

SELF-HOUSES

by Peter Trépanier

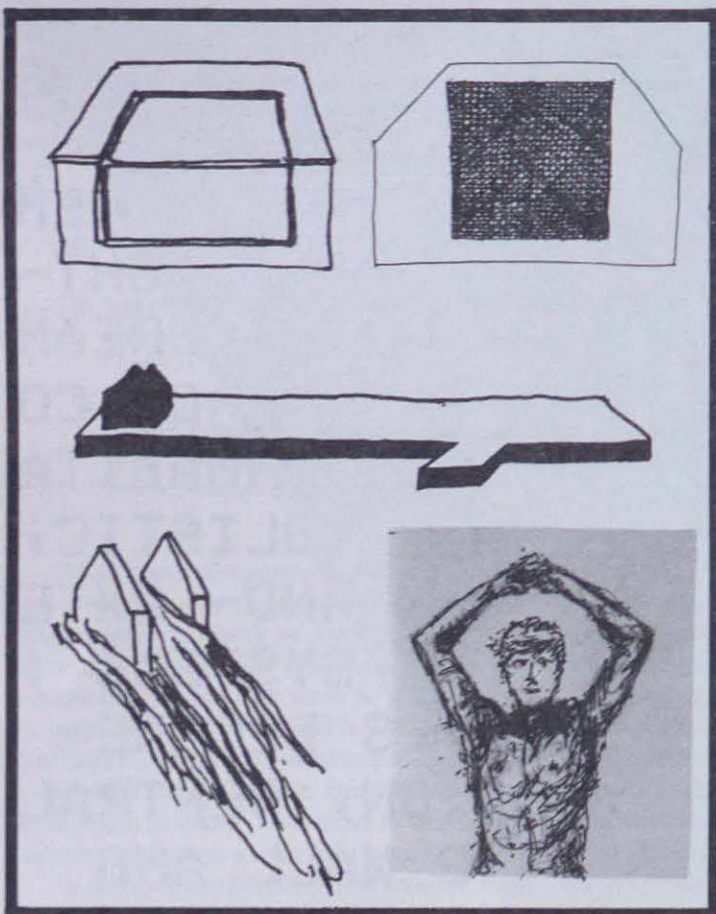
Voici des esquisses, oeuvres finales, commentaires et travaux récents de l'auteur.

The plans for my houses are numerous. Sketches are traced and then altered. Each succeeding plan is a novelty and a surprise. My designs stem from memories of many houses I have known. Gradually, the disparate buildings are reconciled. The plans now represent expressions of daily-



ness:
habitat,
hearth,
comfort,
cloister,
shelter,
retreat,
work,
childbirth,
family,
and death.

In public, this species of house emerges as an unadorned structure that regenerates its own familiarity. It is a portable object and is adaptable to its surroundings. My house is impersonal in style but personal in content. Privately, it staunchly retains its individuality.

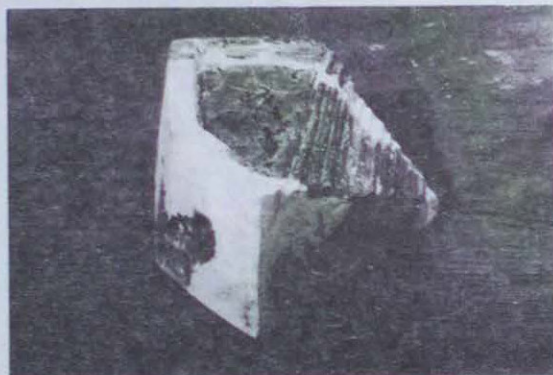


What was the reaction of the person who first made a symmetrical house? He felt a new contentment in the house. He could see that it reflected himself. He felt a new satisfaction in having built it and perhaps an awareness of clarity in his mind as the means.

Agnes Martin

My house is a house within a house. It sits in a clearing, serves earthly necessities, structures events, provides privacy and projects publicly. Unfenced from the human cycle, the smudged walls breathe the dense weight of time. Disdainful of any precision, broken lines spread intently through the mortar tracing interrupted surfaces of dips and hollows. The sagging building baits persistent impressions. Countless interpreters impose a past, maneuvering many footnotes to invent a truth.

But for now this house is mine. I inhabit its core. It functions as my redoubt, penetrable only to those whom I choose.



Standing upon the beaten earth, yet softened by irregularities and afterthoughts within its simple geometric forms, my house functions as the sensible shelter of my mind. The syntax of clay articulates building with thinking, bringing into being. Motifs are pruned to reinforce a modest style of economy.

Confident of the future, this simple structure is prepared to muffle the jolts from narrated interpretations amid claims of authenticity. My house speaks a common language. It keeps me out from the sun and in from the rain.

Peter Trépanier is presently a librarian at the Canadian Centre for Architecture as well as a practising artist.



Illustrations:

1. Family house, Loretteville, Quebec. Photographer Unknown, 1954. "Citing excerpts from my ancestral past."
2. Figures 2-5. Preparatory sketches, ink on paper, 1984.
3. House within a house
4. Screenhouse
5. Landing
6. Snowdrift house
7. Forming a double pitched roof over my head, 1985. Preparatory sketch, Graphite on paper.
8. Redoubt, 1985. Self-hardening clay, plaster, tile grout, and water putty.
9. With house in hands, 1985. Black diazo, Graphite and Conté.