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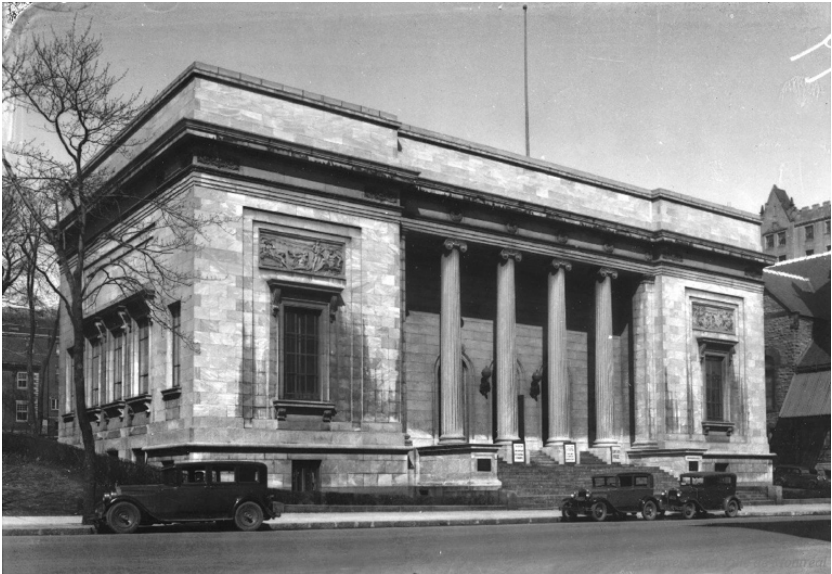
From the series "Mapping the Automatists in Montreal", #115

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Part 3

Exhibitions in which the Automatists were present from 1950 to 1955

Claude Gosselin, C.M., August 14th, 2020



Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion), at 1379 Sherbrooke Street West. Architects: Edward and William S. Maxwell. Photo: City of Montreal's archives, March 26, 1936.

Exhibitions outside of the Spring Salon

January 26 – February 13, 1952

Following the incident of March 1950, the MMFA's director Robert Tyler Davis asked Paul-Émile Borduas and his friends to present an exhibition of their works in the museum's Gallery XII. Entitled *Paintings by P.-É. Borduas and by a Group of Younger Montreal Artists*, it presented works by Marcel Barbeau, Robert Blair, Paul-Émile Borduas, Marcelle Ferron, Jean-Paul Filion, and Gérald Tremblay.

August 12 – September 7, 1952

Exhibition "Les arts du Québec". Borduas participates.
Presented as part of the Festival de Montréal

February 11 – 28, 1955

Following Claude Gauvreau's initial idea, Gilles Corbeil organized *Espace 55*. The exhibit brought together the works of Pierre Gauvreau, Fernand Leduc, and Jean-Paul Mousseau. Still known as the Automatists, although the group no longer had the homogeneity it once had, they are joined by Ulysse Comtois, Paterson Ewen, Rita Letendre, Jean McEwen, Guido Molinari, Robert Dupras, Philippe Émond and Noël Lajoie.

Gilles Corbeil invited Paul-Émile Borduas, then in New York, to come and see the exhibition. His support was important. Borduas said he was disappointed. He found the content too similar to that of the exhibition "*La matière chante*", presented a year earlier at the Galerie Antoine, in 1954 (Guy Robert, *L'art au Québec depuis 1940*, Éditions de La Presse, Ottawa, 1973, p. 109). (See our booklet on Galerie Antoine.)

Espace 55 highlighted the different aesthetic and pictorial approaches between Paul-Émile Borduas and Fernand Leduc (Guy Robert, p. 110). Leduc had recently made the switch to "hard edge, a painting made of geometric planes arranged in a strictly two-dimensional way. Fernand Leduc had also just broken with any form of automatism or tachism, around this date" (F-M Gagnon, *Paul-Émile Borduas. Biographie critique*, p. 373).

The two painters' positions were published by the press and marked a split in the Automatists group (Guy Robert, *L'art au Québec depuis 1940*, Éditions de La Presse, Ottawa, 1973, p. 110). The following year, Fernand Leduc founded the Non-Figurative Artists' Association of Montreal with Robert Blair.

Translation by Vincent Godin-Filion, proofreading by Dominique Robb.

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