable, reflecting the increasingly heterogeneous and diverse society in which we live. Perception of the self and the larger cultural body are inscribed within the landscape, but Ramlochand permits those perceptions to be multiple and changing. Ramlochand’s work is political in the postmodernist sense of it, meaning that it isn’t neutral. As Abigail Solomon-Godeau explains,

if one of the major claims of modernist art theory was the insistence on the self-sufficiency and purity of the work of art, postmodern practice hinges on the assertion of contingency and the primacy of cultural codes.... The intention of such work is less about provoking feeling than about provoking thought.^[42]

Endnotes

[1] Richard Baillargeon, *Configurations Changeantes* (Montréal: Le mois de la photo à Montréal, 1995), 22.

[2] Ramona Ramlochand, "Once upon a Time ... Ever After," *CV Photo* 56 (Jan. 2002): 26.

[3] Since 1978, Quebec has had increasing responsibility in matters of immigration. Today, Quebec has its own point system for selecting immigrants and manages the delivery of services for the reception and linguistic and cultural integration of permanent residents in Quebec. Immigration has increased from 22,500 admissions in 1980 to approximately 33,000 in the year 2000. Source: Gouvernement du Québec (Québec: Ministère des relations avec les citoyens et de l'immigration, Mai 2000).

[4] Statistics Canada, 1996 and 2001 Census. Data available on Statistics Canada Web site: www.statcan.ca. Percentage calculations by author.

[5] Source: Ville de Montréal, Bureau des relations interculturelles, *Portrait des populations immigrantes et non-immigrantes*, February 2002.

[6] Andrea Kunard, *Shifting Sites* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of contemporary Photography, 2000), n.p.

[7] She has been included in two exhibitions catalogues and a number of articles. Sylvie Fortin, *The Night has a Thousand Eyes: Keith Piper, Ramona Ramlochand* (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2000); Richard Baillargeon, *Configurations Changeantes* (Montréal: Vox, Le Mois de la photo à Montréal, 1995); Canadian Museum of Civilization, *Hot links to a Cold Climate* (Gatineau: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2000).

[8] Johanne Lamoureux, *Seeing in Tongues: A Narrative of Language and Visual Arts in Quebec* (Vancouver: Morris and Helen Belkin Gallery, 1995).

[9] "One must never forget that the history of our landscape is intertwined with that of our identity, our hopes, and our destiny as a nation." (translation by author). Jacques Yvan Morin, "Préface," *Le paysage dans la peinture au Québec*, Guy Boulizon ed. (Laprairie: Éditions Marcel Broquet, 1984), 7.

[10] "The increasing heterogeneity of Western populations and the scattered nature of their allegiances challenge the myth of national culture. The ideal of a monolithic culture is less and less possible to actualize" (translation by author). Sherry Simon et al., *Fictions de l'identitaire au Québec* (Montréal: XYZ Éditeurs, 1991), 17.

[11] Homi K Bhabha, "Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *Nation and Narration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990), 139-170.

[12] Homi K. Bhabha, "Introduction," *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 67.

[13] *Ibid.*, 1.

[14] Ibid., 25.

[15] Ibid., 38-39.

[16] Ibid., 1.

[17] Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," *The Location of Culture*, 139-170.

[18] Ibid., 139-170.

[19] Ibid., 170.

[20] Ibid., 164.

[21] The exhibition assembled works by Quebecois and Canadian artists: Yves Arcand, Susan Coolen, Janieta Eyre, Rosaura Guzman Clunes, Eugénie Shinkle, Greg Staats, Andrea Szilasi, and Joanne Tremblay, as well as Ramona Ramlochand.

[22] Andrea Kunard, *Shifting Sites* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of contemporary Photography, 2000), n.p.

[23] Baillargeon, xx.

[24] Sylvie Fortin, "Are we there yet?" *The Night has a Thousand Eyes* (Ottawa: Ottawa Art Gallery, 2000), 18.

[25] Ibid., 20.

[26] Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (Routledge, New York, 1991), 74. Quoted in Leela Ghandi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 128.

[27] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 9.

[28] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (Toronto: Random House of Canada, 1995), 18.

[29] Ibid., 15.

[30] Mitchell, 11.

[31] Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989); Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

[32] Ibid., 2.

[33] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern explained* ed. Julian Prefanis, Virginia Spate and Morgan Thomas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989), 18.

[34] John Storey, *An Introduction Guide to Cultural Theory and Popular Culture* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 154.

[35] Ramona Ramlochand, "Once upon a Time ... Ever After," *CV Photo* 56 (Jan. 2002): 19.

[36] Fortin, 20.

[37] Mitchell, 7.

[38] Ibid., 3.

[39] Alan Trachtenberg, "Naming the View," in *Reading American Photographs* (Hill and Wang: New York, 1989), 125.

[40] Angelika Bammer, *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), xii.

[41] Ramlochand, 26

[42] Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Photography and Postmodernism," in *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 113.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined shifts in the evolution of Quebecois photography over the last three decades from both a socio-historical and thematic point of view. This approach is based on the belief that art is produced and interpreted within a specific context, and that the discussion of the evolution of art practice cannot be disassociated from an examination of the broader context of production and reception. It also recognizes that practice is affected by various theoretical positions.

Quebecois photography has been profoundly transformed over the period in question. As Serge Jongué writes,

in an astonishingly short time, less than two decades, the seething documentary activity of the early 1970s has subsided, and the speculative image has almost completely taken over the exhibition spaces of the commercial, parallel and public galleries.... Group activities have given way to individual enterprise, and the preoccupation with a global vision of society has been replaced by the pursuit on introspective questioning.^[1]

The relative cohesion of photographic practice during the 1960s and 1970s has given way to heterogeneity, reflecting in many ways the character of contemporary society which is increasingly based on notions of inclusiveness, openness and diversity. To borrow Bhabha's terminology, photography has entered the era of "hybridity," in which practice resists traditional categories of definition and is constantly renewed.

This thesis has discussed the shift in Quebecois photography through a critical examination of the practice of three artists – Michel Campeau, Geneviève Cadieux and Ramona Ramlochand. I have argued that Quebecois photography has been affected by

transformations in society. Nationalism, counter-culture, the emancipatory demands of women and visible minority groups, increased dissemination opportunities and improved institutional recognition, all had an impact on the practice of photography during the period in question.

Although the practice of these three photographers is very different, there is a recurring theme. The notion of subjectivity and its relation to the formation of identity surfaces in each chapter. This should not come as a surprise since questions of identity formation, both collective and individual, have been an enduring theme in Quebec (politically and culturally). Each artist explores and expresses these questions in very different ways. For Campeau, it is examined at the first person point of view as his interest lies in the exploration into the formation of his self. Drawing from narrative theory, and specifically autobiographical theory, I have highlighted the strong narrative undercurrent in his work. This has served as a framework to demonstrate that subjectivity lies at the root of his work, even his early work.

For both Cadieux and Ramlochand, the external other emerges as a crucial force in relation to subjectivity and identity. For them, identity is presented as fragmented; it can never be whole nor complete. However, in Cadieux's work, identity is considered in and through the body of the self. A phenomenological interpretation of her work offered a useful tool with which to examine this. Ramlochand on the other hand investigates the notion of identity as it is constructed relationally and in interaction with the "Other." Her work problematizes identity within post-colonialist discourse. Drawing from Bhabha's notion of hybridity, it is at the point of contact between the self and other that new

subjectivities take root. In many ways, Ramlochand's work re-articulates the notion of a collective sense of identity, which was present in the work of social documentary photographers of the 1960s and 1970s. However, it has been reconfigured to acknowledge alterity and difference.

The work of each artist however is rooted in realist representation even while they transgress the medium's claim to visual accuracy. The photographic image is no longer proposed as a direct and unmediated transcription of reality. Its supposed objectivity and transparency has been effectively put into question. Moreover, current or contemporary photography in Quebec no longer seems preoccupied with defining its character. This probably owes to the fact that the creative potential of the medium has been fully established. No longer exclusively based on factual representation, contemporary photography resists categorization, leaving the field open to multiple approaches and interpretations, similar to contemporary understandings of subjectivity and identity formation.

Endnote

[1] Serge Jongué, "The New Photographic Order," in *Thirteen Essays on Photography* (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Contemporary, 1990), 38.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Michel Campeau, *M. Gouin et son fils travaillant à la récolte* (1972).

Figure 2. Michel Campeau, *Pierre Vaillancourt* (1972)

Figure 3. Claire Beaugrand-Champagne, *Henri Gosselin, rang des Breeches* (1972)

Figure 4. Cedric Pearson, *Foins chez les langueux* (1972).

Figure 5. Michel Campeau, *Gribouillage sur la photographie. Autoportrait à la table lumineuse* (1988)

Figure 6. Michel Campeau, *Texte : Moi aussi j'avais envie de voir* (1990)

Figure 7. Michel Campeau, *Nicole et Léandre, Estuaire du Saguenay* (1990)

Figure 8. Michel Campeau, *Planche-témoin reconstituée* (1990)

Figure 9. Michel Campeau, *Quai, Port-au-Persil* (1989)

Figure 10. Michel Campeau, *Sans titre* (2001)

Figure 11. Michel Campeau, *Sans titre* (2001)

Figure 12. Michel Campeau, *Sans titre* (2001)

Figure 13. Geneviève Cadieux. *Amour aveugle* (1992)

Figure 14. Geneviève Cadieux. *Blues* (1992)

Figure 15. Geneviève Cadieux. *Trou de mémoire, la beauté inattendue* (1992)

Figure 16. Geneviève Cadieux. *Elle et Lui (avec main de femme)* (1997)

Figure 17. Geneviève Cadieux, *À fleur de peau* (1987)

Figure 18. Ramona Ramlochand, *In Conversation* (2000)

Figure 19. Ramona Ramlochand, *Journey to Nowhere*, (1997)

Figure 20. Ramona Ramlochand, *Once Upon a time ... Ever After* (2001)

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