

I Don't: The Commodification of the Bride in Montreal Art from the 1970s

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Abstract

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This thesis investigates some of the specific local articulations of the international Women's Liberation Movement created by artists in Montreal at the beginning of the 1970s. I highlight the prevalence of the commodification of women through marriage as a main focal point for this investigation. My case studies are Mauve's performances, manifesto and installation, entitled *La femme et la ville* (1972), and Francine Larivée's environment-event *La chambre nuptiale* (1976). The first section of the thesis explores Mireille Dansereau's documentary *J'me marie, j'me marie pas* (1973) as an introduction to the social and political contexts in which Mauve's and Larivée's works were created. In the second section, I discuss the development of feminism in Montreal, and the history of the institution of the family. The third section examines Mauve's and Larivée's works, and their exploration of the bride in relation to commodities, in the context of an increasingly consumerist society. I focus my discussion on commercial mannequins and the white wedding dress, two elements that are at the centre of both *La femme et la ville* and *La chambre nuptiale*. Additionally, the thesis casts a critical glance at the ambivalence that characterizes sexually empowered women in the media as both objects of male desire and independent, emancipated individuals. The fourth section deals with the impact of pop art, its Quebec counterpart, ti-pop, and with the cultural democracy model. I conclude my thesis by showing that the commodification of the bride and marriage is a topic that is still relevant today, perhaps even more than it was in the 1970s.

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I Don't: The Commodification of the Bride in Montreal Art from the 1970s

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Introduction

In 1973 Quebec filmmaker Mireille Dansereau created a documentary film for the National Film Board of Canada that is now recognized as one of the first cinematic explorations of feminist issues in Quebec. Entitled *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*¹ (1973, 81:18), the title references a children's game, "effeuiller la marguerite," or "he loves me, he loves me not," in which a young girl plucks the petals of a daisy, one by one, to determine her fortunes in love.² Like the game, the title emphasizes the importance marriage assumes in a woman's life from a very young age. Unlike the game, however, the desirable outcome envisioned by the film is considerably less clear. Dansereau later explained the concerns that motivated her film:

I realized that women centre their whole lives in relationship to marriage. Whether or not to marry at eighteen. At least, for my generation it was that – marriage or career? Marriage meant prison. Career meant freedom, adventure, risk – all of which are very masculine.³

In *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*, Dansereau interviews four middle-class women in their late twenties or early thirties about their views on marriage and couple relationships. Although the documentary does not advocate against marriage, it focuses on the negative ramifications the institution had on women in the 1970s.

Behind Dansereau's documentary is the concept that women's personal issues were tied to broader social questions, an idea best represented by the motto of the

¹ *I'm getting married, I'm not getting married*. (My translation.)

² Jocelyne Aubin, "La chambre nuptiale" (master's thesis, Concordia University, 1994), 31.

³ A. Ibrányi-Kiss, "Mireille Dansereau: 'La vie rêvée'", in *Canadian Film Reader*, ed. Seth Feldman and Joyce Nelson (Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977), 256.

Women's Liberation Movement, "the personal is political."⁴ In the words of American feminist art historians Norma Broude and Mary Garrard, "through feminism, women were among the first to arrive at the realization that the self may only exist within social framing, and so the cliché of the individual vs. society, which had been a male myth all along, was brought into question."⁵ In a process not unrelated to feminism's consciousness raising discussions, Dansereau and her team published questionnaires in major newspapers, and people were encouraged to send their reactions and comments to the producers. The more than three hundred and fifty phone calls and two thousand letters that were received revealed a general interest on the topics of marriage and couple relationships in Quebec.⁶ In addition, mediators were hired to moderate discussions after the showing of the film in different communities.⁷ By using individual cases to illustrate a larger problem, and by encouraging individuals to position themselves in relation to them, Dansereau's film thus overlapped with major directions of the global movement known as second-wave feminism.⁸

This movement has been the focus of renewed art historical interest in recent years. Examples of publications and films that explore aspects of the 1970s feminist art

⁴ Carol Hanisch, "The Personal is Political," in *Notes from the Second Year: Women's Liberation: Major Writings of the Radical Feminists*, ed. Shulamith Firestone and Anne Koedt (New York: Radical Feminism, 1970), 77.

⁵ Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, "Introduction: Feminism and Art in the Twentieth Century," in *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 22.

⁶ Aubin, 31.

⁷ Sheena Gourlay, "Feminist/art in Québec, 1975-1992" (Ph.D. diss., Concordia University, 2002), 76.

⁸ I will use the terms 'second-wave feminism' and 'Women's Liberation Movement' interchangeably, to refer to the feminist movement that characterized the 1960s and 70s in the United States and Canada, among other Western countries. The first wave dates back to the nineteenth century, when women fought for the right to vote, and to own property. The second wave is considered to have started in the 60s. Some of the issues women fought for include social and wage equality with men, and reproductive freedom. Third-wave feminism arguably begun in the 1980s, when minority women, such as lesbians, women of different cultural and racial backgrounds, or religions, made their voice heard, since until then they had been excluded from mainstream feminist discourses. Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2002), 4-6.

movement include documentaries such as *The Heretics* (2009),⁹ and *!Women Art Revolution* (2010).¹⁰ Within these discourses, American art often assumes pride of place, as evidenced in books such as *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Feminist Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact* (1994), *A Studio of Their Own: The Legacy of the Fresno Feminist Experiment* (2009), and *Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building* (2011).¹¹ Increasingly, however, there is an interest in considering feminism as a more global movement. Examples of exhibitions that have addressed this issue include *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of Twentieth Century Art, in, of and from the Feminine* (1996), *Global Feminisms* (2007), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* (2007), and *Elles: Women Artists from the Centre Pompidou, Paris* (2012).¹²

Within this increasingly international context, the history of feminist art produced in Quebec emerges as a timely concern. How did feminist art in Quebec coincide with and differ from its counterparts south of the border? What were its main concerns, and how were these inflected by the particular social and artistic situations in Quebec? The

⁹ *The Heretics*, directed by Joan Braderman (2009; Northampton, MA: No More Nice Girls Productions, 2009), DVD.

¹⁰ *!Women Art Revolution*, directed by Lynn Hershman-Leeson (2010; New York City: Zeitgeist Films, 2011), DVD.

¹¹ Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Feminist Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1994); Laura Meyer, ed., *A Studio of Their Own: The Legacy of the Fresno Feminist Experiment* (Long Beach: California State University Press, 2009); and Cheri Gaulke, ed., *Doin' It in Public: Feminism and Art at the Woman's Building* (Los Angeles: Otis College of Art and Design, 2011).

¹² *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of Twentieth Century Art, in, of and From the Feminine* was exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (February 1996); the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London (October-December 1996); and the Art Gallery of Western Australia, Perth (1997). The exhibition was curated by Catherine de Zegher, and explored women artists from around the world, who produced art from the 1930s to the 1990s. *Global Feminisms*, at the Brooklyn Museum, New York City, ran from March 23 to July 1, 2007. The exhibition was co-curated by Maura Reilly and Linda Nochlin, and explored international feminist art from the 1990s to the present. *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution* was organized by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and ran from March 4 to July 6, 2007. The exhibition was curated by Connie Butler, and dealt with international feminist art from 1965 to 1980. Finally, *Elles: Women Artists from the Centre Pompidou, Paris* at Centre Pompidou, Paris, ran from October 11, 2012 to January 13, 2013. The exhibition was curated by Marisa C. Sánchez, and presented international feminist art created between 1907 and 2007.

literature that would permit us to answer these questions is still developing. Significant texts include Sheena Gourlay's Ph.D. dissertation "Feminist / Art in Quebec: 1975-1992" (2002), art historian Rose-Marie Arbour's numerous articles on art created by women in Quebec since the 1970s,¹³ and the book published in conjunction with the exhibition *Déclics. Art et Société: Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970* (1999).¹⁴ In my thesis, I seek to contribute to the formation of this history of feminist art in Quebec – and particularly in Montreal – through an analysis of one specific issue: that of artistic treatments of marriage.

Marriage is not the most prominent issue to be explored by Quebec-based feminist artists in the 1970s; that distinction would probably fall to concerns around self-representation of women in art.¹⁵ Nevertheless, marriage was a theme taken up by several Quebec artists, working both individually and collectively. In the spring of 1975, for example, Montreal was home to the *Artfemme '75* exhibition, the first major event in the city to be dedicated to art created by women, and an initiative of the first and only feminist art gallery in Montreal, La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse.¹⁶ Among the works on display, marriage was addressed by Tilya Helfield in her etching *Ketuba 'The Marriage Contract'* (fig. 1), and by Isobel Dowler-Gow in her boxed sculptures *The Bride Series*.¹⁷

¹³ Such articles include "L'Art des femmes a-t-il une histoire?" *La Revue Intervention*, no. 7 (1980): 3-5; "Quelques hypothèses pour une histoire de l'art des femmes, 1965-1985," in *Le Monde selon Graff: 1966-1986*, ed. Pierre Ayot and Madelaine Forcier (Montreal: Éditions Graff, 1987), 575-585; and co-written with Suzanne Lemerise, "Le rôle des Québécoises dans les arts plastiques depuis trente ans," *Vie des arts* 20, no. 78 (Spring 1975): 16-22.

¹⁴ Marie-Charlotte De Koninck et Pierre Landry, eds., *Déclics. Art et Société: Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970* (Saint-Laurent: Éditions Fides, 1999).

¹⁵ Gourlay, 45.

¹⁶ The Powerhouse Gallery, or La Centrale, was founded in Montreal in 1974 by Elizabeth Bertoldi, Leslie Busch, Isobel Dowler-Gow, Margaret Griffin, Clara Gutsche, Billie-Joe Mericle, Stasje Plantenga and Pat Walsh. It is one of the oldest artist-run centres in Quebec, and its goal is to exhibit artists that are disregarded by major art institutions. "Herstory and Mandate," *La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse*, accessed March 20, 2014, <http://www.lacentrale.org/en/who-is>.

¹⁷ There are no good-quality images available of Isobel Dowler-Gow's series.

A lack of good-quality images and historical documentation makes it difficult to provide full assessment of such works. Even in cases of significant documentation, however, art historians are puzzlingly silent on the marriage theme. Francine Larivée's *La chambre nuptiale* (1976), for example, is widely considered to be the most important instance of feminist art made in Quebec during the 1970s. While the work has been discussed by art historians from a variety of perspectives, a thorough analysis of its feminist exploration of marriage has not yet been undertaken.¹⁸ Other works have barely been addressed, notably the feminist performances, manifesto and installation, entitled *La femme et la ville*, by Mauve from 1972. When mentioned at all, such projects are typically explored in the context of Quebec art history, but their broader feminist implications are rarely contemplated.¹⁹ One of the chief questions my thesis will address, therefore, is how these works offer specific local articulations of the greater international feminist movement that is currently a topic of interest to art historians. In answer, I will highlight the particular importance the issue of commodification assumed for feminist analyses of marriage in the context of Quebecois cultural production. My case studies are Mauve's *La femme et la ville* and Larivée's *La chambre nuptiale*. I will begin with Dansereau's *J'me marie, j'me marie pas* to introduce the social and political context in which Mauve's and Larivée's works were created, by considering Quebec women's artistic

¹⁸ Aubin's "La chambre nuptiale" and Gourlay's "Feminist / Art in Quebec, 1975-1992" constitute the two most complete texts on Larivée's artwork. Other significant texts include Arbour's articles "Quelques hypothèses pour une histoire de l'art des femmes, 1965-1985" and "Chapitre 4: Dissidence et différence: aspects de l'art des femmes," in *Déclics. Art et Société: Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970*; Catherine Melançon's "La réception des expositions d'art engagé à la fin du XXe siècle au Québec: entre reconnaissance et institutionnalisation" (master's thesis, Université de Montréal, 2010); and Aníthe de Carvalho's "*La chambre nuptiale* de Francine Larivée: une oeuvre issue du modèle de la démocratie culturelle ou quand l'art féministe néo-avant-gardiste s'intègre à l'establishment," *Journal of Canadian Art History* XXXIV, no. 2 (2013): 109-140.

¹⁹ An example of a text that focuses on the Quebec context is *Déclics. Art et Société: Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970*. A text that discusses some of the local and international articulations of feminist art in Quebec is Gourlay's "Feminist / Art in Quebec: 1975-1992."

production within the general context of second-wave feminism. I then move on to discuss *La femme et la ville* and *La chambre nuptiale*, noting the particular rise in importance of one issue in Montreal feminist art: namely that of marriage in relation to commodities in the context of an increasingly consumerist society.

1. *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*

A question feminists asked in many Western countries in the 1970s was what marriage meant for middle-class women, who generally worked until they got married, and then quit their jobs to become homemakers. Even among women who sought to pursue a career, most anticipated that they would eventually have to choose between starting a family, and having a full-time job.²⁰ The widespread belief that motherhood was psychologically essential for women, coupled with the fact that discrimination and overt sexism were common in most workplaces, led the majority of women to conclude that their best chance at happiness lay in marriage.²¹ Personal satisfaction remained elusive for many women, nonetheless. Since women were faced with similar problems in many different countries, the 1960s witnessed the emergence of second-wave feminism on an international scale, which pressured the United Nations Status of Women Commission to advise member countries to review the status of women.²²

In Canada, feminist initiatives were burgeoning. The Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, also known as the Bird Commission, made the status of

²⁰ Micheline Dumont and Louise Toupin, eds., *La pensée féministe au Québec: Anthologie 1900-1985* (Montreal: Éditions du Remue-ménage, 2003), 310.

²¹ Wendy Robbins, Meg Luxton, Margrit Eichler, and Francine Descarries, "Changing Times," in *Minds of Our Own: Inventing Feminist Scholarship and Women's Studies in Canada and Quebec, 1966-1976* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2008), 7.

²² *Ibid.*, 12.

Canadian women the subject of a public report published in 1970, and recommended necessary steps for the government to take, if it were to ensure equal opportunities for men and women.²³ Furthermore, in 1973, the provincial Quebec government and the federal government set up the Conseil du statut de la femme (CSF), and the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, respectively.²⁴ Measures were thus being taken at a governmental level to improve women's status in society.

Marriage, divorce and birth rates dramatically changed in the 1970s, reflecting, in part, feminism's impact on society at large. Women gained more freedom of choice with the decriminalization of abortion in 1969, through the same omnibus bill introduced by then Minister of Justice Pierre Trudeau that legalized contraception and homosexuality. Trudeau famously stated that, "the state has no business in the bedrooms of the nation."²⁵ In addition to these changes, the adoption of the Divorce Act in 1968 established a uniform divorce law across Canada, and expanded the reasons for divorce, making it less difficult for people to legally separate. As a result, the annual rate of divorce multiplied by approximately five times between 1968 and 1980.²⁶ In line with this, the number of household of single people that had never been married almost doubled between 1966 and 1971.²⁷ As the divorce rate continued to increase, so did the number of single women who had to provide for themselves. Consequently, more and more women re-entered the labor market to begin earning their own income. It comes as no surprise then, that the percentage of women in the labor force rose dramatically in the period between 1960 and

²³ Gourlay, 82.

²⁴ Ibid., 88.

²⁵ "Trudeau's Omnibus Bill: Challenging Canadian Taboos," *CBC/Radio-Canada* video, last modified June 13 13, 2012. <http://www.cbc.ca/archives/categories/politics/rights-freedoms/trudeaus-omnibus-bill-challenging-canadian-taboos/topic---trudeaus-omnibus-bill-challenging-canadian-taboos.html>.

²⁶ Robbins et al., 5.

²⁷ Ibid.

1980.²⁸ It is important to note, however, that during this time, women held jobs that were predominantly characterized by low wages, and more or less restricted to the clerical and retail sectors, because well-paid jobs and positions of power were not widely accessible to them.²⁹ In 1971, Canadian women earned on average approximately 57.3% of salaries earned by men, while women of colour and immigrant women earned significantly less than this.³⁰ At the national level then, women's opportunities in relation to marriage and work were showing signs of improvement in the 1970s, though change was occurring very slowly.

In Quebec, women's role in society was changing as well. For instance, between 1961 and 1971, the birth rate plummeted by almost 50%, making it the lowest in Canada.³¹ Writing in 1974, sociologist Mona-Josée Gagnon identified three ideologies regarding women's roles in Quebecois society: the traditional ideology of the housewife; the ideology of "adjustment," which implied that a woman should not only be a housewife and mother, but also an intelligent, cultivated person engaging in activities outside of the home as well; and the modern ideology of gender equality.³² Gagnon noted, however, that the "adjustment" ideology still dominated attitudes in Quebec. Therefore, the overall mentality regarding gender roles was slowly changing in Montreal.

Women's status in society and what marriage meant for women were two major issues addressed at the beginning of the 1970s by women filmmakers working with the National Film Board of Canada (NFB). The NFB is known for creating documentaries

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 6.

³⁰ Ibid., 7.

³¹ Ibid., 5.

³² Mona-Josée Gagnon, *Les femmes vues par le Québec des hommes: 30 ans d'histoire des ideologies 1940-1970* (Montreal: Éditions du Jour, 1974), 8.

and fiction films, subsidized by public funds. In 1967, the NFB created the program Challenge for Change/Société Nouvelle (CFC/SN) that was funded by various departments of the Canadian government. The grant program intended to shed light on social issues existing within the greater community and bring awareness to the general Canadian public. By actively engaging with their communities, its filmmakers aimed to enlighten the public, so that people would find solutions to these problems, and eliminate poverty.³³ As part of the CFC/SN program, Vancouver film director Kathleen Shannon produced the series of ten films entitled *Working Mothers* (1974-1975) to explore women's work outside and inside the home. The series included the documentary *...And They Lived Happily Ever After* (1975), which took a critical look at young girls and women's views on married life.³⁴ In Quebec, one of the major projects funded through CFC/SN was *En tant que femme* (1972-1976), a series of socially-engaged fiction films and documentaries, produced by Anne Claire Poirier.³⁵ The series was a groundbreaking opportunity for women to express themselves in cinema, which up until then had been an almost exclusively male-dominated domain. The series aimed to explore topical women's issues, thereby offering women a chance at cinematic expression.³⁶ Such filmic and public explorations of women's personal issues were a first in both Canada and Quebec, and a change that was in line with the values of the Women's Liberation Movement.³⁷

³³ Marie-Ève Fortin, "The En tant que femmes Series, the Film *Souris, tu m'inquiètes*, and the Imagining of Women's Consciousness in 1970s Quebec," in *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada*, ed. Thomas Waugh, Michael Brendan Baker, and Ezra Winton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012), 117.

³⁴ *...And They Lived Happily Ever After*, directed by Kathleen Shannon, Irene Angelico and Anne Henderson (1975; Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1975), 16 mm.

³⁵ The series *En tant que femme* consists of five films: *À qui appartient ce gage?* (1973), *Souris, tu m'inquiètes* (1973), *Les Filles du Roy/They Called us "Les Filles du Roy"* (1974), *J'me Marie, J'me Marie pas* (1973) and *Les Filles c'est pas pareil* (1974).

³⁶ Fortin, 121.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

The five films, which were made by Quebec women, about Quebec women, included Mireille Dansereau's *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Dansereau (b. 1943, Montreal) had a specific interest in the theme of marriage and couple relationships, approaching the theme from different angles, in various films such as *Famille et variations* (1977) and *L'Arrache-Coeur* (1979).

In *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*, Dansereau interviews four middle-class women in their late twenties or early thirties in the intimate setting of their homes. Each interview is interspersed with footage of the women walking outside, either alone, or with their families. The first three women interviewed, all Francophone, are against housewifery and critical of marriage as an institution, a position that sets the tone for the documentary. The first woman interviewed, artist Francine Larivée (fig. 2), explains that although she married at the age of twenty-eight out of fear of losing her partner, she later regretted the loss of her autonomy, and filed for divorce. Larivée also denounces the lack of female role models, distinguishing her own ambitions from those adopted by her mother, whom the artist describes as a submissive housewife. The lack of appropriate role models is part of her explanation for not having answers to all of her questions regarding couple relationships. Similar to Larivée, the second woman interviewed, journalist and single mother Linda Gaboriau (fig. 3), cannot cite her mother as a role model because her mother stopped working the day she got married. She also states that the supposed permanence of the couple is false and idealistic. Her imagined alternative to being in a relationship, or to marriage, is a signed contract that would enact a partnership between her and a man, for a term of five years. In comparison to the first two interviews, the third one with writer and translator Jocelyne Lepage (figs 4 and 5) is unconventional in that

she earns the main source of household income, and is raising a child in an unmarried, non-romantic partnership with the father of her newborn. According to Lepage, marriage is a meaningless institution that gives people a false sense of security. She decided to have a baby for less conventional reasons: because she wanted to contribute to the increase of the Quebecois population in Montreal. In stark contrast to the views of the first three interviews, are those of Anglophone filmmaker Tanya Mackay (fig. 6). Mackay has put her career on temporary hold to care for her family, and is the only woman in the documentary who seems to truly want to be a housewife. And when she did get married, she took on her husband's family name. Despite all of this, Mackay's views on marriage are nevertheless critical. She considers whether people get married because they do not entirely trust their commitment to each other. As such, Dansereau presents several variations on views regarding couple relationships and family life in the rapidly changing Quebec society of the 70s.

The four women interviewed by Dansereau in her documentary illustrate women's problems that were becoming apparent in many countries around the world, and were being addressed by feminist authors who were read in Quebec at the time. In Montreal, some of these included Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Juliet Mitchell's *The Longest Revolution* (1966), Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970), and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970), all of which were available in French at the beginning of the 1970s.³⁸ Greer and Millett travelled to Montreal to promote their books in 1971 and 1973 respectively, both

³⁸ Véronique O'Leary and Louise Toupin, *Québécoises deboutte! Tome 1: Une anthologie de textes du Front de libération des femmes (1969-1971) et du Centre des femmes (1972-1975)* (Montreal: Les Éditions du remue-ménage, 1982), 40-41.

of their visits receiving ample media attention.³⁹ Even though feminist thought in Montreal had a specific set of local articulations, it was nonetheless an “open terrain,” as feminist art historian Sheena Gourlay described it, influenced by a multitude of factors, both local and international.⁴⁰

This international influence is also apparent in Dansereau’s film. The four women interviewed by Dansereau in her documentary illustrate women’s problems that were becoming apparent around the world. Larivée, Gaboriau and Lepage, for example, echo American feminist writer and activist Betty Friedan, whose groundbreaking book, *The Feminist Mystique* (1963), also posited that girls lacked role models, especially since their mothers were housewives. It was thus harder for them than it was for boys to imagine what their professional options might be, and to frame possible aspirations for themselves outside of the home. Friedan claimed that this absence was at the centre of women’s unhappiness later in life. The fact that the public image of women in the media was that of a happy housewife (an image created by advertising companies and magazines run by men) only made it harder for girls to imagine that they could also have a professional career, or for women to understand their unhappiness.⁴¹ Mackay, on the other hand, tries to conform to her new role as a mother and housewife. Although she does not seem unhappy, she regards it as self-sacrifice. In this, Mackay illustrates her wish to conform to what Friedan termed the “feminine mystique.” This was often represented by the “image of woman as housewife-mother,” a role that limits a person’s

³⁹ Clio Collective [Micheline Dumont, Michèle Jean, Marie Lavigne, and Jennifer Stoddart], *Quebec Women: A History*, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1987), 363.

⁴⁰ Gourlay, 104.

⁴¹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1983), 75.

emotional and intellectual growth.⁴² Because of these limits, Friedan argued, many housewives suffered from a “problem that has no name, a vague undefined wish for ‘something more’ than washing dishes, ironing, punishing and praising the children.”⁴³ While Friedan wrote her book based on research undertaken in the United States, Dansereau’s film clearly indicates that the problems the American feminist illuminated were experienced by women in Quebec as well.

Another feminist issue explored in *J’mie marie, j’mie marie pas*, and one that was at the forefront of concern in the 70s, was women’s sexuality. Women’s sexuality and its repression within patriarchy represent Millett’s primary focus in her book *Sexual Politics*. In this work, Millett explores the treatment of women in art and literature, by discussing the literary works of numerous male authors, such as D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Jean Genet, and John Stuart Mill, among others, raising questions about the nature and ownership of female sexuality that are also explored within the film. In Lepage’s small hometown community, for example, sex outside of marriage was scandalous, and access to contraception was difficult. She therefore decided to get married at eighteen, based only on her desire to start having sex. Mackay, on the other hand, did not think she could be monogamous, but was trying since her infidelities were hurting her husband. In Quebec as elsewhere, sexual freedom was one of the major concerns of second-wave feminism.⁴⁴

⁴² Ibid., 54.

⁴³ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁴ Pro-sex feminist texts were published in the 1970s in Quebec in various underground magazines such as *Hobo-Quebec* and *Main Mise*. Pascal Robitaille, "La transgression par la photographie de l'intime. Une étude d'œuvres choisies de Josée Yvon" (MA thesis presentation, Department of Art History, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, February 26, 2014).

Another major topic addressed by all four women interviewed in *J'me marie, j'me marie pas* is the false sense of security that marriage seemed to offer. Australian feminist Germaine Greer addressed this issue in her book, *The Female Eunuch* (1970). Greer explains that “security [relating to marriage and couple relationships] is when everything is settled, when nothing can happen to you; security is the denial of life.”⁴⁵ Like Larivée, Gaboriau and Lepage, Greer too, is trying to conceptualize new alternatives for marriage and traditional couple relationships. The Australian feminist suggests friendship as a potential substitute to marriage, and this is mirrored by Lepage’s unconventional partnership with the father of her newborn, with whom she was not in a romantic relationship before having a child together.

Ultimately, all four interviews in *J'me marie, j'me marie pas* portray the emergence of the new woman who was appearing at the beginning of the 1970s. This new woman had the option of having both a career and children, and had more control than in previous decades over her reproductive capacities – both factors identified by Simone de Beauvoir as major determinants of women’s social position up to that time. If the film demonstrates the major tendencies of second-wave feminism, it also shares some of its limitations. One important aspect that is not only characteristic of *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*, but also of the Women’s Liberation Movement in general, is its homogenization of women’s experience. While it would doubtless have been impossible to offer a complete view of women’s issues in 1970s Quebec (something that Dansereau never claimed to do in the first place), the documentary’s featuring of four Caucasian

⁴⁵ Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008), 270.

women of a similar middle-class background, working in the arts industry, raises questions about the small societal segment that is represented in the film.⁴⁶

The documentary's intersecting issues, as discussed by feminists in the 1970s at an international level, reveals that such topics were not only present in Quebec, but also in many other parts of the world where the Women's Liberation Movement was developing. Yet feminism in Quebec is distinguished from feminist movements elsewhere by a specific set of revolutionary social and political changes that were tied to the province's Francophone population and culture. As the next section will discuss, revolutionary politics and its focus on economics are two key local factors that had an influence on some of Quebec's feminist artists in the 1970s.

2. Marriage and Quebec Feminism

The 1960s in Quebec were years of rapid and powerful social, economic and political upheaval now known as the Quiet Revolution. As historian Jacques Rouillard has argued, the changes that took place in Quebec in the 1960s were part of a much larger continent-wide manifestation of social unrest and restructuring.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, a number of these changes had local characteristics and meanings specific to Quebec, such as the secularization of a formerly Catholic society, the creation of a welfare state, the nationalization of electricity through Hydro-Quebec, and, most notably, the collective affirmation of the province's Quebecois identity.⁴⁸ Economic reforms constituted a significant part of Quebec's increasing financial independence and nationalistic

⁴⁶ Fortin, 118.

⁴⁷ Jacques Rouillard, "La révolution tranquille, rupture ou tournant?" *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes* 32, no. 4 (Winter, 1998): 5.

⁴⁸ Andrée Fortin, "Affirmations collectives et individuelles," in De Koninck and Landry, 18.

affirmation as a Francophone province in an Anglophone country. These economic shifts included the nationalization of electricity through the creation of Hydro-Quebec to exploit the province's abundant natural resources. These changes were in distinct contrast to the period prior to the 1960s during which Quebec's resources were minimally exploited.⁴⁹ Overall, economic changes empowered the Quebec society of the 1960s, and paralleled significant social transformations, such as the rise of nationalism.

The sovereignty movement in Quebec, also known as the independence or nationalist movement, emerged in the 1960s, and was deeply rooted in Marxist and socialist theories.⁵⁰ Sovereignists wished for Quebec to be politically and economically independent from Canada. The movement increased in popularity when French president Charles de Gaulle said in 1967 in his now famous speech at Montreal City Hall, "Vive le Québec libre!" This was followed in 1968 by the creation of the Parti Québécois, which advocated national sovereignty for Quebec. Another group, the Front de libération du Québec (FLQ), was established in 1963 by Marxist separatists, and took more radical actions to separate Quebec from Canada. The FLQ, which became notorious for their bombings, kidnappings and murders,⁵¹ also advocated for the formation of a Marxist-inspired Workers' State, and sought to abolish "capitalist oppression," and the "Anglophone bourgeoisie."⁵² The FLQ thus saw Quebecers as a people colonized by Anglophone Canadians, requiring both cultural and economic liberation.

This focus on economic independence found in various political and social discourses in Quebec – both moderate and militant – is present in the type of feminism

⁴⁹ John Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 351.

⁵⁰ Gourlay, 90.

⁵¹ Dickinson and Young, 321.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 320.

that developed in the province at the beginning of the 70s. Quebecois feminists saw themselves as a double minority: a disadvantaged group within the larger marginalized population of Francophone Quebec.⁵³ The feminist collective Clio posits that revolutionary feminism dominated Francophone feminist thought in Montreal because it was influenced by socialist and Marxist theories popularized by the independence movement:

Their feminism was closely linked to the fight for national liberation, as a popular slogan of the time indicated: *Pas de Québec libre sans libération des femmes! Pas de femmes libres sans libération du Québec.*⁵⁴

Revolutionary feminism characterized the two groups at the forefront of the movement, both formed at the beginning of the 1970s in Montreal. They were: the Front de libération des femmes du Québec (FLF) (1970–1971),⁵⁵ and the Front's successor, the Centre des femmes (1972–1975).⁵⁶ Both groups' strategies focused on the analysis of the status of women, and the training of activists.⁵⁷ A main revolutionary feminist publication in Montreal was the *Manifeste des femmes québécoises* (1971).⁵⁸ It is not known who its authors are, and in it, women's oppression was represented as primarily economic.⁵⁹ The writers show that women are exploited as underpaid employees in the workplace, and as unpaid workers in the home. Furthermore, they argue that the institution of the family benefits men and capitalism while it exploits women.⁶⁰ Some of the terms they use are

⁵³ Gourlay, 87.

⁵⁴ Clio Collective, 360. *No free Quebec without women's liberation! No liberated women without freedom for Quebec!* (My translation.)

⁵⁵ Quebec Women's Liberation Front. (My translation.)

⁵⁶ Women's Centre. (My translation.)

⁵⁷ Clio Collective, 361. *Quebec women, stand up!* (My translation.)

⁵⁸ Quebec Women's Manifesto. (My Translation.)

⁵⁹ Gourlay, 90.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 93.

similar to the ways in which nationalists described their oppression.⁶¹ For example, some common terms are “political, social, economic and cultural” oppression.⁶² These and similar terms appeared in texts published by the FLF and the Centre de femmes, in the *Manifeste des femmes québécoises*, and also in Front de liberation du Quebec’s (FLQ) manifesto of 1963, as well as the leftist journal *Parti Pris* (published 1963-1968).⁶³ These similarities reveal the close connections that existed between the sovereignty movement and feminist thought in Quebec.

A text that was read by both nationalists and feminists in the Francophone province and that formed a basis of their theoretical foundation was Friedrich Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1884). It is a treatise based on notes made by Karl Marx in response to anthropologist Lewis H. Morgan’s book *Ancient Society* (1877).⁶⁴ In it, Engels explored the history of the institution of the family, particularly in relation to women's rights and freedom. Monogamous heterosexual marriage, the basis of the nuclear family, is analyzed as the smallest economic unit of Western society, within which the wife and her children became financially dependent on one single man. Engels notes that the original meaning of the word ‘family’ referred to slaves, and dates back to the fifteenth century, when it was invented by the Romans to denote the social unit formed by a man and his household servants, including his wife and children. The Latin *famulus* meant domestic slave, and *familia* represented a man’s total number of slaves or servants.⁶⁵ Additionally, Engels observes that monogamy was imposed only on women,

⁶¹ Ibid., 91.

⁶² Ibid., 92.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Friedrich Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, in the Light of the Research of Lewis H. Morgan*, ed. Eleanor Burke Leacock (New York: International Publishers, 1972).

⁶⁵ Engels, 121.

because it was the only way for the man to make sure that her children were his own, and that his wealth would be passed on to his offspring.⁶⁶ While marriage's structure had evolved significantly, a woman's financial dependence on her husband had remained constant as a major characteristic of the institution. Engels also argued for the "abolition of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society," and that housekeeping, the unpaid work of women, should become "a public industry."⁶⁷ In this way, Engels set the precedent for pertinent analyses of the inequalities between men and women in relation to marriage. In their re-readings of his text, Quebec feminists pointed out that the type of financial disadvantages women faced as they got married in the nineteenth-century were still present in the second half of the twentieth century.⁶⁸

Feminists in the 1970s embraced not only Engels' theory, but also those of his collaborator Karl Marx, who wrote extensively on the topic of commodification, identifying this as the transformation of goods, services and other entities into commodities, as well as 'commodity fetishism', which he deemed one of the chief mystifications of the capitalist system.⁶⁹ Feminists recognized themselves within this process, as 'goods' available on the 'marriage market.' Wedding ceremonies, supported by bridal salons and magazines, emblemized the connection between marriage and commodities, and brides were offered increasingly expensive dresses to fetishize in lieu of critical consideration of the social and economic relations that marriage entailed.

Overall, bridal publications, fairs and department stores greatly contributed to the

⁶⁶ Ibid., 138.

⁶⁷ Eleanor Burke Leacock, "Introduction and Notes," in Engels, 43.

⁶⁸ Engels' solution to the inequalities between men and women, however, was not realistic. He suggested that if both the wife and the husband are working there will be no inequalities. As we now know, this is not the case. Inequalities in monogamous heterosexual marriage are much more complex, and not just financial. Engels, 135.

⁶⁹ Norman Geras, "Marx and the Critique of Political Economy," in *Ideology in Social Science: Readings in Critical Social Theory*, ed. Robin Blackburn (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 296-297.

commercialization of marriage at an unprecedented level, further complicating the financial implications marriage had for women.

Consequently, feminists approached the wedding industry critically. Most writing on the subject is fairly recent including Naomi Wolf's "Brideland" (1995), Lisa Walker's article "Feminists in Brideland" (2000), Jaclyn Geller's *Here Comes the Bride: Women, Weddings, and the Marriage Mystique* (2001), Vicki Howard's *Brides, Inc.: American Weddings and the Business of Tradition* (2006), and Erika Engstrom's *The Bride Factory: Mass Media Portrayals of Women and Weddings* (2012).⁷⁰ The feminist interest in brides and the thriving wedding industry has long antecedents, however, and some of the earliest examinations of the theme were not by writers but by artists. These include American artist Christo's *Weddings Dress* (1967), Shawnee Wollenman's *The Bride* (1969), W.I.T.C.H.'s guerrilla theatre and protest at a bridal fair at Madison Square Garden (1969), and Kathy Huberland's *Bridal Staircase* (1972). They also include the two artworks I will discuss in the next section: Mauve's *La femme et la ville* and Larivée's *La chambre nuptiale*.

3. The Commodification of the Bride in Art

The commodification of marriage and the bride herself through the institution are at the centre of two feminist artworks created in the early 1970s in Montreal. Mauve's *La femme et la ville* and Francine Larivée's *La chambre nuptiale* are a product of the

⁷⁰ Naomi Wolf, "Brideland," in *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*, ed. Rebecca Walker (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 35-40; Lisa Walker, "Feminists in Brideland," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 19, no. 2 (2000): 219-230. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/464427>; Jaclyn Geller, *Here Comes the Bride: Women, Weddings, and the Marriage Mystique* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2001); Vicki Howard, *Brides, Inc.: American Weddings and the Business of Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); and Erika Engstrom, *The Bride Factory: Mass Media Portrayals of Women and Weddings* (New York: Peter Lang, 2012).

international feminist mindset emerging in the 1970s, whose artworks sought a way to criticize women's status in society. Nevertheless, the two artworks also reveal several local influences, such as the independence movement in Quebec and its theoretical Marxist core, along with the province's strong tendency toward revolutionary feminism. Before exploring the artworks in greater depth, I will provide a detailed description of them.

3.1. *La femme et la ville* and *La chambre nuptiale*

Sociologist Ghislaine Boyer and filmmaker Lucie Ménard founded Mauve in September 1971 to denounce social and political issues they did not agree with, such as stereotypical images of women promoted by the media.⁷¹ They chose to call their group Mauve because it was a colour then frequently associated with the portrayal of women in advertisements.⁷² Boyer and Ménard were later joined by visual artist Lise Landry, by Catherine Boisvert, who was a housewife, by nurse Céline Isabelle, and by childcare worker Thérèse Isabelle.⁷³ Even though the group was short-lived, ceasing to exist within two years after its founding, Mauve's contribution to 1970s feminist art is significant.⁷⁴ The group brought feminist art, albeit temporarily, to a traditional institution such as the Museum of Fine Arts which had historically excluded women artists altogether. What is more, the group's contribution *La femme et la ville* is also one of the few feminist

⁷¹ Nicole Charest, "La vie en mauve: Six femmes en colère à la défense des femmes silencieuses," *La Presse*, August 26, 1972, 8.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Mauve, exhibition proposal for *Montreal, plus ou moins?*, 1972, box AHM-0084, folder 2477, 11/104, *Montreal, plus ou moins?*, Archives Department, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Claudette Isabel, a student in sexology, is presented as the seventh member of Mauve in Gourlay's "Feminist/Art in Quebec, 1975-1992" (68). In Arbour's "Chapitre 4: Dissidence et différence: aspects de l'art des femmes" (146), however, Isabel is not mentioned as a member of Mauve.

⁷⁴ Charest, 8.

artworks produced in Quebec during the 1970s to be presented in the context of a major exhibition of contemporary Quebecois art.

Mauve's *La femme et la ville* was part of the group exhibition *Montreal, plus ou moins?* organized by artist and architect Melvin Charney at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts between June 11 and August 13, 1972, a show that explored urban development in relation to life in the city.⁷⁵ The title of the exhibition implies the show's local and international character, suggesting that even though the artworks might deal with Montreal, they were also relevant to other major urban centres, like Paris, Tokyo and Mexico City. Some of the topics the show dealt with included green spaces in various cities, skyscrapers, and suburbia. As such, the exhibition situated Montreal in an international context as it presented its specific local characteristics at once. As important as the events that took place within the museum, were those that took place outside museum walls in the form of a bus tour around the city organized by Espaces Verts, and Mauve's installation and performances.⁷⁶ Charney's consciousness-raising goals for the exhibition echoed those of the NFB's Société Nouvelle program:

Le mieux qu'on puisse faire dans le contexte d'un musée, ce n'est pas de la politique, mais plutôt de politiser le public, de le sensibiliser à la nécessité d'agir, en espérant déclencher et promouvoir chez lui ce désir d'effectuer les changements nécessaires dans les priorités de l'aménagement de Montréal.⁷⁷

In this way, the artists and curators of the 1960s and 70s, expressed a desire to perpetuate social change through the dissemination of art amongst the general population.

⁷⁵ The English version of the exhibition's title was originally *Montreal, plus or minus*. As Melvin Charney noted, however, a better translation is *Montreal, more or less*. René Rozon, "La ville au musée," *Vie des Arts*, no. 69 (1972-1973): 30.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* "The best we can do in the context of a museum is not politics, but to politicize the public, alert it to the need to take action, hoping to trigger and promote in it the desire to undertake necessary changes in the priorities of Montreal's organization." (My translation.)

Mauve's contribution to the *Montreal, plus ou moins?* exhibition was fivefold, combining performance and installation art with visual and technical elements. Their first contribution was a performance at the exhibition's opening, on a Sunday afternoon (fig. 7). The six women, dressed as brides, walked up the grand staircase of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. The visitors made room for them, moving to the extreme left and right of the staircase. At the top, the artists removed the wedding veils from their heads, rumpling them with their hands. They then proceeded to walk down the stairs, dusting the staircase and walls with their veils as they descended. According to Landry, some of the visitors were shocked and insulted by the artists' gestures, which they considered derogatory towards brides.⁷⁸

Another element presented by Mauve at the Museum of Fine Arts for the *Montreal, plus ou moins?* exhibition was a poster of American burlesque dancer Lili St. Cyr (1918-1999), a popular public figure in Montreal in the 1940s and 50s (fig. 8).⁷⁹ According to Landry, Mauve initially planned to present photographs of women working in the sewing industry. The artists were not pleased with the results, however, and after some consideration, they chose to replace the sewing industry photo project with the poster because it represented a working woman on very obvious display in a public space, on the street.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Landry.

⁷⁹ According to Lise Landry, the woman depicted on the poster is a burlesque dancer who used to be famous in Montreal. I have identified her as Lili St. Cyr given both the physical resemblance and the popularity of St. Cyr in Montreal at the time.

⁸⁰ Landry.

St. Cyr's portrait, depicted on the poster, was also on the front cover of Mauve's manifesto, distributed to visitors at the Museum (fig. 9). The text reads:⁸¹

Nous, dites de l'attente et du silence,
De l'immobile et du reflet, de la
Dentelle et de l'horloge, sommes lasses
d'être refuges et apparences.

Nous avons déchiré le voile de notre
patience et brisé les verres de notre
parure.

Notre espoir métamorphose notre courbe
et enfante déjà demain.

MAUVE se veut expression d'une sensibilité nouvelle
MAUVE se veut transformation d'une réalité désuète
MAUVE est prospection d'une liberté possible

Mauve à démasquer
Mauve à inventer
Mauve à multiplier

The manifesto begins with Mauve's denunciation of women's traditionally ascribed attributes, such as silence, the importance of appearances, passivity and fragility. To the

⁸¹ We, said from waiting and silence,
from the immobile and the reflection, the
lace and the clock, are tired
of being refuges and appearances.

We tore off the veil of our
patience and broke the glasses of our
finery.

Our hope metamorphoses our curve
and gives birth tomorrow, already.

MAUVE wants to be expression of a new sensibility
MAUVE wants to be transformation of an obsolete reality
MAUVE wants to be exploration of a possible liberty

Mauve to unmask
Mauve to invent
Mauve to multiply

(My translation.)

contrary, the artists wish to create a new reality full of possibilities, to fight against predefined gender roles determined by society. In sum, they want women to have options to choose from, to decide for themselves how to be, and who to become.

Mauve also challenged various female stereotypes such as the model, the secretary, the prostitute, the bride, the cleaning lady, the “miss,” and introduced other topics inspired by women’s daily experiences, such as children’s games and mirrors (figs 10 and 11).⁸² These elements were explored in short performances that lasted approximately fifteen minutes. According to Landry, pantomime was their choice of performance because two founding members of the group, Boyer and Ménard, had previously taken pantomime classes.⁸³ The group performed between June 15th and July 28th, 1972, in different Montreal shopping malls, such as Place Alexis Nihon, Place Longueuil, Place Versailles, Place Côte des Neiges and Place Ville Marie.⁸⁴

Finally, the group created a black-and-white installation for the window display of the Quebec retail store Dupuis Frères on Saint-Catherine’s Street East, in downtown Montreal (fig. 12). This installation dealt exclusively with the bride, and was focused on a white wedding gown with long sleeves and made out of lace, on a hanger, as if ready to be worn. A nude female dummy sitting with her legs crossed directly next to the dress seemed to be emphasizing the need for this dress. Approximately seventeen Heinz soup cans were hung from the dress. The wedding dress and the mannequin were placed inside an open refrigerator. Other objects hanging on the refrigerator included two pans of different sizes on the left side, six dolls above the dummy, and a bouquet of flowers next

⁸² Melvin Charney, *Montreal: plus or minus? Montreal, plus ou moins?* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1972), 112.

⁸³ Landry.

⁸⁴ Charney, 114.

to the dress. Above the refrigerator was a clothesline, on which eight white bras were strung. Next to the refrigerator was a shelving unit containing different objects, including four female dummy heads, women's shoes, ten nursing bottles, and, on top, four mop heads. On the floor, in front of the shelving unit, were approximately five toy television sets. The screens showed Lili St. Cyr's portrait from the poster. Lastly, in the foreground of the installation, a sign introduced the viewer to the artwork: "Window designed and created by Mauve, feminist group, as part of the *Montreal, more or less?* exhibition at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts."

Another artwork that explored similar issues, like women's roles in 1970s society, the bride, wedding gowns and mannequins, is Francine Larivée's *La chambre nuptiale*, an enormous "environment-event"⁸⁵ that took about seventy thousand hours over the course of two years to complete.⁸⁶ Quebec art historian Sheena Gourlay notes the importance of this work for Quebec art history when she describes it as "the other 'moment' within the formation of feminist art discourses," alongside the *Artfemme '75* exhibition.⁸⁷ Larivée was inspired to create *La chambre nuptiale* after participating in Dansereau's documentary *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Because she did not agree with all the views represented in the documentary, Larivée decided to explore couple relationships and the bankruptcy of marriage in an artwork of her own.⁸⁸ Larivée came up with the concept for *La chambre nuptiale* in 1974, and created it with the group that she

⁸⁵ Gourlay, 68. Environments-events were popular artistic strategies at the beginning of the 1970s in Quebec. Examples include *Vive la rue Saint-Denis* (1971), *Quebec Scenic Tour* (1971) and Groupe Point Zéro's environment-labyrinth for the *Montreal, plus ou moins?* exhibition (1972).

⁸⁶ Arbour, "Chapitre 4: Dissidence et différence: aspects de l'art des femmes," in De Koninck and Landry, 123.

⁸⁷ Gourlay, 65.

⁸⁸ Yolande Dupuis, "Francine Larivée et 'La Chambre Nuptiale'", *Sisyphes*, last modified March 30, 2005. <http://sisyphe.org/spip.php?article1698>.

founded Groupe de recherche et d'action sociale par l'art et les médias (GRASAM) between 1974 and 1976.⁸⁹ The work was presented for the first time to the public in summer 1976 in the newly inaugurated Complexe Desjardins, a multifunctional building in downtown Montreal.⁹⁰ *La chambre nuptiale* was part of the activities organized for the Olympic Games of Montreal in 1976, and also marked the celebration of the first International Women's Year in 1975.⁹¹

La chambre nuptiale was formed by a circular corridor called "Le corridor des angoisses"⁹² that was approximately twenty-one meters, or seventy feet, long and two meters, or seven and a half feet, high, and that lead into a central chamber (fig. 13).⁹³ Above the installation's entrance was a birth scene representing both the starting point of life, and the starting point of the artwork (fig. 14). Decorating the corridor were seventy-three life-sized figures of women and men of all ages in different postures (figs 15 and 16). A soundtrack composed of undefined sounds including, piano music, cries, and laughter accompanied the visitor throughout the corridor.⁹⁴ Just before entering the central chamber, the audience heard Felix Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* (1842), which served to announce the impending theme.⁹⁵

The central room of the installation, variously known as "La chapelle ardente" or "La chapelle nuptiale-mortuaire,"⁹⁶ was just under six meters, or nineteen feet high, with a diameter of over nine meters, or thirty feet.⁹⁷ Different figures and images presented

⁸⁹ Melançon, 61.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² "The corridor of fears" or "The corridor of anxiety." (My translation.)

⁹³ Arbour, 142.

⁹⁴ Melançon, 62.

⁹⁵ Aubin, 53.

⁹⁶ "The chamber of passion" and "The nuptial-funerary chamber." (My translation.)

⁹⁷ Arbour, 142.

various aspects of married life to the public.⁹⁸ Along the sides of the room were three altars, one dedicated to woman (fig. 17), one to man (fig. 18), and a third altar dedicated to the couple (fig. 19). The altars were decorated with a total of seventy-nine colourful oil paintings of varying sizes. Each of these images was framed by padded and quilted golden satin. The altars too, were decorated with floral, spiral, and arabesque motifs.⁹⁹ At the highest level of each altar were the purported ideals of marriage, represented by couples kissing, and stereotypically attractive men and women.¹⁰⁰ The center area of each altar was decorated with images of the realities corresponding to each of the altar's themes, such as home cooking and cleaning appliances, and stereotypical male and female pastimes. At the lower level of the altars were oil paintings of Western cultural stereotypes, represented in the altar of the couple, by a traditional wedding photograph. Each section presented imagery from popular culture, mostly from mainstream Hollywood movies, and advertising. The dominant colours of the altars of woman and man were those generally associated with the genders, pink and blue respectively.¹⁰¹

In the upper area of "The Altar of Woman" were five images of conventionally beautiful women symbolized by Hollywood actresses such as Barbara Streisand. At the centre of the midsection of the Altar was the image of a young woman holding a white dove in her hand. On each side of this oil painting were eight images showing pastimes traditionally considered feminine, such as dishwashing, cleaning floors, helping children

⁹⁸ Ibid., 150.

⁹⁹ Aubin, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 56.

¹⁰¹ Even though there was no established rule regarding these two colours, it is important to note that before the 1940s in the United States and Canada, pink was considered an appropriate colour for boys, and blue for girls. However, since the 1940s, this social norm was inverted, each colour becoming generally accepted to represent one of the two genders, blue for boys and pink for girls. Andrée Pomerleau, Daniel Bolduc, Gérard Malcuit and Louise Cossette, "Pink or Blue: Environmental Gender Stereotypes in the First Two Years of Life," *Sex Roles* 22, no. 5/6 (1990): 362.

with school-work, applying cosmetics while looking in a mirror, and doing gymnastics. Right below these images, in the tabernacle, was a painting of two naked breasts. The painting at the lowest part of the Altar depicted a group of three men and three women, all dressed in nineteenth century clothing. Each man was covering the mouth, ears, and eyes of a woman, referencing the Japanese pictorial maxim of the three wise monkeys, popularly understood in North America by the phrase “see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil.”

“The Altar of Man” was dominated by stereotypical images of physically powerful men fighting or holding guns, symbolizing the epitome of masculinity as defined by Hollywood actors such as Sean Connery, Bruce Lee and Charles Bronson. At the center of the upper level was a man with a beard, sitting comfortably in a chair, holding a sceptre, the symbol of monarchic power, in his right hand.¹⁰² In the Altar’s middle part were two sections of eight oil paintings, one representing masculine professional and the other masculine leisure activities. Images along the right side of the Altar showed a man washing his car, playing pool, watching television, or looking at a half-naked woman dance for him. The paintings along the left side depicted men in typically considered masculine professional roles: judge, academic, scientist, or blacksmith. At the centre of the Altar was a large image of a conventionally handsome young man holding an eagle on his shoulder. Right below this image, in the tabernacle, was the image of an erect penis. The lowest part of the Altar contained the painting of a man alongside his car and dog.

“The Altar of the Couple” was primarily gold. In the upper part, there were five paintings of different couples from Hollywood movies, either kissing or holding each

¹⁰² Aubin, 58.

other in their arms, with halos above their heads and floating in the sky, amongst clouds. Below these images was another painting of a couple kissing, framed by two additional paintings on each side, one of a man and the other of a woman, both behind bars as though in prison. On the right and left side are four images of household appliances, such as a vacuum cleaner, toaster, microwave oven, pots, and a sewing machine. At the centre of the lower level of the Altar was a painted wedding portrait of the bride and groom with some of their guests. To the left and right side of this image were paintings of a man and a woman, respectively; both crawling on their knees with an unidentifiable object on their heads and part of their backs, as if carrying marriage as a literal burden. In front of the “Altar of the Couple” were two sculptures of a bridal dress with a bouquet of flowers and satin shoes, and a groom’s outfit, as if waiting to be worn.¹⁰³

At the centre of the room was a large baldachin with two levels. The upper level showed a couple having sex on their wedding night, as indicated by their clothes, while on the lower level, laid the bride on her deathbed with a bouquet of flowers in her hands (fig. 20).¹⁰⁴ What might first appear as Sleeping Beauty’s bed is actually the bride’s coffin.¹⁰⁵ The baldachin therefore represents both marriage and funeral.¹⁰⁶ This structure was also moveable to make space for the screening of an animated short film that dealt with the exploitation of a mother by her husband and two children, and the autonomy of each member of the family.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Aubin, 61.

¹⁰⁴ It is important to note that the woman is on top of the man, a position that might indicate a feminist mindset, which presupposes the woman having control over her sexuality.

¹⁰⁵ Aubin, 62.

¹⁰⁶ Melançon, 63.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 64.

When visitors exited the installation they were greeted by social mediators, who would ask them about their reactions to the work, and give them a questionnaire to fill out; these were later returned to Larivée and her team (fig. 21). In addition to the mediators who met with visitors as they exited the installation, community groups, health organizations, and women's associations set up booths onsite to inform the public about their activities.¹⁰⁸ As a result, visitors were not only taught about some of the problems marriage entailed for both men and women, but also learned about popular topics in the 1970s, especially women's and sexual liberation.

3.2. Mannequins and Weddings Dresses

Mauve's and Larivée's works have several elements in common. At the centre of both *La femme et la ville* and *La chambre nuptiale* are white weddings dresses and commercial mannequins. The themes the artists deal with also have numerous intersecting elements in common including the exploration of what marriage meant for middle-class women in the 1970s in Quebec, women's status in society as consumers of household goods as well as their roles as sex objects, the bankruptcy of couple relationships, and the negative effects of molding an individual according to societal norms. All of these themes are condensed into the symbols of the mannequin and the dress.

The white wedding dress is a central and recurrent element in both *La femme et la ville* and *La Chambre nuptiale*. In Mauve's works, it appeared in their performance at the exhibition opening of *Montreal, plus ou moins?*, in their installation in the Dupuis-Frères store front, and in part in their pantomime performances, where one of the members,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

representing the bride, wore a wedding veil on her head. In *La chambre nuptiale*, again, the white wedding dress is at the centre of the installation: in the middle of the central room inside the baldachin, the mannequin laid on her deathbed in her bridal gown, while the newlywed version of herself was having sex with her husband above. She reappeared, once again in her dress, standing next to the groom in front of the “Altar of the Couple.”. By using several wedding dresses in these unusual circumstances and by placing them next to consumer objects, both Mauve and Larivée are desacralizing and mocking the traditional sanctity of the wedding dress. Not only are they pointing to the fallacy of the dress’s symbolism, they further their claims given that the history and prevalence of the wedding dress is closely connected to the ever-increasing commodification of weddings in Western history, and its expanding consumerist society.

While the white wedding dress is a fairly recent tradition, the colour is culture-specific. White became a popular option in the West in 1840, after the marriage of Queen Victoria to Albert of Saxe-Coburg, in which the Queen wore a white gown to incorporate a specific type of lace she prized. The official wedding photograph was widely published, and many brides opted for white in accordance with the Queen’s choice. By the end of the nineteenth century, the white dress had become the garment of choice for wealthy brides on both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁰⁹ The biggest factor in popularizing the white dress, however, was the change in socio-economic circumstances. The nineteenth century saw the rise of a large middle-class with expendable income for the first time in modern history. This middle class aspired to emulate the customs of the upper class, and had the means to make such an attempt. Until the nineteenth century, most women were married in their Sunday best, which could be worn again. Middle-class British and American

¹⁰⁹ Geller, 226-227.

brides, however, did not adopt the trend fully until after World War II. The presentation of weddings in Hollywood movies, for example, helped shape and homogenize the white wedding into a normative form.¹¹⁰

Although the wedding dress is regarded as a beautiful and highly romantic item of clothing, it is heavy and not meant to be practical or comfortable. Both aspects are reminiscent of women's clothing during the Victorian era that popularized the dress. The restrictiveness of the wedding dress even mirrored Victorian women's social circumstances. Once they were married, these women had little legal control over their bodies, future children, and money inherited from their family.¹¹¹ According to writer Erika Engstorm, author of *The Bride Factory* (2012), "as the absolute ultimate in women's formalwear, the bridal gown serves as a metaphor for women's continued relegation as objects of gaze; their value lies in their ability to be admired, to be still."¹¹² Like lifeless mannequins in the window of a store, so are brides meant to be immobile objects of visual consumption, valued primarily for their physical attributes.

This discrepancy between the look of the white wedding dress and its meaning to women is at the centre of Kathy Huberland's *Bridal Staircase* (fig. 22), presented as part of the *Womanhouse* exhibition in Hollywood, organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro in early 1972. The bride, symbolized by a female dummy wearing a wedding dress and a veil that covers most of her body, is standing at the top of the staircase, as if ready to descend. According to Huberland, "the bride's failure to look clearly where she is going leaves her up against the wall."¹¹³ The similarities between Mauve's

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 227.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Engstorm, 136.

¹¹³ Arlene Raven, "Womanhouse," in Broude and Garrard, 52.

performance at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and Huberland's installation are striking: both artworks begin by portraying a dreamy and beautiful bride and the wedding dress. As Mauve's performance evolved, however, the realities of marriage surfaced, in stark contrast to the ideal image of the bride. A married woman's household duties, such as cleaning and cooking, juxtapose the beauty and purity symbolized by the wedding dress. Huberland's work also began with a standardized image of the bride, but as she descended the staircase, the blue colour surrounding the mannequin changed to grey, a transformation that foreshadows the grim reality she will have to face after her wedding day.

There is an aspect of wedding dresses that the American artist's work does not reference, namely its relation to consumer culture, opening the possibility that Mauve's and Larivée's interest in the commodification of marriage is a local characteristic of feminist art particular to Montreal. The inclusion of household objects and by exhibiting their works in malls and stores, Mauve and Larivée explored the problematic relationship of commodities and consumer culture as they relate to marriage. Wedding ceremonies represented the focal point where marriage and commodities intersect, becoming more commodified than ever in the 1970s. Bridal salons and magazines exemplified another form of the bride's commodification and conformity to societal norms. Beginning in the 1950s, weddings were becoming more than a tradition that created a family: "they became profound opportunities to patriotically celebrate capitalism."¹¹⁴ Even advertisements in bridal magazines encouraged consumers to buy as a way to improve the economy, with the justification that buying is part of the American way of life.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Sid Sachs, "Beyond the Surface: Women and Pop Art 1958-1968," in Sachs and Minioudaki, 22.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

Publications in Quebec such as *Mon mariage* (published 1948-1969), *Nous fiancés* (published 1965-1978) and *Mon mariage et mon nouveau foyer* (published 1969-1978) illustrated fashions for future brides in the 1960s and 70s. The conventional image promulgated in these publications is that of a young Caucasian woman, with a slender figure, gracefully posing for the camera. The words that are most often used to describe them include delicate, romantic, pure, feminine, elegant, gracious, and dreamy:

Among myriad media representations of femininity, bridal media exemplify all three components [sex, romance and beauty], perhaps even to the point of serving as the ultimate source for feminine representation.¹¹⁶

Bridal publications are not merely selling wedding dresses, they are also selling the concept of the perfect wedding, and present what the “perfect” bride should look like in a version of exaggerated femininity. Writer Erika Engstorm explains in her book *The Bride Factory* (2012) that femininity is at the centre of bridal media, and that the advertised ideal of the perfect wedding, offered as “a reward for achieving her new status in wife,” is in fact limiting to women.¹¹⁷ The Women’s Liberation Movement, however, did not have any significant impact on bridal magazines. Combined, bridal publications, fairs and department stores greatly contributed to the commodification of marriage at an unprecedented level, further complicating the financial implications marriage had for women in the 1970s.

In tandem and together with wedding dresses, commercial mannequins, in and of themselves an exemplification of ideal femininity, represent another element that is at the centre of Mauve’s and Larivée’s respective installations. Mannequins increased in popularity as fashion became more accessible to the general population, facilitated by the

¹¹⁶ Geller, 19.

¹¹⁷ Engstorm, 19.

opening of department stores, first in Paris in the 1850s, and then in America and Britain.¹¹⁸ The first fashion mannequins were developed in France in the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹⁹ According to art historian Jocelyne Aubin, mannequins project an image that creates a desire in viewers to acquire something that will bring them closer to the advertised ideal. Incidentally, however, buyers internalize this desire until it becomes part of their perception of who they are.¹²⁰ Meanwhile, the use of dummies in *La femme et la ville* and *La chambre nuptiale* also raises questions about what is consumed in a marriage between a man and a woman. By placing the female dummy inside the refrigerator in Mauve's installation, the female is transformed into the main object of consumption – a metaphor highly reminiscent of Canadian writer Margaret Atwood's feminist novel *The Edible Woman* (1969), in which the main character is a young woman who, following her engagement, begins to feel like she is being consumed.¹²¹ Woman as object of consumption in the context of marriage is thus a topic present in both the visual arts and literature in Canada.

While Mauve's focus on women led to the exclusive use of female mannequins in their installations, Larivée also featured male mannequins in her artwork. The artist thereby demonstrates that both men and women are limited by gender roles, and forced to conform to societal norms. The walls of "Le corridor des angoisses" were decorated with male and female dummies meant to evoke the "stratifications du développement affectif."¹²² The figures, representing young women and men between the ages of

¹¹⁸ Jane Audas, "Mannequins," in *Encyclopedia of Clothing and Fashion*, ed. Valerie Steele. (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005), 377.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 379.

¹²⁰ Aubin, 52.

¹²¹ Margaret Atwood, *The Edible Woman* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969).

¹²² Melançon, 62. "the stratifications of emotional development." (My translation.)

eighteen and twenty-five, seemed to be trying to detach themselves from the walls of the corridor, a gesture symbolizing their need for emotional independence.¹²³ As indicated by the imagery on the altars in *La chambre nuptiale*, both men and women are pressured to conform to societal stereotypes that inhibit an individual's personal expression. While feminists in the 1960s and 70s focused on the status of women in society, research on the extent of the negative effects of marriage and other societal expectations on men still needs to be undertaken. Just as the mannequins in a store are designed to attract customers to persuade them into buying a ready-to-wear outfit, the mannequins in Mauve's and Larivée's installations serve as a caution for marriage as a *prêt-à-porter* way of life. In this case, the meaning of *La chambre nuptiale* coincides with the mannequins and what they represent:

La Chambre Nuptiale dénonce nos gestes faux, infantiles, malhabiles et résignés. Elle reflète bêtement le miroir du vide quotidien entre le "pipi room," la cuisine, le métro, la "job," les rôles d'hommes, de femmes, d'enfants, d'animaux, la violence du silence, le pouvoir, l'entendu du compromis des rapports de classe, la torpeur du sexe et la pauvreté des sentiments, l'absence d'amour et surtout le manque total d'autonomie.¹²⁴

Commercial mannequins symbolize societal norms to which people strive to conform; ideals that, according to Larivée, will make them feel confined and unfulfilled. With their prominent use of commercial dummies, Mauve and Larivée are thus denouncing the cultural and societal molding of the individual.

¹²³ Aubin, 51.

¹²⁴ Francine Larivée, "La chambre nuptiale," quoted in Aubin, "La chambre nuptiale," Annexe C. "*La chambre nuptiale* denounces our false, childish, clumsy and resigned gestures. The work foolishly reflects the mirror of the daily void between the bathroom, the kitchen, the metro, the job, the roles of men, of women, of children, of animals, the violence of silence, the power, the agreed compromise of class relations, the torpor of sex and the poverty of feelings, the lack of love, and above all the complete absence of autonomy." (My translation.)

3.3. (Dis)Empowering Sexuality

The female mannequin, an idealized version of a woman's body, also alludes to woman as sex object, a concept embodied in *La femme et la ville* by the photograph of American burlesque dancer Lili St. Cyr on the TV sets (fig. 23). Similar to the rest of mass-produced household objects on display, she too can be purchased, and lacks individuality, as indicated by the multiple reproductions of her portrait. St. Cyr also appeared on the cover of Mauve's manifesto, in which the members of the group deplored the lack of options for women, and the need for change. According to artist Lise Landry, the burlesque dancer was, for the members of the group, a symbol of the modern woman and a representation of the city.¹²⁵ They considered her as a woman empowered by her sexuality, living her life as she pleases.¹²⁶

St. Cyr, born Willis Marie Van Shaak, was a successful American burlesque dancer and stripper, who performed in various cities across the United States, and who gained notoriety in Montreal in the 1940s and 50s. According to filmmaker Nicole Messier, director of a 1999 documentary about the dancer's life, "you cannot talk to anyone in Montreal over fifty, French or English, who doesn't know who Lili St. Cyr was."¹²⁷ As a woman, she did not adhere to the norms of the 1940s and 50s by being a housewife and having a family. Although she was married six times, all of her marriages ended in divorce, and she had no children.¹²⁸ Even as a young girl, St. Cyr did not dream

¹²⁵ Landry.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "This Stripper Seduced Montreal; Lili St. Cyr Dead at 81," *Edmonton Journal*, February 03, 1999, accessed March 15, 2014, <http://0-search.proquest.com.mercury.concordia.ca/docview/252662531?accountid=10246>.

¹²⁸ Dennis Wepman, "St. Cyr, Lili," *American National Biography Online*, accessed March 11, 2014, <http://www.anb.org/articles/18/18-03864.html>.

of being a housewife, and wanted to grow up to be, in her words, an “adventuress.”¹²⁹ Certainly she had adventures, being arrested on a number of occasions in both the United States and Canada, as part of a police attempt to eliminate striptease.¹³⁰ In Montreal, St. Cyr was publicly criticized by Quebec’s Catholic Clergy and the Public Morality Committee in 1951, and was soon after charged with “immoral, obscene or indecent” behavior.¹³¹ The burlesque dancer was acquitted, however, and the Montreal Chamber of Commerce celebrated her victory in its newsletter.¹³²

Consequently, St. Cyr’s status was a highly ambivalent one: she was a sexually and financially empowered, independent woman, and yet, she represented a hyper-sexualized object of desire, thus epitomizing the commodification of women. Her success depended on men. Her youthfulness and conventionally beautiful body were intended to please the male gaze. From one perspective, it could be said that she made the best out of a bad situation. Certainly, St. Cyr was fully aware of her economic agency: “I broke hearts and emptied pocketbooks,” St. Cyr proclaimed. “Sex is currency. What is the use of being beautiful if you can’t profit from it?”¹³³ Even though St. Cyr was very successful in her profession at a time when women did not have access to positions of power in the workplace, her occupation has nevertheless been a difficult one for feminists to embrace. From this perspective, St. Cyr’s status is a problematic one because so many women, particularly in the 1960s and 70s, were fighting for their societal value based on their intellect and work capabilities, rather than on their appearance or other feminine qualities.

¹²⁹ William Weintraub, "Filling a Craving for the Sublime: Lili St. Cyr was no Ordinary Stripteaseuse. She Took Montreal by Storm," *The Gazette*, October 20, 1996, <http://0-search.proquest.com.mercury.concordia.ca/docview/433084902?accountid=10246>.

¹³⁰ Rachel Shteir, *Striptease: The Untold History of the Girlie Show* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 275.

¹³¹ Weintraub.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ "This Stripper Seduced Montreal."

At the same time, feminists also fought for women's freedom of choice and financial independence, and in these respects St. Cyr was an empowered woman decades before the Women's Liberation Movement started. As writer and author of *The Happy Stripper* (2008) Jacki Willson notes, feminists are divided about what stripping means for women who make a living out of it.¹³⁴ Mauve was also ambivalent about St. Cyr's status. Her presence on the cover of the Mauve manifesto might be taken as a visual reiteration of the text's claim that women need more options to choose from in their decisions of what to become. While Mauve criticised the commodification of women within marriage, their works do not address the fact that a comparable process was occurring in strip bars. As such, Mauve's inconclusiveness on the subject reflects feminism's ambivalence about strippers.

If the St. Cyr figure raises complex questions about women's relationships with economic agency and sexual commodification, this complexity is further reinforced by Mauve and Larivée's deployment of a pop art vocabulary. Pop art, however, was just as ambivalent about economic agency and commodification of women. According to artist Martha Rosler, "if pop contains a critique, it depends on the viewer to perceive it (...). If pop contains a critique, it is not of any particular historical event (...) but of a civilization. It was a critique that depended on embrace."¹³⁵ Pop art became a celebration of popular culture, while it simultaneously denounced it. As I will show, Mauve and Larivée implemented this ambivalent perspective on various levels, including the stylistic and thematic vocabulary of pop art and its Quebec counterpart, ti-pop.

¹³⁴ Jacki Willson, *The Happy Stripper: Pleasures and Politics of the New Burlesque* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008), 2.

¹³⁵ Martha Rosler, "The Figure of the Artist, the Figure of the Woman," in Sachs and Minioudaki, 182.

4. Quebec Identity in the Arts

Two elements that further characterize Mauve and Larivee's artworks are their adoption of a ti-pop vocabulary and their harmonization with a new governmental vision of the role of culture within society, a vision that has become known as the 'cultural democracy model' and that has been discussed by Quebec art historian Anithe de Carvalho. Both of these elements influenced the stylistic and conceptual choices that underpin the artists' explorations of the commodification of the bride and the status of women in society in *La femme et la ville* and *La chambre nuptiale*. Major similarities between ti-pop and the cultural democracy model include strong political or social motivations, and the rejection of distinctions between fine art and popular culture. At the same time, these elements were also characteristic of 1970s feminist art at an international level.

4.1. Ti-pop

Mauve's and Larivée's participation in an international pop art movement is clearly discernible in the parallels between their works and the first pop artwork to achieve iconic status – British artist Richard Hamilton's collage *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* (1956) (fig. 24).¹³⁶ Mauve, Larivée, and Hamilton all critically explored their increasingly consumerist society by using humour, both thematically and stylistically. Even though Hamilton's collage was created in England, most of the images in his work are from American magazines, such as *Ladies Home Journal*, *Tomorrow's Man*, or *Life Magazine*. The two main characters represent

¹³⁶ Amy Dempsey, *Styles, Schools and Movements: The Essential Encyclopedic Guide to Modern Art* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 217.

Western ideals of masculinity and femininity, embodied by Irvin ‘Zabo’ Koszewski, a body builder, and Jo Baer, a pin-up model. Larivée also used images of female and male Hollywood actors as examples of gender stereotypes, whereas the female mannequin in Mauve’s installation is a similar symbol of standardized beauty perpetuated by the media. Moreover, Hamilton’s work, like Mauve’s and Larivée’s, is also imbued with irony and everyday objects, two major characteristics of pop art. Elements that facilitate the artist to shed a critical light on consumerism are, for example, the body builder’s pose to accentuate his muscles, the pin-up wearing a peculiar hat while holding her breast with her left hand as if presenting it to the viewer, the giant tin of ham on the coffee table, and the housewife vacuuming the staircase with a vacuum cleaner that has an unusually long cord. These playful strategies help make the experience of the artwork less didactic and more enjoyable.

The interplay between the private and public realms is another common element that Mauve’s and Larivée’s installations share with Hamilton’s collage. While Mauve’s bride-to-be seems to be at home, preparing for her wedding, the space is not closed, but is rather open to anyone passing on the street, and therefore a public space. Larivée’s *La chambre nuptiale* also oscillates between private and public spheres. Visitors entered an enclosed, intimate space that was nonetheless in a public setting, accessible to almost anyone. In Hamilton’s work, while the focus is on the central scene in a living room, the viewer’s gaze is directed toward the space behind the body builder. Through the window of the room, one can see advertisements and a theatre, elements that make the overall scene partially exposed to the public. This tension between the public and private spheres is reflected in the works’ meditation on the power that the media and societal rules have

over people's personal and private lives, leading them to strive towards unrealistic ideals. In Mauve's, Larivée's and Hamilton's works, the presented ideals are of marriage and the perfect couple. Both are characterized by consumerism and exaggerated physical beauty. Overall, the similarities between the three works indicate an international concern with issues of consumerism and idealized notions of women, men and marriage on both sides of the Atlantic.

This international concern had specific local articulations in the province of Quebec. An expressly Quebec-based variant of pop art, known as ti-pop, emerged in the 1960s. This local aesthetic vocabulary adopted by Mauve and Larivée further distinguishes feminist art in 1970s Montreal from the feminist art movements in other cities. According to art historian Johanne Sloan, "Canadian and Quebecois pop experiments of the 1960s and 70s are unusual (as compared with contemporaneous international practices) for their degree of politicization."¹³⁷ Ti-pop is also distinguished from the international pop art movement by the prevalence of religious references, vestiges of the importance that the Catholic Church had assumed in Quebec's history.¹³⁸ According to art historian Sheena Gourlay, "traditional Quebec culture, with its religious and political conservatism, was seen as kitsch, but only seen as such because it could no longer be taken seriously."¹³⁹ Like pop art, ti-pop is defined by a kitsch aesthetic and the appropriation of everyday objects.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Johanne Sloan, "From Genre to Genre: Image Transactions in Contemporary Canadian Art. Ron Terada and Lynne Marsh," in *How Canadians Communicate III: Contexts of Canadian Popular Culture*, ed. Bart Beaty, Derek Briton, Gloria Filax, and Rebecca Sullivan (Edmonton: Athabaska University Press, 2010), 186.

¹³⁸ A. Fortin, 44.

¹³⁹ Gourlay, 72-73.

¹⁴⁰ A. Fortin, 44.

Although *La chambre nuptiale* was created years after the ti-pop movement emerged, the central room of the work is nevertheless a perfect example of the movement in the visual arts. The gravity of the artist's exploration of marriage is counterbalanced by a vibrant and ironic visual attitude, achieved through the use of religious architectural elements, such as the baldachin and three altars, alongside images from mainstream Hollywood movies, bold colours, and satin materials. The use of the antiquated Baroque aesthetic associated with Quebec churches, characterized by exaggerated ornamentation to produce drama and grandeur, creates a vibrant, kitschy appearance. The images of embracing couples have halos, an ironic detail that references saints but also the emblem of the ti-pop movement, Quebec Premier Maurice Duplessis with a halo.¹⁴¹ The seriousness of the topic is counterbalanced by this playful visual attitude, which helps the viewer achieve a more nuanced, less didactic, interpretation of the work. According to art historian Michel Euvrard, "certains objets, ordinaires ou menaçants, se voient ainsi ... détournés de leur usage prosaïque, allégés de leur poids quotidien, transformés en jouets."¹⁴² Larivée used a religious vocabulary of similar techniques to the one used by the Counter-Reformation movement, but its self-reflexive qualities reveal the Catholic Church's lack of power in Quebec.¹⁴³ The Counter-Reformation movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries used painting, sculpture and architecture as media for religious propaganda.¹⁴⁴ As such, Larivée subversively employed the same strategies to criticize values once promoted by the Catholic Church, including paradigms of the monogamous couple and marriage. This kind of irony is typical of ti-pop. In this way, the

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 44.

¹⁴² Michel Euvrard, "Ti-Pop or not Ti-Pop?" *24 images*, no. 50-51 (1990): 26. "Some objects, ordinary or menacing, are stripped of their prosaic use and daily weight, transformed into toys." (My translation.)

¹⁴³ Melançon, 68.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 55.

installation also becomes a parody of the power of the church and traditional values in Quebec prior to the Quiet Revolution. This was a time when religion had an enormous influence on people's lives in Quebec, particularly because the Catholic Church had long been in charge of social, health and education systems, and managed all publications, and thereby controlled the transmission of knowledge.¹⁴⁵ While this was changing at the beginning of the 1960s, Larivée's work references the deep impact that Catholic culture still had on people's personal lives in the 70s.¹⁴⁶

Another pop art strategy employed in the artworks discussed here is the inclusion of every-day objects. In Mauve's installation, these include irons, pans of different sizes, dolls, a bouquet of flowers, bras hung on a clothesline, women's shoes, nursing bottles, mop heads, and TV sets. The Heinz soup cans hung on the wedding dress are the ultimate symbol of pop art (fig. 25). They are a direct reference to Andy Warhol's Pop artworks from the 1960s depicting Campbell's soup cans, of which numerous variations exist. An example is *Campbell's Soup Cans* (1962) (fig. 26). While both Mauve's and Warhol's use of soup cans is ironic, the American artist, however, seems to be more embracing of consumer culture than the Montreal group.¹⁴⁷ The purpose of Mauve's use of soup cans is more critical and direct. It is amplified by and echoed through the entire installation, symbolizing the future domestic role of the bride, and, through the multiplicity of the objects, life's lack of originality in a consumerist society. Similarly, Larivée, included imagery of everyday objects portrayed as wedding gifts in *La chambre nuptiale*, placing

¹⁴⁵ Michael S. Pollard and Zheng Wu, "Divergence of Marriage Patterns in Quebec and Elsewhere in Canada," *Population and Development Review* 24, no. 2 (June, 1998): 335.

¹⁴⁶ Aubin, 54.

¹⁴⁷ There is no consensus regarding Andy Warhol's art: while some argue that it celebrates American consumer culture, others interpret it as a fine critique. Bradford R. Collins, *Pop Art: The Independent Group to Neo Pop, 1952-90* (New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2012), 125.

them at the centre of the “Altar of the Couple.” She alluded to the importance of shopping for married couples, demonstrating how consumerism is a founding element of marriage.

Pop art further complicated women’s relationship to consumer culture. According to art historian Sid Sachs, “pop art was intrinsically antagonistic to women” because “advertising’s misogynistic tendencies pushed pop into the realm of blatant sexism.”¹⁴⁸ Therefore, pop art and feminism have often been regarded as incompatible.¹⁴⁹ Pop artists also depicted stereotypical images of women, often in a sexualized manner. For example, Quebec artist Pierre Ayot’s *Ma mère revenant de son shopping* (1967) (fig. 27), appears to show a childhood memory of the artist’s mother, because of its extreme low-angle perspective. The focus is on the legs and the genital area of the mother, who is wearing only a black bikini. A shopping bag with the Miracle Mart logo references a popular chain of Quebec grocery and department stores. Although the woman’s semi-nudity and monumentality might place the work within the context of the sexual liberation movement of the 1960s, the woman is also commodified and objectified.¹⁵⁰ While the portrayal of women in pop art is ironic, these artists also perpetuate detrimental stereotypical images of women in their works. In the United States, for example, Roy Lichtenstein portrayed, in his characteristic comic book-style, women crying over men in works such as *That’s the Way It Should Have Begun! But It’s Hopeless!* (1968) (fig. 28).

¹⁴⁸ Sachs, 20.

¹⁴⁹ Kalliopi Minioudaki, “Pop Proto-feminisms: Beyond the Paradox of the Woman Pop Artist,” in Sachs and Minioudaki, 90.

¹⁵⁰ Sarah Watson, Katy Tari, Andrée Lemieux, Pascale Lapointe-Manseau, Johane Leblanc, and Gaëtane Verna, “Pierre Ayot,” *Musée d’art de Joliette*, accessed March 18, 2014, <http://www.itinerart.ca/en/discover/work.jsp?id=5>.

Despite pop art's perpetuation of demeaning images of women, many female artists, such as Americans Martha Rosler, Mara McAfee and Idelle Weber, or French pop artist Marisol, used this artistic style in the 1960s and 70s to challenge female stereotypes, and women's place in a consumerist society. Mauve and Larivée used pop elements to explore feminist topics that were also being discussed in other countries, such as the meaning of marriage for middle-class women in 1970s, women's status in society as household consumers after marriage and as sex objects, the bankruptcy of couple relationships, and the moulding of the individual according to societal norms. Their focus on the notion of the bride's commodification through marriage is, however, specific to Quebec. It is in part a reflection of the presence of the Catholic Church in the province and the central place that church rituals had so long occupied in its cultural life. Starting at the beginning of the 60s, however, the government began controlling Quebec's cultural identity.

4.2. The Cultural Democracy Model

Mauve's and Larivée's works were part of a larger trend in Quebec, which saw local artists becoming increasingly concerned with the commodification of art, and the consumer culture in which it functioned. In 1960, when the Liberal government led by Jean Lesage won the elections against the Union Nationale, which had been in power for sixteen years under the leadership of Premier Maurice Duplessis, the State took charge of healthcare and education systems that had previously been run by the Catholic Church.¹⁵¹ For the first time in Canada, both the national and Quebec provincial governments were interested in the integration of art and artists into society. In 1957, the Canada Council for

¹⁵¹ Dale C. Thomson, *Jean Lesage and the Quiet Revolution* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1984), vii.

the Arts was created, followed in 1961 by the creation of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs in Quebec. The government assumed responsibility for assuring artists' financial subsistence, and regarded the arts as a way to form a national identity.¹⁵² Prime Minister Jean Lesage also recognized the arts as a complementary way to define the formation of the modern Quebec state. Moreover, he promoted art "as an antidote to the materialism of a consumer society,"¹⁵³ identifying consumerism as a problematic issue. Consequently, a critique of commodities pervaded public thought in Quebec in the 70s, thus characterizing – at least to some extent – the new Liberal government, the feminist and independence movements, and some Quebec-based feminist artists who chose to explore what the issue of commodities meant for women.

With its strong impetus towards social change and public education, *La chambre nuptiale* dovetailed well with this new government policy to promote the arts, as is evidenced by the government funding Larivée received for the creation of her work.¹⁵⁴ Anithe de Carvalho argues that even though *La chambre nuptiale* has often been described by art historians as anti-establishment it was in fact part of both the Quebec and Canadian government's project to control culture through a cultural democracy model.¹⁵⁵ Citing the work of sociologist Lise Santerre, de Carvalho explains that this model was characterized by the integration of the arts into diverse areas of activities, by the participation of the government in the formation of cultural identity, and by the goal to make art accessible to the general public – all with the aim of using the arts to build a

¹⁵² Francine Couture, "Présentation: Les années soixante: la reconnaissance publique de la modernité artistique," in *Les arts visuels au Québec dans les années soixante: La reconnaissance de la modernité* (Montreal: VLB Éditeur, 1993), 11.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Mauve received funding from the organizers of the *Montreal, plus ou moins* exhibition.

¹⁵⁵ De Carvalho, 110.

sense of citizenship, stakeholding and cultural belonging.¹⁵⁶ Some elements that Larivée's work has in common with this model are their envisioning of a new role for the public that presupposed a more engaged attitude, the presentation of art outside of the gallery and museum system, and their support by new funding sources that promoted experimentation and cultural engagement.¹⁵⁷ *La chambre nuptiale* was funded by a variety of government projects and branches, including the Metropolitan Arts Council, the Council on the Status of Women, the Canadian Ministry of Labour, and the Canada Council for the Arts.¹⁵⁸ The work also benefitted from private funding that came from a variety of corporations.¹⁵⁹

Both Mauve and Larivée had strong social motivations, and wanted their artworks to make the public think critically about the status of women in society and the institution of marriage. The public thus had a new role in relation to art, a more participatory one that encouraged the conviction that art could generate changes in society. Mauve's goal with *La femme et la ville* was to make the public aware of women's current status in society, and offer possible solutions to women's problems. Furthermore, the group's members also wished to allow women to make their needs and aspirations heard.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, Mauve also criticized women's place in public institutions, such as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. According to Landry, through their performance at the exhibition opening, they sought to show that women were present in major institutions,

¹⁵⁶ Lise Santerre, "De la démocratisation de la culture à la démocratie culturelle," in *Démocratisation de la culture ou démocratie culturelle. Deux logiques d'action publique*, ed. Guy Bellavance (Quebec: Les Éditions de l'IRQC, 2000), 49.

¹⁵⁷ De Carvalho, 121.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 126.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Landry.

even though they were not visible to the public, nor in positions of power.¹⁶¹ Larivée too explicitly intended *La chambre nuptiale* to have a strong social character connected directly to Quebec society:

J'ai fait de l'art un outil de combat politique. *La chambre nuptiale*, issue d'un travail d'équipe, dénonce l'exploitation des femmes dans les rapports quotidiens du couple dans le mariage. Elle a été conçue dans le but de provoquer la réflexion et l'échange sur le phénomène de crise qui vit la cellule de base de toute société contemporaine. (...) C'est un instrument de guérilla culturelle, assumé comme tel.¹⁶²

In this context, artists became “social animators” that used art to critically explore a social issue.¹⁶³

Gourlay identified the concept of ‘play’ as a strategy that allowed artists to educate the public, and that was part of the cultural democracy model.¹⁶⁴ Mauve used the concept of ‘play’ by doing pantomime performances, and going to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts dressed as brides. Larivée, on the other hand, employed an environment-event to convey her message as well as possible, immersing the public in a different world for the duration of their visit. Furthermore, *La chambre nuptiale*’s playful aesthetic balanced out the seriousness of the topic, thus allowing the visitor to engage with the ideas more easily. Social animation and the concept of interdisciplinary were also represented by the mediators that greeted visitors as they exited the installation: the first

¹⁶¹ Landry.

¹⁶² Francine Larivée, “Francine Larivée,” *Art et féminisme* (Quebec: Ministère des Affaires culturelles, 1982), 116. I used art as a tool for political combat. *La chambre nuptiale*, created through teamwork, denounces the exploitation of women within the daily life of a married couple. It was conceived with the goal of generating thought and exchange on the phenomenon of crisis that the basic unit of any society is experiencing. (...) It is a tool of cultural guerrilla, assumed as such. (My translation.)

¹⁶³ Gourlay, 71.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 71.

times the work was shown, booths of community groups, health organizations, and women's associations were also present to inform the public about their activities.¹⁶⁵

The cultural democracy model also fostered activities that took place outside of institutional contexts.¹⁶⁶ The artists would thus contribute to the democratization of culture by reaching a large audience that would not normally go to museums and galleries. Mauve exhibited its installation in the downtown store Dupuis Frères and performed in various Montreal malls, while Larivée displayed *La chambre nuptiale* in 1976 in the Complexe Desjardins and Carrefour Laval, a shopping mall in a suburb of Montreal.¹⁶⁷

At the same time, however, because the artists criticized the commercial aspects of marriage, relating them to the excessive acquisition of goods, and the negative financial impact that marriage had on women, their choice to exhibit their artworks in malls and stores also represents an ironic and subversive act. Department stores had played a major part in the process of the commodification of women that these works critiqued. Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, department stores appeared in North America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Canada's biggest department stores, Eaton's, Simpson's and the Hudson's Bay Company, were part of this change in commodity distribution, along with regional stores like Dupuis Frères, in which the group Mauve exhibited its installation.¹⁶⁸ Founded in 1868 by Nazaire Dupuis, Dupuis Frères associated itself with Catholicism, with the institution of the family, and with Quebec

¹⁶⁵ Melançon, 64.

¹⁶⁶ De Carvalho, 126.

¹⁶⁷ *La chambre nuptiale* was exhibited in the Complexe Desjardins and Carrefour Laval in 1976, at the Québec: art et société » pavilion at Man and His World in 1977, and, for the first time in a museum, at the Museum of Contemporary Art as part of the *Art et féminisme* exhibition in 1982. Gourlay, 65-66.

¹⁶⁸ Donica Belisle, *Retail Nation: Department Stores and the Making of Modern Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 14.

nationalism. Furthermore, its success was also seen as a way for Quebec to gain economic independence. The store's various slogans reveal its nationalistic tendencies: "Le magasin du peuple" in the 1920s, and "Le grand magasin canadien à l'accent français" in the 60s.¹⁶⁹ From 1882 to its closing due to bankruptcy in 1976, Dupuis Frères was located at 865 St. Catherine Street East in Montreal, where Place Dupuis is now, and near the Berri-UQAM metro station.¹⁷⁰ Like many other department stores, Dupuis Frères hired mostly women to provide customer service, making it a space where women shopped and worked.¹⁷¹ Mauve's choice to present their installation in the window of such a significant store made a very obvious point that criticized the institution from the inside.

Since many of the people present in malls and stores were women, the two artworks were experienced largely by the segment of the population they were referring to: middle-class housewives. The relationship between women and department stores was, however, in the thriving consumerist society of the 1960s and 70s, a problematic and ambivalent one. On the one hand, middle-class housewives were the main buyers of goods and, on the other hand, women as sex objects were products themselves, "or at least product-like: passive, sexual creatures (...) made to be consumed – or thrown away – by hungry made admirers."¹⁷² According to art historian Linda Nochlin, "the role of female agency was apparently reduced to that of choosing what to buy."¹⁷³ While being

¹⁶⁹ "The store of the people" and "The major Canadian store with a French twist." (My translation.)

¹⁷⁰ Jean-Herman Guay, "Fermeture du magasin Dupuis Frères," *Bilan du siècle*, Université de Sherbrooke, accessed March 20, 2014, <http://bilan.usherbrooke.ca/bilan/pages/evenements/23105.html>.

¹⁷¹ Daniel Baril and Julie Lemieux, "Dupuis Frères et les femmes," YouTube video, 4:16, Université de Montreal, posted by "forumclips," September 20, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBqzOYxAeQw>. 2012.

¹⁷² Linda Nochlin, "Running on Empty: Women, Pop and the Society of Consumption," in Sachs and Minioudaki, 15.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

able to choose what to buy and having numerous options might give the impression of freedom, it necessitates spending more money and time considering what to purchase. Furthermore, in the 70s in particular, when women were making less money than men, and when housewives had to spend their husband's income, an increasingly consumerist society was not tied to true economic empowerment for women. Therefore, by exploring the wedding as a marker of women's new role as household consumers, Mauve and Larivée employed a feminist discourse that was gaining popularity in many Western countries in the 70s, while at the same time articulating issues around commodification and religion that were highly relevant to Quebec's economic and cultural realities.

Conclusion

While Mauve's *La femme et la ville* and Larivée's *La chambre nuptiale* are two feminist artworks that are part of the international 1960s and 70s Women's Liberation Movement, they also belong to the history of art in Quebec, and Montreal more specifically. The two artworks deal with issues that were at the centre of discussions in the 1970s by feminists all over the world, such as women's status in society, the limitations of marriage and gender roles, the lack of positive role models for women, and the need to have more options, both personally and professionally. *La femme et la ville* and *La Chambre nuptiale* also share a certain set of local characteristics specific to social and political developments in Quebec. The affirmation of the Quebecois identity, the province's fight for financial and political independence, the emergence of the nationalist movement, and the waning power of the Church are some of the changes occurring in Quebec in the 1960s, known collectively as the Quiet Revolution. A specific type of

feminism that was popular in Quebec but not other parts of Canada was revolutionary feminism, with its particular interest in economics. This represents a major factor that distinguishes *La femme et la ville* and *La Chambre nuptiale* from other feminist artworks. The economic focus is set on what marriage meant for women in the 70s, and men too in Larivée's case, in the context of an increasingly consumerist society, as well as women's ambivalent status as main consumers of goods and 'objects' that can be purchased through marriage. One effect these changes had on the arts was the emergence of the cultural movement *ti-pop* and the government's cultural democracy model, two elements that had a significant impact on Mauve's and Larivée's works.

Public reactions collected by mediators after people visited *La chambre nuptiale*, and watched Dansereau's *J'me marie, j'me marie pas* indicated that most of the visitors identified with the problems explored by the artists, and that change was necessary. Today, almost forty years after the creation of these works, and the Women's Liberation Movement, the topic of commodification in relation to women is more relevant than ever. According to Quebec art historian Marie-Ève Fortin, women's place in society still is highly problematic:

Nonetheless, even if they have overcome housewifery, women still seem to have to manage their homes, carry out most of the domestic chores, and raise their kids. In other words, in the twenty-first century, the double-edged ideal of the superwoman seems ever closer to reality. Women's new values and social roles are still defined by sex appeal and their dedication as housewives and mothers, with their career potential now consolidated into the definition.¹⁷⁴

Moreover, British feminist writer and activist Kat Banyard, for example, observes that "the objectification of women's bodies is today at an all time zenith: the pressures on

¹⁷⁴ M.-È. Fortin, 134.

women and girls to manipulate their appearance have never been greater.”¹⁷⁵ In essence, the commodification of women is only increasing.

Since the beginning of the Quiet Revolution, the decline in marriage rates in Quebec has been greater than in the rest of Canada. Two major contributing factors to fewer couples getting married in the Francophone province is the decline of religion, and women’s increasing financial independence.¹⁷⁶ The ideal of the family, however, continues to be an important element of Quebecois society.¹⁷⁷ *La chambre nuptiale* and *La femme et la ville* are feminist critiques not only of marriage, but also of its commodification and the requirement to spend large sums of money, as promoted by events like the *Salon de la femme* or the *Salon de la mariée*. While the latter was almost exclusively directed at women in the 1970s, today it is called *Salons marions-nous*, and targets both men and women.¹⁷⁸ Fundamentally, Larivée’s and Mauve’s critiques of the commodification of marriage are almost more relevant today, in a capitalist society in which consumerism and commodification now extend to men as well. With TV series like *The Bachelorette* that turn marriage into a commercial spectacle, and with an abundance of bridal magazines such as *Brides*, *Bridal Guide*, or *Modern Bride* advertising expensive wedding dresses, the bride continues to be pressured to spend astronomical amounts of money in order to have the ‘perfect’ wedding. Thus, *La chambre nuptiale* and *La femme et la ville*, created almost forty years ago, are not only groundbreaking artworks, but ones that are still tremendously relevant today.

¹⁷⁵ Kat Banyard, *The Equality Illusion: The Truth About Women and Men Today* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 20-21.

¹⁷⁶ Pollard and Wu, 348.

¹⁷⁷ Christine Corbeil and Francine Descarries, “La famille: une institution sociale en mutation,” *Nouvelles pratiques sociales* 16, no. 1 (2003): 21.

¹⁷⁸ Melançon, 65.

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Figures



Figure 1: Tilya Helfield, *Ketuba-The Marriage Contract*, circa 1975.
Photo-etching, 76.2 x 57.2 cm.

Source: *Tilya Helfield - Artist*, <http://tilyahelfield.com/PrintsPhotoEtch1.html>.



Figure 2: *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Directed by Mireille Dansereau. 1973; Quebec, Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 2014. 16 mm, 81:47.
Film still: Mireille Dansereau (*left*) and Francine Larivée (*right*). 2:08.

Source: https://www.nfb.ca/film/jme_marie_jme_marie_pas.



Figure 3: *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Directed by Mireille Dansereau. 1973; Quebec, Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 2014. 16 mm, 81:47.
Film still: Linda Gaboriau and her baby. 36:48.

Source: https://www.nfb.ca/film/jme_marie_jme_marie_pas.



Figure 4: *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Directed by Mireille Dansereau. 1973; Quebec, Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 2014. 16 mm, 81:47.
Film still: Jocelyne Lepage. 40:59.

Source: https://www.nfb.ca/film/jme_marie_jme_marie_pas.



Figure 5: *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Directed by Mireille Dansereau. 1973; Quebec, Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 2014. 16 mm, 81:47.
Film still: Jocelyne Lepage's partner holding their baby. 40:23.

Source: https://www.nfb.ca/film/jme_marie_jme_marie_pas.



Figure 6: *J'me marie, j'me marie pas*. Directed by Mireille Dansereau. 1973; Quebec, Canada: National Film Board of Canada, 2014. 16 mm, 81:47.
Film still: Tanya Mackay and her children. 78:47.

Source: https://www.nfb.ca/film/jme_marie_jme_marie_pas.

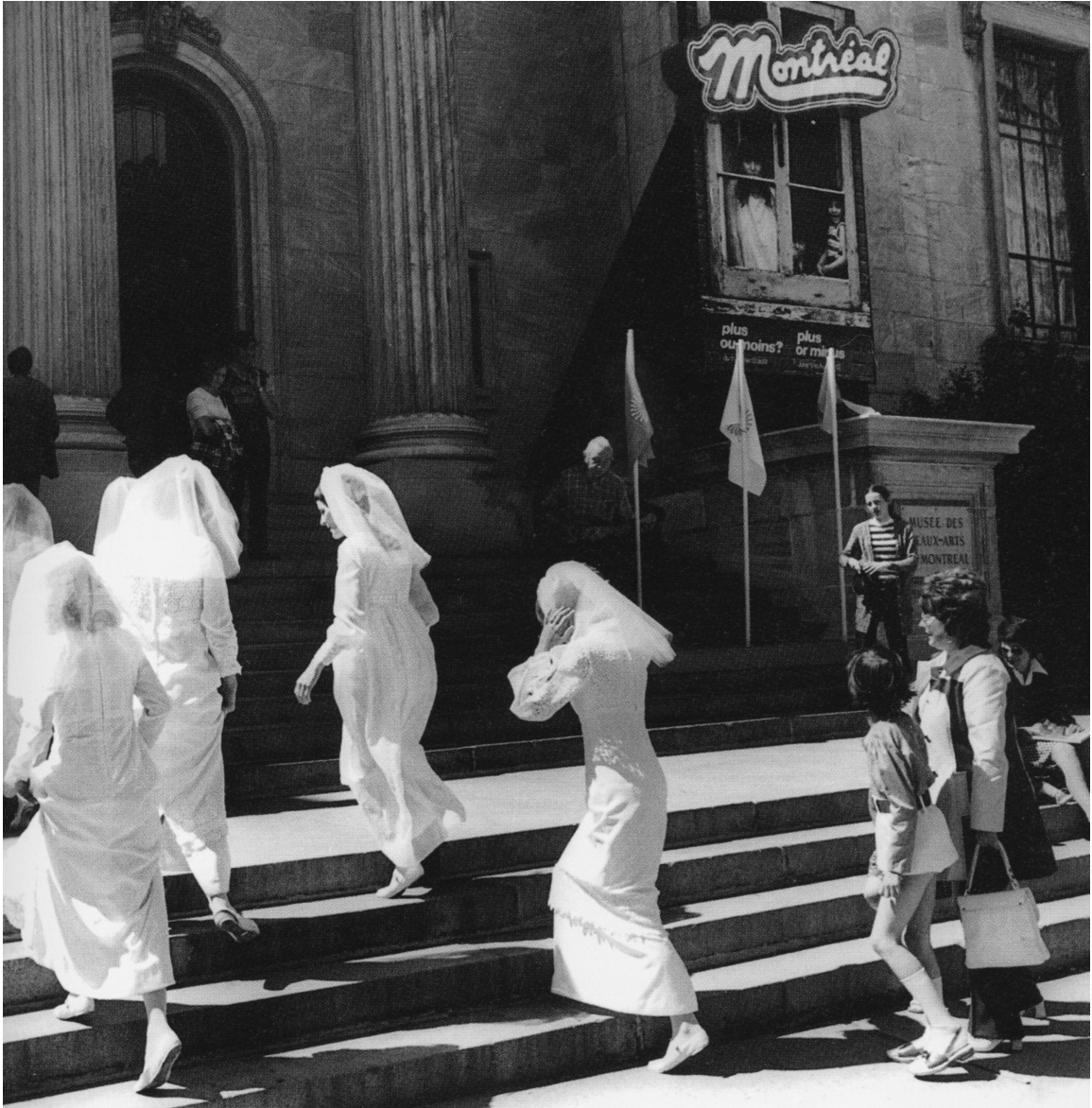


Figure 7: Mauve, performance at the exhibition opening of the *Montreal, plus ou moins?* exhibition, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, July 1972.

Photo: Henry Koro.

Source: Marie-Charlotte De Koninck and Pierre Landry, eds, *Déclics, art et société: Le Québec des années 1960 et 1970* (Saint-Laurent: Fides, 1999), 147.



Figure 8: Anonymous, poster.

Source: Melvin Charney, *Montreal, plus or minus? Montreal, plus ou moins?* (Montreal: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 1972), 113.

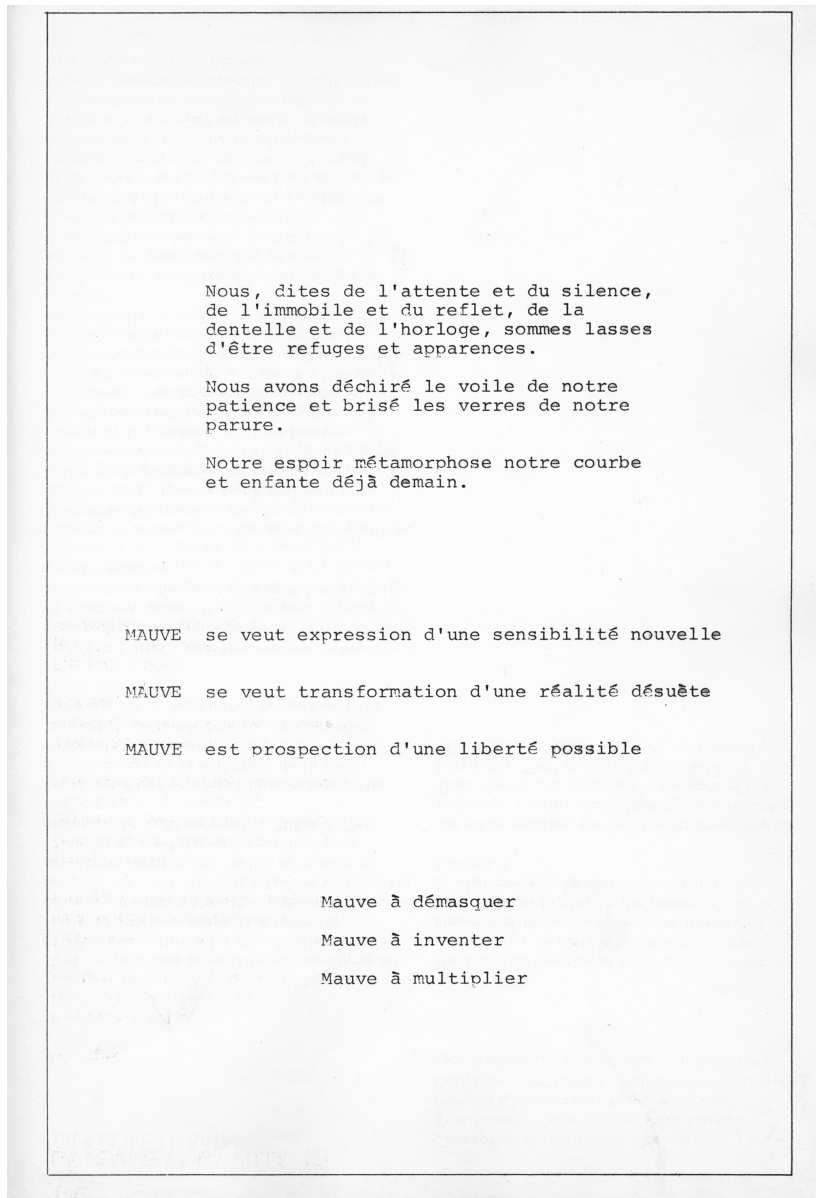


Figure 9: Mauve, manifesto, 1972.

Source: Charney, 115.

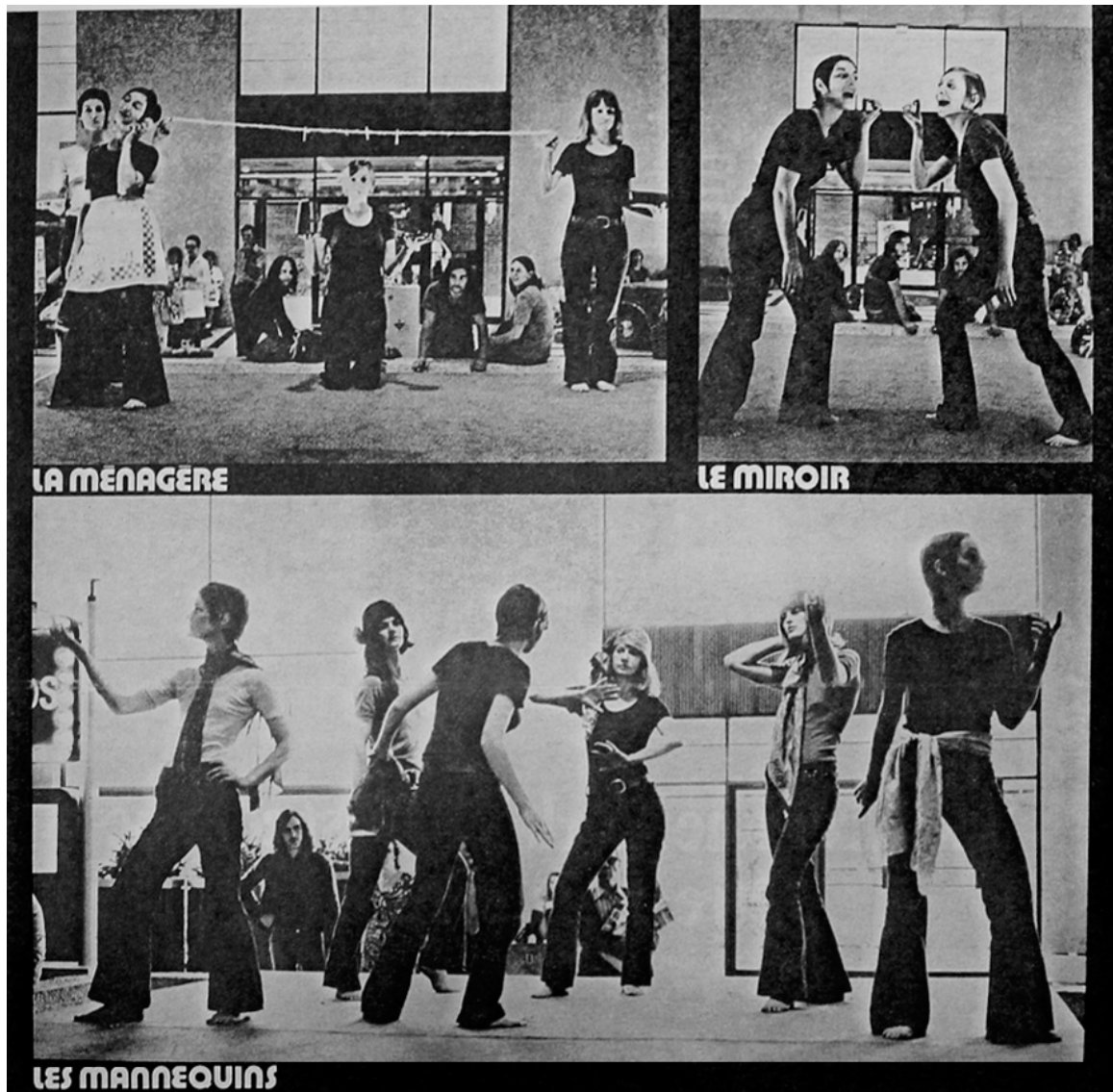


Figure 10: Mauve, pantomime performances, 1972.
Photo: Denis Plain.

Source: Nicole Charest, "La vie en mauve: Six femmes en colère à la défense des femmes silencieuses," *La Presse*, August 26, 1972, 6.



Figure 11: Mauve, pantomime performances, 1972.
Photo: Denis Plain.

Source: Charest, 8.

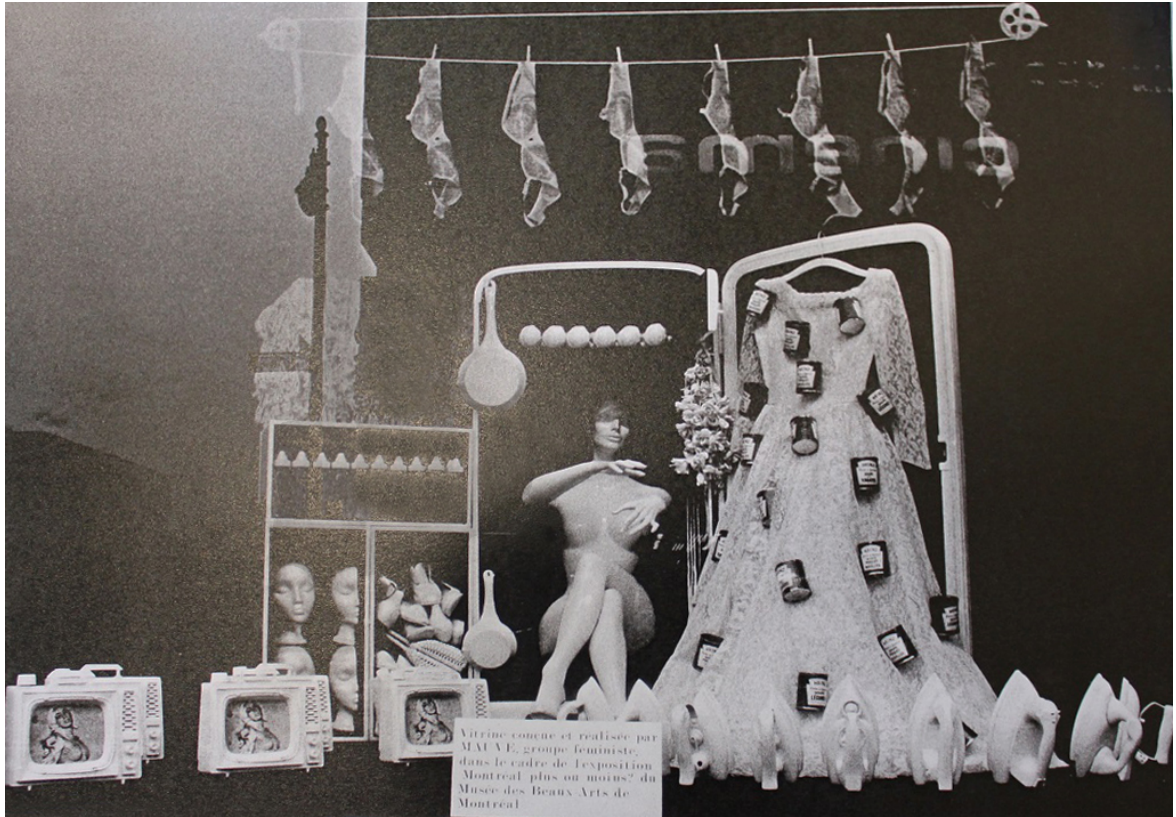


Figure 12: Mauve, *La femme et la ville*, 1972.
Installation at Dupuis-Frères.

Source: Lise Landry.



Figure 13: Francine Larivée, *La chambre nuptiale*, 1976. Mixed media.
Exterior View: circular corridor leading to the central chamber.

Source: Digital Image and Slide Collection, Concordia University, Montreal.

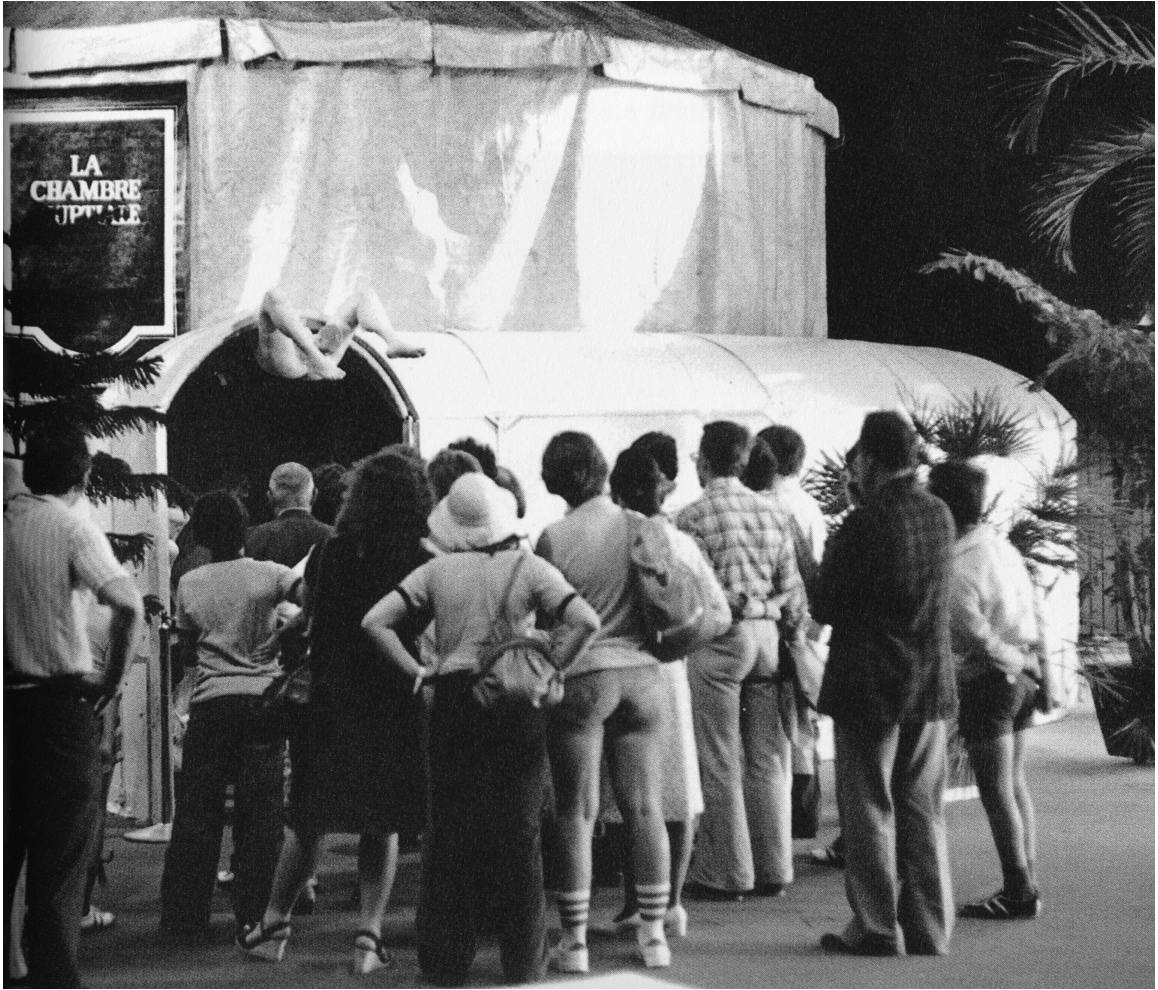


Figure 14: Visitors of *La chambre nuptiale* at Complexe Desjardins, 1976.
Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 125.



Figure 15: Francine Larivée, *La chambre nuptiale*, 1976. Mixed media.
Detail: The Corridor of Fears.

Source: Digital Image and Slide Collection, Concordia University, Montreal.



Figure 16: The set up of *La chambre nuptiale*.
Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 62.



Figure 17: Francine Larivée, *La chambre nuptiale*, 1976. Mixed media.
Detail: The Altar of Woman.
Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 62.



Figure 18: Francine Larivée, *La chambre nuptiale*, 1976. Mixed media.
Detail: The Altar of Man.
Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 63.



Figure 19: Francine Larivée, *La chambre nuptiale*, 1976. Mixed media.
 Detail: The Altar of the Couple.
 Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 131.



Figure 20: Francine Larivée, *La chambre nuptiale*, 1976. Mixed media.
Detail: Bed-coffin and the Altar of the Couple.
Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 132.



Figure 21: Visitors of *La chambre nuptiale* at Complexe Desjardins, 1976.
Photo: Marc Cramer.

Source: De Koninck and Landry, 124.



Figure 22: Kathy Huberland, *Bridal Staircase*, 1972. Mixed media site installation.

Source: Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, eds., *The Power of Feminist Art: the American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994), 53.



Figure 23: “Lili St. Cyr, *stripteuse extraordinaire*, in the chastity belt she wore for her historic opening night performance at the Gayety Theatre in 1944.”
Photo: Bernard of Hollywood.

Source: William Weintraub, *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights in the 1940s and '50s* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1996), 184-185.



Figure 24: Richard Hamilton, *Just what is it that makes today's homes so different, so appealing?* 1956. Collage, 26 x 24.8 cm.

Source: Collins, Bradford R. *Pop Art: The Independent Group to Neo Pop, 1952-90* (London: Phaidon, 2012), 16.



Figure 25: Mauve, *La femme et la ville*, 1972.
Installation at Dupuis-Frères. Detail: Irons, wedding dress and soup cans.
Photo: Bernard Lauzé.

Source: "Femme-objet," *Le Devoir*, July 15, 1972.



Figure 26: Andy Warhol, *Campbell's Soup Cans*, 1962. Synthetic polymer paint on 32 canvases, each 508×406 mm.
New York, Museum of Modern Art.

Source: *Grove Art Online*. [http://0-](http://0-www.oxfordartonline.com/mercury.concordia.ca/subscriber/article/img/grove/art/F018131?q=%22andy+warhol%22+%22soup+cans%22&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

[www.oxfordartonline.com/mercury.concordia.ca/subscriber/article/img/grove/art/F018131?q=%22andy+warhol%22+%22soup+cans%22&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit](http://0-www.oxfordartonline.com/mercury.concordia.ca/subscriber/article/img/grove/art/F018131?q=%22andy+warhol%22+%22soup+cans%22&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit)

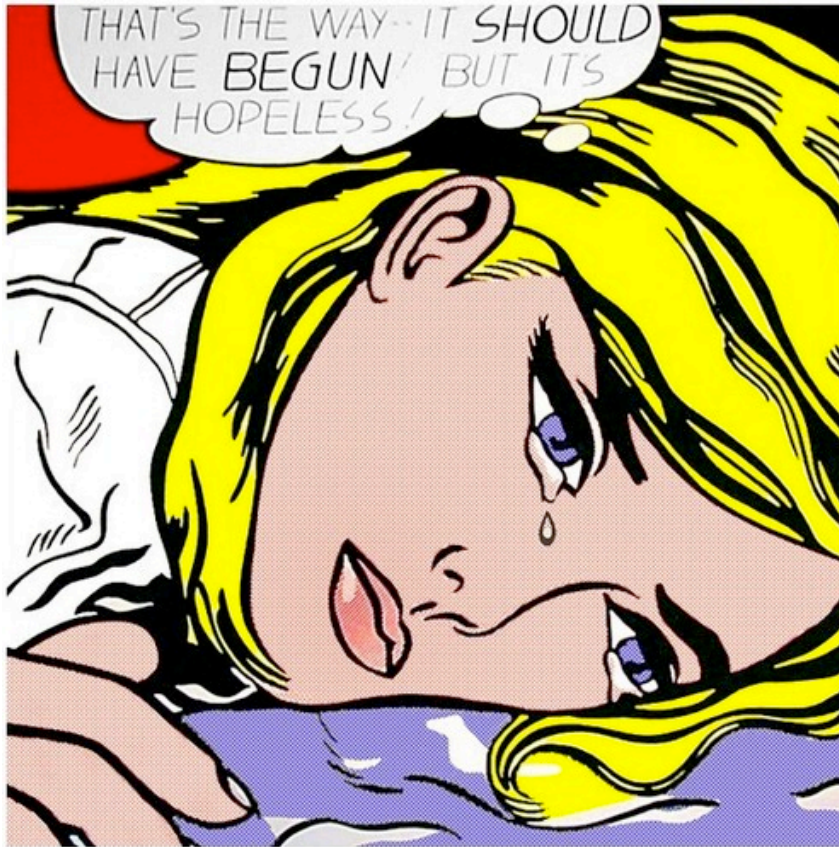


Figure 28: Roy Lichtenstein, *That's the Way It Should Have Begun! But It's Hopeless!* 1968. Screenprint, 127 x 90.17 cm.

Source : "Roy Lichtenstein (American, 1923-1997)." *Artnet*.
<http://www.artnet.com/auctions/artists/roy-lichtenstein/that%27s-the-way-it-should-have-begun-but-it%27s-hopeless-signed-exhibition-poster-2>.