

Cathexis

Charles Gagnon

Please join Michiko Gagnon for the opening reception of:
Cathexis: Selected Works from the Estate of Charles Gagnon.

Friday, October 3, 2003; 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

"I've always said – and it's perhaps the only thing worth saying – that art is not a means of communication but rather a form of communion. I think that people become united with a work of art, those who are ready anyway, not because they have prepared themselves but because they are available. It has nothing to do with intelligence, culture, or knowledge, it's something else."

Charles Gagnon in conversation with Olivier Asselin, 1998.

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■ ■ TrépanierBaer

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403.244.2066 Gallery hours: Tuesday – Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.



Self portrait, 1978.

MEDIA RELEASE

Cathexis: Charles Gagnon

TrépanierBaer gallery is pleased to announce the opening of an exhibition of works from the estate of Charles Gagnon entitled, "Cathexis." Charles Gagnon 1934-2003, was one of the most inspirational leaders in contemporary Canadian art, and a major contemporary art figure in Québec. This exhibition will feature selected works drawn from the artist's prolific career.

Since the beginning of the 60's, after his studies in New York at the Parsons School of Design and New York School of Design in the second half of the 50s, Charles Gagnon has been at the forefront of the visual arts in Canada. Throughout the sixties and seventies, in addition to teaching film and photography at Concordia University, and later through to 1995 at the University of Ottawa, Mr. Gagnon exhibited regularly within the gallery and museum circuit across the country. Yet despite his busy public life there was a quiet stillness at the heart of his work, notes Sarah Milroy in a recent memorial article published in The Globe and Mail. In her article Milroy quotes photographer Geoffrey James, a close friend of the artist, who illuminates on the nature of the artist's unique spirit: "Charles' work was totally unlike anyone else's. It had a deep metaphysical weight to it. He liked to observe the landscape when it was at its quietest. This was a man who loved November."

Parallel to his career as a painter, Gagnon photographed landscapes, urban and rural, for more than thirty years. These two mediums formed the foundation of a multidisciplinary art practice that also included film: A visual arts career that spanned nearly 45 years. Through his expansive body of multidisciplinary work he created, explored, and observed the realm of the visual to reveal new layers of meaning to what is perceived. With dazzling eloquence and insightfulness, Gagnon quietly – but

fundamentally – sought throughout his creative life to embody the act of perception into visual codes.

The recipient of many honors over the course of his life: an honorary doctorate from the University of Montréal in 1991; induction to the Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Québec, in the same year; the prestigious Prix Bordeas in 1996; and the Governor General's Award for the Visual Arts in 2002. In January, 2003 he was awarded the first Jean Paul Riopelle Lifetime Award, given by The Council for Arts and Letters of Québec. Charles Gagnon's work has been shown extensively throughout Canada, the United States and in Europe. Among the institutions who have exhibited his work one notes all major Canadian Museums including the National Gallery of Canada. Several major retrospectives of his work have been mounted in and outside Québec: The Montréal Museum of Fine Arts in 1978; The Musée Art Contemporain's stunning retrospective in 2001 – an extraordinary exhibition that laid bare the clear trajectory of Mr. Gagnon's thought and the sophistication of his sensibility; And, the Musée de la photographie in Lausanne, Switzerland: A photographic survey organized and first mounted at the Musée du Québec in 1998: An exhibition which spanned thirty years of his photographic work. His work has also been shown at the National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, the National Gallery of New Zealand, the Hirshorn Museum in Washington, the Tel-Aviv Museum, the Paris Biennial, and the Albright Knox Gallery in Buffalo. Charles Gagnon's works are also included in many of the most important private collections in Canada.

For more information please contact Yves Trépanier or Kevin Baer at (403) 244-2066, or email tbg1@telusplanet.net.