

# GÉRARD

# DANSEREAU

## Beast or not to Beast

ROBERT BERNIER

**S**ince the beginning of the 1980s, Gérard Dansereau's art has caught the eye of many an art lover. His journey is eloquent, and like all journeys, his trajectory has been all but linear... Similar to humanity's evolution, his path is more akin to a zigzag. As such, throughout the course of his career the famous Kat-Mandou, who is in great part responsible for Dansereau's notoriety, has invited many creatures to come and populate the pictorial universe of this artist. So successful was this endeavour that the artist was in fact swept away by this little game as, and it is worth mentioning, it was quite amusing. In recent months, the artist has felt an overwhelming and irresistible desire to explore new avenues. "I wanted to go elsewhere, do things differently, but I didn't know which direction to take or even how to get there. I tried many things – I love to experiment – but nothing was really fulfilling me. And then suddenly, as is often the case, things just fell into place. One fine morning, everything began to converge towards a language that was fitting for my artistic approach. In fact, there seems to have been a fusion between what I was producing at the beginning of my career and what I have been painting more recently. I returned to basics and, ultimately, to taking immense pleasure in painting".

It is this production that the artist will be presenting in the spring at the Galerie Michel-Ange in Old Montreal. "I am not yet certain if the entire exhibition will be composed of new material; it all depends on my inspiration. I want to take my time and do things my way. I feel free, much freer than I have in years!"

"What would you be able to tell us about this new period in your artistic production?" "First off, I need to specify that I am not cutting all ties with my artistic past. I have always worked by following a certain path, my own path. This is not

a clean break. I would say that I have remained myself, but that I have made my approach more complex, more intricate. I have returned to a density in my materials, in my colours, and in my treatment of these elements. For example, I have always chosen simple subjects in order to be able to manipulate them more freely. A good subject is one that is not only flexible but also opens the door to new ideas and interpretations. My vision of a subject is firstly graphic and secondly plastic. In this series, I have returned to collages, graffiti and also black backgrounds. It's funny, I used to work on black backgrounds but now it is as if I see something new in this technique, something that allows me to move forward. Above all, what fascinates me is the contrast, and mostly all the possible contrasts that black backgrounds permit. These black backgrounds imposed themselves onto my painting quite naturally and have allowed my work areas to become very fertile grounds for my imagination. In a certain way, this has bridged the gap between by current and previous productions, as I have always felt a close kinship with children. In this way I have a lot of fun with my work, in how I treat my materials and in how I play with the different colours and tones in my paintings. Other elements from my past have also resurfaced, such as numbers, which are a reference to my studies in technical design. I scatter numbers here and

there, giving my viewers the impression that my works are similar to plans or blueprints. In fact, all this is false. I enjoy giving the impression that beneath the layers of paint I am hiding the secrets to painting, like an undisclosed code. All of this confers a quite playful dimension to my paintings, one that I had not yet discovered. In fact, I have noticed that people often see these codes and then seek out a specific interpretation – and they often find it. Consequently, I have become more conscious of this aspect of my art, and I entertain myself by leading my viewers down certain paths, some good, some bad.

It is a little bit as if I were writing a mystery novel". "This makes us want to see your new paintings. What is up next for you?" "There is a documentary being produced on my work, but this project may take quite some time to be completed. I am nevertheless awaiting it with much enthusiasm". ●



Gérard Dansereau, *Soleil levant pour nos amis*, technique mixte, 61 x 76 cm

Gérard Dansereau, April 24 to May 8  
at Galerie Michel-Ange, 430, rue  
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