

QUAND • LA • FINE TECHNOLOGIE • ET L'ART • CRÉENT L'ENCHANTEMENT

Jeanne Maranda

Artist Marie-Andrée Cossette combines laser, optical and computer technologies to create holograms – three-dimensional, multi-coloured images that seem to float in space. She

divides her time between her teaching job at Laval University in Quebec City, and New York, where she is working with other holographic artists towards perfecting her art. She is currently attempting to establish the first art-related holographic centre, as well as mak-

ing links with European researchers in this field. Her upcoming holograms are the result of her exploration into the symbolic colours of air and water.



Marie Andrée Cossette et son hologramme par réflexion "Le chant de la Création" (1982).
Credit: Richard Baillargeon (1983)

Marie-Andrée Cossette est une femme occupée! Elle partage son temps entre l'Université Laval, où elle enseigne à l'École des arts visuels, et New York où elle fréquente les grands de l'holographie afin de perfectionner son art. Elle nous avait promis un texte pour notre Cahier sur le FUTUR, elle n'a pas pu tenir sa promesse, faute de temps. Nos lectrices devront se contenter de ces quelques lignes tirées du *Journal de Québec* signées par Yvon Pellerin, lors de l'exposition de Marie-Andrée au musée de l'Anse dans le secteur de la Place Royale, en septembre 1984.

"Une puissante lumière blanche traverse un mince panneau de verre transparent dans la salle plongée dans une demi-obscurité. Si on mesure cinq pieds et quatre pouces et qu'on est placé à une distance de 15 pieds, on voit aussitôt apparaître dans cet "écran" un globe terrestre coloré en trois dimensions qui a l'air de se balancer dans le vide. Au-dessus, un coeur de cristal rougeoyant paraît s'éloigner vers l'infini. En dessous, des cubes de verre étranges glissent vers l'extérieur du cadre. Il suffit de bouger les yeux et la tête légèrement pour que l'image se transforme complètement: les couleurs changent, les objets se meuvent comme par enchantement . . . C'est le bal holographique!

"L'holographie d'art que présente actuellement Marie-Andrée Cossette, c'est la rencontre de plusieurs technologies de pointe: celle du laser d'abord, de l'optique, de l'information, mais aussi de la matière grise humaine qui anime toute cette science.

Cette fois, cette pionnière québécoise présente trois nouvelles pièces au public, sorties toutes chaudes d'un laboratoire holographique du New Jersey où l'artiste scientifique a passé l'été. Chacune de ces trois réalisations a nécessité des semaines de mise en place en laboratoire d'une instrumentation raffinée faite de lentilles et de plaques photosensibles traversées en des points extrêmement précis par la lumière séparée de puissants lasers à l'argon. Des calculs informatiques sophistiqués ont été nécessaires pour atteindre l'image désirée et les couleurs voulues. On a dû appliquer méthodiquement des lois physiques complexes, mais le résultat est là, magique: des formes en trois dimensions aux couleurs de l'arc-en-ciel flottent dans l'espace et ce sont exactement celles que l'auteur avait imaginées. "Cette fois," explique Madame Cossette,

"c'est de l'holographie par transmission, un processus plus difficile à travailler que celui par réflexion comme j'avais l'habitude d'utiliser." L'holographie par transmission inventée en 1968 aux États-Unis se voit par transmission de la lumière derrière l'image plutôt que devant, comme c'est le cas avec la réflexion."

Marie-Andrée Cossette définit elle-même sa démarche en ces termes:

"Exprimer l'aspect essentiellement dramatique de la vie, faire éprouver la joie sous tous les aspects, fût-ce l'aspect tragique. Mes images parlent du temps qui fuit, de la réalité et de ses illusions dans la vie de tous les jours et de rêves enfouis dans le coeur de l'homme.

"Dans mes images, je joue avec les effets de la lumière et des couleurs sur des formes et des structures. Et par là, j'essaie de saisir l'essence de l'existence. En ce sens, j'exprime ce qui me préoccupe sans en parler, ou plutôt j'en parle toujours sans le nommer.

"Et c'est ainsi que l'holographie, comme forme d'art, est partie intégrante de mon existence."

Marie-Andrée travaille actuellement à mettre sur pied le premier centre d'holographie rattaché aux arts visuels. Des scientifiques en chimie, physique et informatique se joindront aux concepteurs visuels. Ce centre sera d'abord un lieu de recherche pour y développer des images holographiques, un lieu d'animation où les chercheurs viendraient échanger et partager leurs idées mais la vocation que privilégie Marie-Andrée, c'est celle de l'enseignement: elle veut former la première génération d'holographes québécois.

Les prochains hologrammes de Marie-Andrée Cossette seront les résultats de ses explorations des couleurs symboliques de l'air et de l'eau. Par exemple, elle conçoit l'eau comme une spirale rouge. Pourquoi rouge? Parce que le rouge est une couleur cosmogonique, c'est la couleur du commencement, de l'explosion du cosmos. Rouge aussi, parce que c'est la couleur du sang, liquide qui porte le germe de vie, qui est rattaché à la femme. Et dans cet ordre d'idée, cette artiste rêve de faire des images qui explorent le corps humain érotisé. De belles images en perspective!

Pour plus tard? Marie-Andrée fait des démarches actuellement pour se rapprocher des chercheurs européens. Cette inlassable chercheuse n'a pas fini de nous épater, ses ambitions n'ont pas de frontières.

DIES IRAE*

On that day
Ripples will spread,
Fat will undulate,
Swell, sprawl,
Rampant,
Surging, insurgent.

No recanting then,
No mealy-mouthed forgiveness
Our vengeance is curved,
Compact and keen.

Fat women
Are not few.
When we rise,
The earth will shake.

Christine Donald
Toronto, Ontario

**this poem and "the fat woman finds her level" (published in CWS/cf Vol. 6, No. 1) are from a manuscript to be published later this year by Ragweed Press, P.E.I.*

invocation

just in case
duality
gets the upper hand,
just in case
destruction and redemption
act out the prophecy,

we will cant the lullaby
they taught us for this
special occasion, meiosis
of the spirit

because

the measurement of time
just may have
the upper hand
over eternity.

just in case
the council of hours
gets to
call the shots
this time round,

we will
sound the ancient rhythm,
summon the mist of fusion
to the boundaries they said
would come to pass,
just in time,

just in time.

Joan Ruwinsky
Foster, Quebec

THE QUEENDOM OF MOTHES

A Story by Giovanna Peel

Once upon a space there was a little queendom. It was lovely and small and had meadows and rivers, valleys and clouds and pink flamingoes, both of the flying and front yard variety. It was inhabited by women only and was ruled by a very wise old queen named Mothes. The women had never seen the world of Men and were naturally very curious about the Men's ways and wanted to learn about that unknown but fascinating world. So, after lengthy deliberations between the queen and her women it was decided that the Queen's youngest daughter, a mere child of nine by the name of Ette, would be sent to the Land of Men to see and to tell of their strange ways.

Ette left with the blessings of her mother, one fine day in the season of the Bright Clouds and Soft Winds. She was gone for a long time, the blossoms she left withered and fell, and the Queen grew apprehensive and restless. She kept looking in the direction of the land of Men, over the Eastern Mountains where Ette had disappeared, and kept wishing she had never let the girl go.

But one day, at about the end of the season of the Chill Winds, Ette was seen by one of her sisters coming over the foot of the Mountains and all the women gathered together in great excitement around the girl to hear the tales of the Land of Men.

A great silence fell upon the audience and the girl started to speak of her journey. "I have seen many wonderful things in the Land of Men, and sometimes I was stunned by the beauty of their art and the cleverness of their devices." "But sometimes," she continued, "I could not understand their actions."

The audience grew attentive. The expectation was such that one could hear the bees dancing in the sun and the river polishing the stones down in the valley.

Ette went on. "Sometimes a great number of them gather together in an immense basin with seats with a little field in the center. In this field two groups of men fight strenuously for a long time to take possession of a little brown ball."

The women listened on, waiting for some kind of explanation. "Well," the Queen said, "maybe the little ball had some kind of special power or was made of a very precious material."

"No, no," said the girl, "I thought so too, so that when they finished their battle I went down in the field and asked to be shown the little ball. They gave it to me and nobody seemed to care much about it. They didn't even asked for it back."

"That's strange indeed," said the Queen. "What else did you see?"

"I saw something even stranger," continued Ette. "Sometimes they put two men together on a little elevated platform surrounded by ropes. Then one of the men starts to punch the other

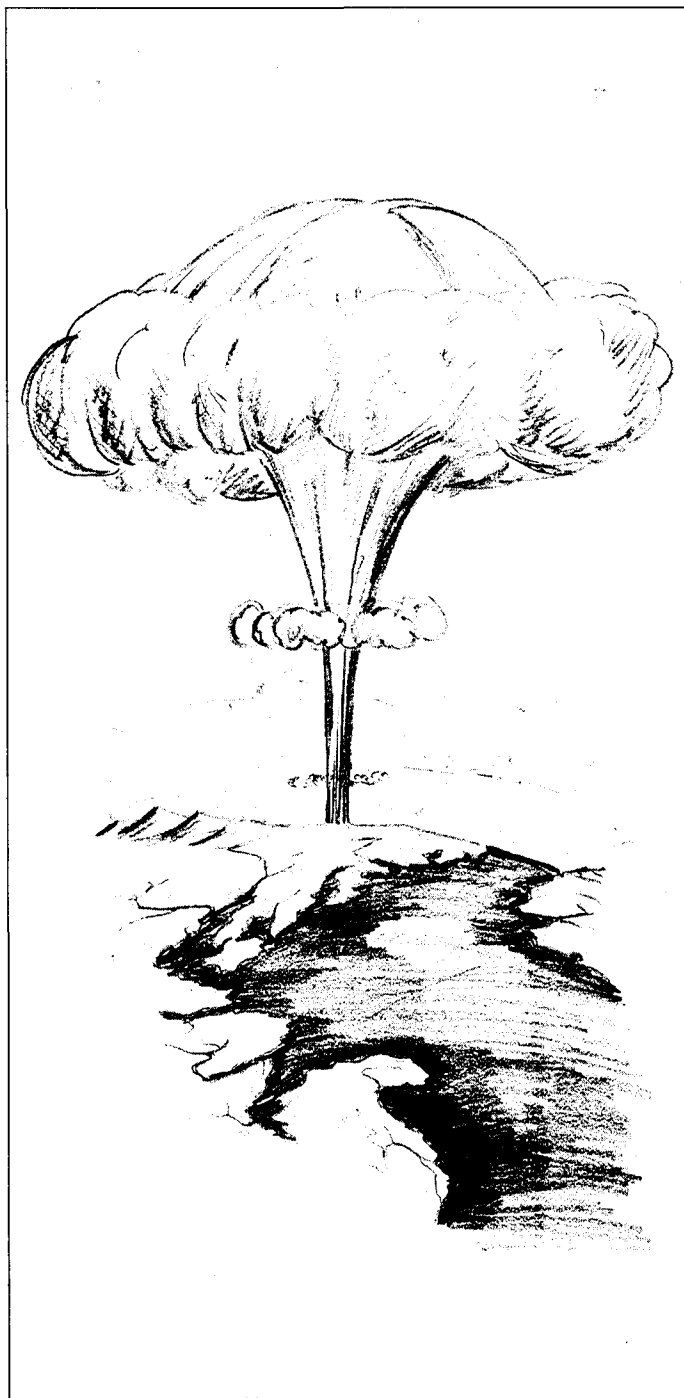


Illustration: Tony Venditello

in the face and on his chest. The other man does the same, and nobody tries to stop them. All the onlookers grow very excited and incite them to go on. When one of the man finally faints in pain nobody helps him but rather they cheer the guilty one, and proclaim him the winner. They actually give him no punishment, and treat him like a hero."

The women were starting to disbelieve what they were hearing. They grew tense and perplexed.

"They also," said Ette quickly now, because she sensed she was starting to lose credibility, "go to places where nobody should want to go, deserted, lonely and terribly cold. They almost die of cold and hunger, and some of them sometimes do die, so that they can put a little flag in the middle of these God-forsaken places. They have to do it very fast before another group arrives there first and puts a different little flag in the same place. They like to put little flags in difficult places, on top of mountains, on deserts, on islands – the more difficult the place is to reach the more they struggle to put little flags on it."

The girl paused with some satisfaction. She knew she had succeeded in stunning her audience, that the women were a bit incredulous. But she also knew that the strangeness of her tale had the flavor of truth.

The queen knew that her favourite daughter was speaking the truth and urged her on.

So Ette went on. "Sometimes they gather in great numbers and dress all the same. Then a man shouts some inaudible orders and everyone starts to walk in little steps. When the man bellows right everyone turns right and when he bellows left everybody turns left, and then they all stop."

"Where do they go in little steps?" asked the Queen.

"Nowhere, mother, nowhere," said the girl.

The women were silent for a while and then noiselessly gathered around Ette. They slowly started to whisper comments and suggestions and ideas and the whisper grew more decisive and loud.

Finally the eldest of the Queen's daughters rose and said: "We think that it is necessary that we go to the land of Men and teach them wisdom and peace and show them the way to be happy with each other as we are in our land."

The Queen saw that this had to be done without delay and allowed the women to prepare for departure. She on her part was too old to travel and would remain in the queendom for their return.

So the women of Mothes left one bright morning in the season of Scents and Ripeness and disappeared over the Eastern mountains in the direction of the Land of Men. The Queen looked on with trepidation but she was also happy that her women would spread wisdom and peace in another land.

A long time passed and when the women of Mothes were not back the Queen grew restless and preoccupied. She was three-hundred years old and she knew that she had to die soon. She wanted to see her beloved daughters happy and safe back in the Queendom. So she waited and waited.

But one day, over the Western mountains in the direction of the Land of Men, she saw something very beautiful and reassuring. A marvellous immense cloud appeared, as big as the highest mountain, and covering most of the sky. It was in the shape of a mushroom.

So the queen knew, because of the beauty of that mushroom cloud, that her daughters had found happiness in the Land of Men.

The National Women's Studies Association Conference:

"Creating Choices Through Feminist Education"

will be held at the

University of Washington,
June 19-23, 1985.

For further information contact:

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The Marian Engel Award

An endowment fund has been established in Marian's name – the eventual target being \$50,000 – to provide for an annual prize which rewards achievement and encourages future production among women novelists, 45 and under.

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