

**Ayot/Moli (by way of Maclean)****Familiarities**

(On the subject of certain felicitous resonances)

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The exhibitions at the Guido Molinari Foundation since the inception of its programming more than five years ago have all been related to the personality or the work of “Moli”. When approached by Nicolas Mavrikakis to participate in his “Ayot Event”, the initial response was to acknowledge the chasm between the universe of the founder of Graff and that of the master painter of dynamic space. Then followed a search for a sort of “missing link” which might uncover commonalities between these two major figures in Québec art, at first glance so thoroughly opposed. And then the practice of Maclean, an artist already in the Foundation’s sights, was considered anew . . .

Curator Madeleine Forcier, who as director of Graff and as the life companion of Pierre Ayot, witnessed all phases of his artistic development, presents in the upstairs galleries further resonances, both pertinent and unexpected, in the works of the artist’s successors.

**Ayot/Moli (by way of Maclean)****1 Moli / Ayot**

At the outset of the Sixties, the world of painting was dominated by abstraction. Both in New York and in Montréal. In the former, the stars of abstract expressionism and then of chromatic abstraction dominated the scene; here, the same can be said for the post-automatistes and then the plasticiens

None of these artists had any intention of becoming known as the “predecessors” of this, that or anyone. Therefore, it was not easy for an innovative young artist to leave a mark of any significance with art that did “nothing but sit on its ass in a museum” (Oldenburg). In Québec, Serge Lemoyne was the dominant force in all categories of alternative artistic practices and in the decompartmentalization of the arts: “In painting, for example, we are reacting against the automatistes and the plasticiens: we want to challenge the constipated bourgeoisie to which they cater. A majority of the over-thirties have succumbed to academic abstraction: they have fallen into their own trap and have lost any taste for adventure”. In comparison, Pierre Ayot’s revolt was less violent, and perhaps more subtle. He played the role of a soft-spoken agent provocateur: his art invites the spectator to play with him, even if it sometimes seems to be at the spectator’s expense. In any case, Ayot remained far distant from the serious and rigorous paintings of Molinari. Although, in actual fact . . .

**2 Ayot / Maclean**

One of Ayot’s pleasures was to integrate subjects and objects of the most trivial nature into more noble structures, and vice versa. He could have been the author of this other remark by Oldenburg: “I’ve never made the separation between the museum and the hardware store, I mean I enjoy both of them and want to combine the two.” The same may of

course be said of the multidisciplinary artist Maclean, whose favourite artist's supply store on Villeneuve street proudly bears the sign "La Vraie Cour À Bois" (the true lumberyard). Indeed, just like Ayot, he enjoys found objects, "construction sites", with a weakness for anything to do with road signage, which he causes to deviate from its function and turns into art.

### 3 Maclean / Moli

For a time, Maclean was a sort of activist, somewhat on the model of a young Serge Lemoyne; he later became a "real" artist whose game, rather like Ayot, consisted mainly of "blurring the limits of anything held to be real and serious" (Mikel Dufrenne). With complete freedom, always. At the same time, he now admits his preference for geometric abstraction: in his mind, a stop sign or a diamond-shaped dead end sign are also forms of "shaped canvases", surfaces intended to support images. Maclean admired Molinari, whom he met (almost) accidentally at the start of his career; sensitive tributes to him can be found throughout his work, which has taken on a strong identity of its own.

Lisa Bouraly, Gilles Daigneault  
Curators

### Familiarities

I have opted to confront works by Pierre Ayot with those of artists of the following generation, with the aim of underlining certain common iconoclastic issues, either in terms of method of representation, of transgression of identity, or of perversion of meaning and perception of distance between what we see and what is. The choice of works and their juxtaposition show that objectivity is ultimately a very relative notion, susceptible of being defeated at any time. The exercise also consisted of highlighting the multidisciplinary character of Ayot's work as a whole, by reference to the multiplicity of forms given to his subjects. Witness the video entitled *Le tournis* by Gwenaël Bélanger, in which the process of breaking glass echoes *Crac Ding* by Ayot. A grouping of shoes and boots used and reproduced by Ayot will be visible alongside *Bottes (Michèle et Adrienne)* by Raphaëlle de Groot. Forty years after *Corridart*, when Ayot attempted to bring down the cross from its pedestal on Mount Royal, Emmanuel Galland and François Lalumière attempt the risky adventure of reconsidering the configuration of this Montréal icon; their preparatory studies may be compared to Ayot's preliminary concepts and a photograph, as presented in 1976. The links between the sculptures of Pierre Ayot and those of Emily Hermant can be seen in closely-related ideas of representation and interrogation of the perceived reality, as influenced by experience. The works of Julie Picard and BGL may be related to those of Ayot through their use of Pop imagery and their references to the advertisements for consumer goods.

Madeleine Forcier  
Curator