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## ARTS

## Developing a signature in contemporary art

by *Chloë Lalonde* | November 14, 2017 | 0 comment



*Marie Jo Maillé* revives the Canadian *Plasticien* movement in **Géométrie Variable**

"My artistic career began in New York City. I can't dissociate myself from it and all of the city's possibilities."

Marie Jo Maillé was born in Montreal in 1948, and found her love for the arts at a Mont-Orford arts camp in 1964. However, Maillé only began taking painting seriously after a trip to France, where she discovered op art (optical illusion art) and the work of Victor Vasarely. In 1976, the artist continued her studies in New York at the New School for Social Research and the Pratt Institute of Graphic Design. Today, *Géométrie Variable*, her recent body of work, is featured at Georges Laoun Opticien.



Inspired by the artists mentioned above, Maillé creates her own style by merging elements from the work of Josef Albers and Vasarely. Maillé's artwork follows the Plasticien, non-figurative painting movement, showing clear similarities to Guido Molinari's linear abstraction and the added geometrical influence of Yves Gaucher. It is also interesting to note that Molinari and Gaucher were both some of Canada's and Concordia University's most important professors in visual arts.

Most of the time, Maillé uses a board to paint on. She begins by using a solid colour for the background, and proceeds to cover sections with masking tape. "That's where my adventure begins," she said. "I construct my project from a few [random] lines. With an X-Acto [knife], I remove a part of it and apply my first colour. I continue by using other colours and creating new shapes. Sometimes, I cover my whole canvas with masking tape and discover my painting when I remove all the tape. It's an exciting moment."

Maillé's paintings consume the sides of her canvas, an aspect specific to her style.

"I want to represent the stability in the instability," she explained. "I try to give a sense to a world that doesn't make any sense. For me, painting is a way to breathe. I wouldn't be able to live well without this way of expressing myself."

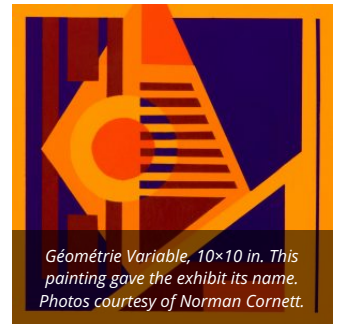
Norman Cornett, a former McGill professor and the exhibit's curator, said art is nothing without sight. Neighbour to Montreal's Museum of Fine Arts, Georges Laoun Opticien is a gracious promoter of artists who aren't well known. According to Maillé, the shop doesn't charge artists for use of the gallery space and they don't take a percentage of the artist's sales.

According to Cornett, music played a pivotal role for both Molinari and Gaucher, as it does for Maillé. These artists were able to put music into geometric forms, capturing dynamic and musical tension on canvas. "If a musician saw my paintings, he would be on familiar ground," Maillé said.

Classical and jazz music are integral to Maillé's life and artwork. The artist is influenced by music and her paintings reflect that.

Also passionate about art and music, Cornett explained that "by juxtaposing archetypal geometric forms and primal colours, Maillé creates a [sheer], dynamic tension that bespeaks psychological complexity."

***Géométrie Variable* will be exhibited at Georges Laoun Opticien (1396 Sherbrooke St. W.) Monday to Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. until Nov 29.**



Photos courtesy of Norman Cornett

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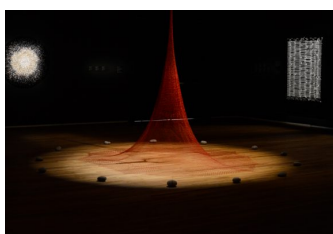


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