

Études

June 11–August 2, 2015

manonGUIDOsara

This slightly awkward title will perhaps remind you of another: *mSm* (Molinari, Sala, Munari).

That title had been selected for the exhibition of Italian sculptor Andrea Sala, who was the first artist to be in residence at the Foundation, in the final months of 2011. The experiment had fostered the creation of four new works consisting of as many physical elements designed, among other things, to bridge the work of Molinari, that of the important multidisciplinary Milanese artist Bruno Munari—a sort of one-man band to whom Picasso referred as “the new Leonardo”—and Sala’s own. The artist had concentrated on a little known body of work by Molinari, which for the occasion was considered in a new way. Memories of that particular residency continue to glow favourably at the Foundation, since it achieved a natural place in our general mission of promoting the work of Molinari by all means deemed worthwhile, including offbeat exhibitions which cast a somewhat oblique look at his legacy.

It is also clear that, *mutatis mutandis*, Manon De Pauw and Sara A.Tremblay, have behaved in much the same way. The two multidisciplinary artists took over Molinari’s workshop for five short weeks, with the intention, they affirmed, of “exploring the notion of pictoriality in close connection with the gesture through which it comes about” while enjoying unfettered access to all of the resources of “Moli’s bank”. Access to which they resorted with gusto. A body of new work is the result, impressive in light of the short time span of the residency, the fact that each was working for the first time in a “four

hands” mode on the conciliation of their respective worlds. *Études . . .* is the title they have modestly given to the results.

From their very first incursion into the treasure trove in the Foundation’s basement, they were attracted to four square columns made of coloured wood, piled in a corner and more than slightly the worse for wear. These pieces were in fact a sort of *maquette* for a 1966 sculpture entitled *Configuration* which was part of Molinari’s last Montreal retrospective and is now owned by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. It is worth remembering that Molinari’s sculptural experiments in the Sixties were intended to create new spatial structures in which the viewer was intended to literally walk between the colours, which had the effect of proportionately multiplying and enriching the modes of interaction with the esthetic object to be perceived. From this perspective, Manon De Pauw and Sara A.Tremblay, who are also the creators of refined performances, will have fulfilled the expectations of the painter / sculptor beyond his wildest dreams.

The four sculptural elements were therefore hurriedly moved to the large ground floor room where they were subjected over several days to the most free and inventive manipulations, sometimes slyly humorous, but always reflective of an environment where there are no prohibitions: scale models—particularly when they are jettisoned—never reflect the same aura as the finished works made to their image. But when subjected to the cross-handed ministrations of two enterprising and talented artists, these remnants may give rise to a true new work of art which, without discarding the issues which engendered the initial purport of the artefacts, open new avenues as well. Affirmatively multidisciplinary, this series of thirteen images speaks of painting,

sculpture and installation, of photography, theatre and performance art, of games and signs which suggest the idea or feeling of a language. Guido would definitely have been enthralled.

The other pieces in the show are of the same ilk. Sharing a common refinement and even conviviality, and always the same modesty of means, the two videograms act as both complements and opposing statements one to the other. The aim is always to study (*étudier*) the means of organising a rectangular surface, constantly composed and decomposed—Molinari saw the genius of Mondrian in these alternating states. Simply, Manon's "dance" is more optical, while Sara's is more physical. The former, drenched in colour, recalls the works in Guido's *Quantificateurs* series, with the blues leading here to a felicitous suite of cyanotypes, while the latter relies on the small coloured masonry works of 1954, of which only the material effects are preserved, the same effect as she will achieve in a surprising *Hommage* to the *Configuration* scale model.

In any case, there is already at the Foundation a pervasive feeling that, in a few weeks, all of these *Études* will be sorely missed.

Gilles Daigneault, Director

The Guido Molinari Foundation offered Manon De Pauw a residency followed by an exhibition in its main space, which the artist already knew from having worked there the preceding summer while preparing an interdisciplinary performance project entitled *La matière ordinaire*. After discussion, the artist decided to invite her young colleague Sara A. Tremblay, who had previously been her student and then her occasional assistant for specific projects, to become her companion in adventure. The Foundation imposed no conditions on the artists and, at the time of writing, the results are of such quality that the residency formula may well be institutionalized.

Manon De Pauw is represented by the Galerie Division Montréal–Toronto.

Sara A. Tremblay is represented by the Galerie Donald Browne.