

Valérie Blass Wangechi Mutu
Ghada Amer Althea Thauberger
Kent Monkman Laurent Grasso
A Matter of Abstraction Musée Ball
Max and Iris Stern Symposium 6
Les Aveugles Nocturnes

Magazine of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Volume 22, Number 3 — Winter 2011–2012



Serge Murphy | Shirley Wiitasalo | Étienne Zack

7 janvier au 11 février 2012

Nicolas Baier

18 février au 24 mars 2012

Anthony Burnham

31 mars au 5 mai 2012

Galerie René Blouin

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Photo: Nat Gorry

The creative endeavour blurs the distinction between art and life, according to John Cage. Can we also, quite simply, posit that it has no meaning other than its capacity for attaining something universal? It was this thought that guided our decision to devote our temporary-exhibition spaces to three remarkable women artists—Ghada Amer, Valérie Blass and Wangechi Mutu—and so provide a unique opportunity to discover their works, which promise visitors an extraordinary experience. The selected pieces attest to the wide range of intentions and sensibilities conveyed by each of the artists and are a natural fit for our continuing series of exhibitions that explore vibrant contemporary practices. We have chosen to present a cross section of their art precisely in order to highlight dynamic approaches to the act of creating. Museum goers will find an examination of three individual paths that express the tensions and fragile balance in today's society, in an illuminating look at the work of these three artists—an explosive trio whose forceful pieces reflect very topical concerns. Altogether, nearly ninety works will be on view in the exhibitions, each of which possesses its own, distinctive atmosphere, laid out in a way that offers insight into the artists' powerful output.

Opening in March, a major exhibition entitled *A Matter of Abstraction* will focus on the Collection. We know that abstraction has had a sizable impact on the evolution of art. It is engaged in an ongoing dialogue with different forms of contemporary representation, from painting to new media. Showcasing a hundred or so works, the exhibition is planned in two parts, with constant interconnections between a historical section and more current works, brought together in a second part titled *On Abstraction*, offering food for thought through a fresh vision of great works of art.

Events tying in with these exhibitions include meetings with artists and curators, and workshops and guided tours for school groups, families and the general public. Children will also enjoy the day camp scheduled for March break. The young campers will take the workshop walls and spaces by storm, gradually transforming them into a space with a life of its own, a place to be inhabited or an imaginary universe to be investigated.

Until February 19, as part of the multimedia Projections series, the Musée is presenting recent work by Vancouver artist Althea Thauberger, whose film installation projects arise out of site-specific collective performances. Then, from February 23 to March 11, the Maurice Maeterlinck play *Les Aveugles*, turned into a technological phantasmagoria devised and produced by Denis Marleau, will run at the Musée, in a coproduction of UBU, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Festival d'Avignon. Readers will recall that this piece was created by Marleau as artist in residence at the museum in 2001. The *International Festival of Films on Art*, which celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year, returns in March, when the Musée will screen a selection of films as part of this edition of FIFA.

The sixth Max and Iris Stern International Symposium, titled *Manufacturing Exhibitions 2*, is the follow-up to last year's symposium on topics related to exhibition practices and curating. It will contextualize current issues by concentrating on the last two decades. Of course, our very popular Nocturnes will continue to liven up the first Friday of every month with evenings that are always full of delightful surprises.

I would like to congratulate Claudie Gagnon, winner of the Collection Loto-Québec people's choice award for the *Québec Triennial 2011*. And I must thank the Musée Foundation for the steadfast support it provides to the museum through its fundraising activities. The annual event Les Printemps du MAC, titled *Manipulations*, will take place on April 20. I invite you all to come and enjoy the season's bountiful offerings.

Paulette Gagnon

Director

Cover:
Valérie Blass
Cargo-culte (detail), 2011



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www.macm.org



Exhibitions

Althea Thauberger

January 4 to February 19, 2012

Ghada Amer

February 2 to April 22, 2012

Valérie Blass

February 2 to April 22, 2012

Wangechi Mutu

February 2 to April 22, 2012

A Matter of Abstraction

March 2012 to 2016

Tour, Meetings, Talks

Meet artist Althea Thauberger

Wednesday, February 1, 2012 at 5 p.m.

In English

In BWR Hall

Meet artist Ghada Amer

Thursday, February 2, 2012 at 4 p.m.

In French

In the exhibition galleries

Meet artist Valérie Blass

Wednesday, February 8, 2012 at 7 p.m.

In French

In the exhibition galleries

Meet Josée Bélisle, Curator of the Collection and of the exhibition

A Matter of Abstraction

Wednesday, April 25, 2012 at 7 p.m.

In French

In the exhibition galleries

Nocturnes

February 3: *Misstress Barbara with Girls on a Ducati*

March 2: *Organ Mood*

April 6: *K.A.N.T.N.A.G.A.N.O.*

May 4: *Carsten Nicolai*



Lectures

Beverly Webster Rolph Hall

Max and Iris Stern

International Symposium 6

Manufacturing Exhibitions 2

March 30 and 31, 2012

Events

Nuit blanche at the Musée

Saturday, February 25, 2012 from 6 p.m. to 3 a.m.

The Musée will be offering an impressive range of activities. On the program: three exhibitions by women artists; an art workshop titled *Bric-à-Blass* for La Petite Nuit blanche; tastings of Belgian beers, hot chocolate and other treats; and performances by the Qwartz quartet punctuating the evening.

Multimedia Events

Beverly Webster Rolph Hall

Les Aveugles Fantasmagorie technologique
By Maurice Maeterlinck

February 22 to March 11, 2012

Information: 514 521-0403 #222

www.ubucc.ca

Art Videos

Gazoduc-TQM Room

Free admission

January 31 to May 21, 2012

Tuesday to Sunday at 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m.

and 3:30 p.m., and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m.

Plus Nocturne Fridays: **February 3, March 2,**

April 6 and May 4, at 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.

and holiday Mondays: April 9 and May 21,

at 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m.

January 31 to March 15, 2012

Our City Dreams

Director: Chiara Clemente. New York:

Di San Luca Films, 2008 (85 min). In English.

An invitation into the world of five women artists, from different cultures and generations, who have one thing in common beyond making art: the city they call home—New York. Nancy Spero, Marina Abramović, Kiki Smith, Ghada Amer and Swoon.



Art Videos (continued)

François Lacasse: peintures 1992-2002

Director: Chantal Charbonneau. Montréal:

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Groupe de recherche en arts médiatiques, 2002 (15 min).

In French.

Special program for the thirtieth edition of FIFA

To mark its thirtieth anniversary, the *International Festival of Films on Art (FIFA)*, in collaboration with the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, is honouring the contribution made by Concordia University's Faculty of Fine Arts to films on art and the media arts. A series of films related to artists who have emerged from the university will be screened from March 16 to 25, 2012.

March 27 to April 29, 2012

Sullivan

Director: Françoise Dugré. Rimouski:

Par' Ici, 2010 (38 min). In French.

François Lacasse: peintures 1992-2002

Director: Chantal Charbonneau. Montréal:

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal;

Groupe de recherche en arts médiatiques, 2002

(15 min). In French.

Mousseau

Director: Chantal Charbonneau. Montréal:

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal;

Groupe de recherche en arts médiatiques, 1996

(24 min). In French.

May 1 to 21, 2012

Waste Land

Director: Lucy Walker. New York:

Arthouse Films, 2010 (99 min). In English.

Brazilian artist Vik Muniz set out to meet the "catadores" of Rio de Janeiro. These ill-fated men and women are all garbage pickers at the world's largest dump. The artist has attempted to capture the beauty of this incredible place and its destitute yet dignified workers.

Marcelle Ferron

Director: Chantal Charbonneau. Montréal:

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal;

Groupe de recherche en arts médiatiques, 2000

(20 min). In French.



Art Workshops

Main floor

In the invention-friendly surroundings of the Musée's art workshops, participants give free rein to their imaginations by creating their own artworks inspired by a piece on display at the museum, while trying out different techniques, media and materials.

Sunday combo

For all, with family or friends, every Sunday at 1:30 p.m. or 2:30 p.m.

To provide inspiration before you start creating, a 30-minute tour is given prior to the workshop activity. Free for children under 12 (must be accompanied by an adult).

No reservation necessary.

Workshop/tour combo for groups

Tuesday to Friday at 9, 9:30, 10:30 and 11 a.m., and 12:30, 1 and 2 p.m.

Consult the *Practical Guide for Teachers*:

www.macm.org/education

Information/reservations: 514 847-6253

Bric-à-Bloss

February 3 to March 4, 2012

February 25, 2012, from 6 to 9 p.m.,

La Petite Nuit blanche at the Musée

Works by Valérie Blass will guide us as we create extraordinary images, with hybrid, oddly disturbing forms, out of all kinds of materials.

Abstraction in Action: Borduas

March 9 to April 8, 2012

After observing Paul-Émile Borduas's 1945 work titled *Palette d'artiste surréaliste ou 3.45*, on display in the exhibition *A Matter of Abstraction*, you will use a brush to paint abstract images made up of a tangle of expressively coloured forms.

Abstraction in Action: Riopelle

April 13 to May 20, 2012

Taking inspiration from Jean-Paul Riopelle's *Landing*, 1958, presented in the exhibition *A Matter of Abstraction*, participants will wield spatulas as they paint abstract images using spontaneous gestures and dazzling colours.



SéminArts

An educational program that consists of five gatherings providing an introduction to the art of collecting contemporary art, offered in cooperation with the Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Family Foundation.

March 14 to May 9, 2012

In French

March 21 to May 16, 2012

In English

Cost: \$200 for the series of five sessions

Sessions take place Wednesday evenings from 7:30 to 9 p.m.

Registration begins February 7, 2012.

For information and registration: 514 847-6244

Creative Tuesdays

1:30 to 4 p.m.

Art workshops for adults looking for a creative diversion. By way of introduction, each series of activities starts off with a guided tour—only on dates marked with an asterisk*. Cost: \$14 per workshop. Space is limited.

Registration required: 514 847-6266

Blassemblage

February 21* and 28, 2012

Not Just a Pretty Face

March 13* and 20, 2012

Spontaneous Gesture: Abstraction Made Real

March 27*; April 3, 17 and 24*;

May 1, 8 and 15, 2012

Musée Day Camps

March Break: March 5 to 9, 2012

For children aged 7 to 11

Summer 2012

For children aged 6 to 16

Visit our website: www.macm.org/camps



Practical Information

Hours

Tuesday to Sunday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesday: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. (free admission from 5 to 9 p.m.).

The Musée will be open on April 9 and May 21, 2012.

Admission

\$12 adults

\$10 seniors (age 60 and over)

\$8 students (age 30 and under with valid I.D.)

\$24 family (maximum 4 persons including at least 1 adult)

Free admission for children under 12 and members of the Musée Foundation

Wired to the MAC Card \$20

Enjoy unlimited admission to all our exhibitions for one year. Also valid for access to Friday Nocturnes. Available at the museum ticket counter.

Guided Tours without Reservation

Wednesdays at 5, 6 and 7:30 p.m. in French and 6:30 p.m. in English

Saturdays and Sundays at 1 p.m. in English and 3 p.m. in French

Guides in the Galleries

Educator/guides are on hand in the galleries to answer your questions and discuss the current exhibitions with you, on Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m.

Media Centre

Second floor

One of Canada's largest reference centres devoted to contemporary art. An ideal place for multimedia research and consultation, open to the public, free of charge, Tuesday to Friday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Wednesdays till 8:30 p.m. <http://media.macm.org>

Subscribe to the Musée's E-Newsletter at www.macm.org

February 2 to April 22, 2012

Valérie Blass is a sculptor in every sense of the word. Her practice is fundamentally a question of creating encounters—between her own body and the objects she creates, between one sculpture and another, between the physicality of the viewer and that of the works in a space. Employing virtually every sculptural technique—from moulding, casting, carving and modelling to assemblage and bricolage—she explores the territories between animal, human and inanimate forms, creating strange, hybrid objects.

Valérie Blass

The impact of Valérie Blass's work resides in the anachronistic way she navigates between two sculptural traditions. She makes free-standing, vertical, handmade, human-scale, autonomous pieces that locate her squarely within the classical tradition of figurative sculpture. But the diversity of her materials and the plethora of mass-produced, bought and found objects she uses, stemming from an enthusiastic engagement with the material culture of the twenty-first century, anchor her art in assemblage and bricolage.

Valérie Blass's work is a kind of material problem solving as she experiments with ways of making visible the images she forms in her mind. Paying attention to the *facture*—to how the artwork is made and what it is made of—is paramount to grasping its significance. It is through making that she participates in discussions about the status of the object and the “difference” between a work of art and a mass-produced object. Blass takes everyday consumer objects out of circulation and, through a variety of material strategies, creates a new *thing* that acknowledges the mass-produced, pop-cultural origins of its fragments yet also declares its identity as an artwork. Each individual object brings with it a range of associations and meanings, as well as a materiality

that participates in the communicative resonance of the final work. A cow-shaped milk jug is perceptible and evocative as such, but it also forms the mouth and snout of an uncanny creature whose realization provokes a multiplicity of sexual, philosophical and sociological musings that enrich its meaning. Blass has what she describes as an obsessive interest in the *infigurable* (a term that translates unsatisfactorily as “unrepresentable”). She navigates the terrain between figuration and abstraction, the recognizable and the indeterminate, the declared and the evoked, in order to create a duality that is charged with potential. She generates confusion between the found and the made, the deskilled, the mass-produced and the reskilled, jarring familiar perceptions and cognitive channels long enough to produce a moment of dissonance and insight.

The exhibition, which contains approximately thirty works, is accompanied by a major publication that includes essays by the curator, Lesley Johnstone, and by feminist art historian Amelia Jones, as well as an interview with the artist by Wayne Baerwaldt. It is Blass's largest exhibition to date, following her participation in the inaugural *Québec Triennial* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in 2008 and numerous group and solo exhibitions in Montréal and across Canada. **Lesley Johnstone, Curator**



Cargo-culte, 2011
Metal stand and wooden objects, rattan, metal, plastic and ceramic, Hydrocal FRG plaster, acrylic, enamel paint
154.5 × 122 × 127 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Midnight Viper, 2009
Ceramic objects, glue
38 × 33 × 28 cm
Collection of José Parlà, New York

Femme panier, 2010
Fibreglass and resin mannequin, basket, fishnet stockings, polyester shirt, wood, Hydrocal FRG plaster, acrylic
126 × 149 × 72 cm
Purchased with the support of the National Bank Private Wealth 1859 Collectors Symposium 2010
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal





Color Misbehavior, 2009
Embroidery and gel medium on canvas
177.8 × 149.9 cm
Photo: Courtesy Cheim & Read, New York



Ghada Amer

February 2 to April 22, 2012

This exhibition features largely recent works by Egyptian artist Ghada Amer. Born in Cairo in 1963, Amer spent a number of years in France and studied fine arts in Nice before moving to New York, where she now lives.

Handling subjects as delicate and personal as pleasure and love, Ghada Amer shows that it is possible to resist a conventional representation of women in art. Some of her iconographic references are drawn from the literature of porn and reveal women's bodies as they are displayed for a heterosexual male audience. Clearly, in Amer's work, art and pop culture overlap.

What she contrasts with high art, moreover, is a medium considered artisanal—embroidery—which she employs to represent these unseemly women engaged in their delectations, as she deliberately foregrounds the threads left behind by the “handiwork.” This female pleasure and leisure express the artist's desire to merge a content and style in order to re-examine the criteria that are used to define artistic quality.

In this vein, several pictorial works in the exhibition refer to well-known artists (Ingres and Picasso, for example), who established a supposedly objective classification of those criteria. Taking works from the canon as her starting point, the artist observes the idealizing narrative construction of Western art history, indulging in a conventional presentation of an image of women that satisfies a voyeuristic gaze.

In allying art and pornographic imagery, pitting embroidery against painting and proposing a rereading of works emblematic of a certain evolution of art, Amer defies the discourses that determine what can suitably, even properly, be called “art.” In her own way, she casts a critical eye on material, support and representation, challenging hierarchies of any kind, whether of medium or gender.

Thérèse St-Gelais, Guest Curator

Exhibited regularly since the late 1990s, Wangechi Mutu's collage-drawings depicting black women, tampered with and prey to strange bodily mutations, attracted attention that has not abated since.

Born in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1972, Wangechi Mutu lives and works in New York. In her drawings and collages, as well as her sculptures, installations and videos, she evokes the interplay of relations between living organisms, human beings and the power of nature.

The broad range of raw materials she uses—magazines on fashion and current events, geography and ethnography, motorcycles and pornography—allows her to tackle the stereotypes of media representation, particularly of women, head on by exposing the fragility of their foundation. Concerned with questions of identity and the African diaspora, Mutu creates new models, beyond all norms, that will undermine the worn-out images that promote reckless consumption and perpetrate a superficial, simplistic understanding of the world: the (Western) world in general, whose codes and standards are apparently known and recognized, and the generally unknown world of the Other and the stranger.

Moth Girls, 2010

Ceramic, leather, feather, paper and wash

Variable dimensions

Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Photo: Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York

February 2 to April 22, 2012

Wangechi Mutu



The centrepiece of the exhibition is the installation *Moth Girls*, 2010, recently acquired by the Musée. In the recurrence of a half-human, half-animal, female figure, the product of an extreme hybridization, the work reintroduces the notion of taxonomy, along with the volatile notion of classification and hierarchization of species and, by extension, peoples and races. The installation of the work recalls a classroom configuration that resembles a modest African school. Carving material right out of the wall surface creates a kind of crevices, reddened patches like engravings expressively representing the shapes of four lakes in Kenya. This elemental relationship with landscapes of a remembered geography is part of the intense introspective power that pervades Mutu's work. Conjuring up a physical wound and colonialism's territorial appropriation and exploitation, the artist merges poetic symbolism with an ethno-political discourse.

Josée Bélisle, Curator of the Permanent Collection



A Matter of Abstraction

March 2012 to 2016

The Musée has mounted highly dynamic rotating exhibitions of works from the Collection since 1992. In 2002, the museum obtained a substantial grant from Québec's Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine that enabled it to present *Place à la magie! The Forties, Fifties and Sixties in Québec*, which ran from May 2002 to March 2008. This was the museum's first permanent exhibition focusing on the historical foundations of the Collection; it featured ninety major works by key figures who played a part in the artistic renewal seen in this crucial period of great change. In 2010, under the Ministère's program of support for permanent exhibitions, the museum received another major grant to highlight, from a thematic and a scholarly perspective, one of the most important facets of the Collection.

The search for abstraction plainly influenced developments in contemporary artistic expression in Québec and Canada. With this new exhibition titled *A Matter of Abstraction*, which brings together a hundred or so works produced between 1939 and the present,¹ the Musée continues its reassessment of the quest led, since the early 1940s, by the artists of the Montréal School in a thoroughly original way yet in synchrony with the major international movements.

A distinctive feature of this exhibition, which is both historical and thematic, is its ability to offer a multidisciplinary body of works (paintings, sculptures, drawings, photographs, videos) illustrating the wide-ranging visual ramifications of the expression of abstraction. The broad overview defined, which spans seven decades (1940–2010), places particular emphasis on Québec works in the Collection, while also pointing out specific relevant connections with the Canadian and international scenes. The thematic presentation, divided into chronological segments, gives an immediate sense of the diversity and complexity of the works.

¹ The 1939 founding of the Contemporary Arts Society by John Lyman in Montréal was decided on as the starting point of the museum's sphere of investigation, its exhibition program and the building of its collections.

Once again, a significant portion of the Borduas Collection will be on view. Beginning, quite logically, with the Automatist adventure that emerged at the same time as the *Refus global* manifesto published in 1948—with Paul-Émile Borduas, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Fernand Leduc, Pierre Gauvreau, Claude Gauvreau, Jean-Paul Mousseau, Marcel Barbeau and Marcelle Ferron, among others—the exhibition then moves on to the development, in the 1950s and 1960s, of an abstract, geometric visual language, based on order, rigour and the concision of its components—here represented by Jauran and the early Plasticians, Guido Molinari, Claude Tousignant and Fernand Leduc. The show will also explore the contrasting merits of gestural expression and the structural dynamics at the heart of a relative hybridity—Yves Gaucher, Charles Gagnon, Jacques Hurtubise, Jean McEwen, and others. A number of these artists continued, into the 1980s and 1990s and beyond, pictorial investigations that have had an enduring resonance and depth.

The close embrace of abstraction necessarily informed the development of sculpture throughout these same decades—Armand Vaillancourt, Robert Roussil, Françoise Sullivan, Charles Daudelin, Peter Gnass, Ulysse Comtois, Henry Saxe and Roland Poulin, for example.

And now, new generations of artists—Christian Kiopini, Richard Mill, Louis Comtois, Guy Pellerin, Stéphane La Rue, Francine Savard, François Lacasse—are proposing fresh and relevant paths, by turns spare, engaging, conceptual even, for expressing abstraction.

The two galleries adjacent to the permanent exhibition *A Matter of Abstraction* will be the site of periodic, sharply focused shows examining other current perspectives *On Abstraction*.

Josée Bélisle, Curator of the Permanent Collection

Francine Savard
Casier pour objet du désir, 2000
Linden wood
213 × 213 × 152 cm
Gift of the artist
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal

Guido Molinari
Structure, 1970
Acrylic on canvas
229.2 × 199 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: MACM





January 4 to February 19, 2012

Althea Thauberger

Zivildienst ≠ Kunstprojekt, 2006

Photo: Courtesy the artist

Zivildienst ≠ Kunstprojekt (Social Service ≠ Art Project) is an eighteen-minute black-and-white film made with the collaboration of eight young Germans who devoted part of their civil service—an alternative to military service, which was then compulsory in Germany—to Althea Thauberger's project.

A native of Saskatoon, Althea Thauberger has been based in Vancouver for several years. She studied photography at Concordia University before going on to earn an MFA at the University of Victoria, in British Columbia. From her earliest works, Thauberger has engaged in a collaborative creative process with the “subjects” she chooses to explore. Her practice has led her to work with young tree planters in B.C., with members of a linguistic minority in northern Italy, and so on. In 2005, she made *Murphy Canyon Choir* with military spouses on the San Diego base, the largest military housing complex in the U.S. One of her projects took her to Kandahar, Afghanistan, with the Canadian Forces. While she was an artist in residence at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin in 2006, Thauberger reached an agreement with the Zivildienst authorities to work with conscientious objectors on writing and producing a film exploring the ideas of civilian service, questions of national identity, the power of the State and the work ethic.

Thauberger won the 2011 VIVA Award last spring and she was one of the four finalists for the Grange Prize 2011, awarded by the AGO. Her work has been featured in solo exhibitions in Canada, the United States and Europe. She has also taken part in numerous group shows, including the 17th Biennial of Sydney; *WE: Vancouver*, at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2011; *Nomads*, at the National Gallery of Canada in 2009; *Farewell to Postcolonialism*, the Guangzhou Triennial, China, in 2008; *The Soul*, Manifesta 7, in Trento, Italy, in 2008; *The Tree: From the Sublime to the Social*, at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 2008; and *Explorations narratives*, Le Mois de la photo à Montréal in 2007. Thauberger has worked on various public projects in Montréal, including *Décarie Devotional Choir*, a community exhibition project at the Saidye Bronfman Centre in 2005; she was also involved in *Diabolique*, at the Galerie de l'UQAM in 2010. La Centrale presented one of her first solo exhibitions in 2003.

Louise Simard, Head of Multimedia Events

Max and Iris Stern International Symposium

6

Manufacturing Exhibitions

2

March 30 and 31, 2012

Sophie Bélair Clément

Proun Room: wall, wood, color, 1923

(1965/1971/2010), 2011

Installation

Various materials

300 × 300 × 300 cm

Produced by Benoit Bourdeau

Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay



On Friday, March 30 and Saturday, March 31, 2012, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents *Manufacturing Exhibitions 2*, part two in a series of events revolving around curatorial theory and practice in contemporary art. The symposium held in March 2011 brought together an international group of leading specialists: Bruce Altshuler, Director, Program in Museum Studies, Graduate School of Arts and Science, New York University; Daina Augaitis, Chief Curator, Vancouver Art Gallery; Howie Chen, curator, artist; Barbara Fischer, Executive Director/Chief Curator, Justina M. Barnicke Gallery, Toronto, and Senior Lecturer in Curatorial Studies, University of Toronto; Kate Fowle, Executive Director, Independent Curators International; Marie Fraser, Chief Curator, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal; Chus Martinez, Chief Curator, Museu d'Art Contemporani, Barcelona; and Michèle Thériault, Director, Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, Montréal.

Continuing from that first symposium, *Manufacturing Exhibitions 2* will take up the historical contextualization of current issues in the field of exhibition curating in contemporary art. This year's lectures and discussions will focus on the last two decades, which saw a great many transformations. Examples include: the ongoing professionalization of exhibition curating; its growth in the academic world, which has generated numerous theoretical and historiographic questions; the power of the curatorial paradigm in contemporary culture; the role of the independent curator and the fate of the "new institutionalism" type of structures at a time of shrinking public funds; the change in exhibitions toward a more flexible, process-based model; their new adaptability with respect to the internationalization of networks; the development of activity structures that seek to integrate the distinctive action of a specific local reality; the methodological objective of the critical approach and the social and economic responsibility targeted by these new models; and finally, the persistent issue of the curators' authorial status, suddenly brought back to the fore by lively polemics surrounding the manufacturing of exhibitions.

For a list of speakers and the detailed symposium program, please check the Musée website in the coming months. **François LeTourneux, Associate Curator**



Laurent Grasso

1619, 2007
Digital video on DVD, animation,
loop projection, 7 min 30 s, 4/5
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

Studies into the Past – 1619, 2010
Oil on panel
37 × 43.5 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

Laurent Grasso was born in 1972 in Mulhouse, and now lives and works in Paris. Since the late 1990s, he has employed virtually every medium (from film to video, and from photographic projection to installation) to support an original conception bounded only by the existing realms of knowledge and advances in technology. His aesthetic project is at once relevant and eclectic, not to mention ambitious, critical and poetic. In 2008, he received the Prix Marcel Duchamp, awarded by ADIAF, the Association pour la diffusion internationale de l'art français, earning him an exhibition at the Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou in 2009.

Among other interests, Grasso focuses on natural phenomena: falling meteorites, eclipses, etc. The title of the video *1619*, produced in 2007, recalls the date on which Galileo used the term “aurora borealis” for the first time. Framed as a static shot, the field of the image reveals a vaguely northern landscape that contains a geodesic dome; rays of light shimmering in space gradually illuminate the sky. The timeless look of this tranquil environment alludes both to the history of the beginnings of geodesy and to the current day. The sound track incorporates sounds from nature and cosmic undertones.

The painting *Studies into the Past – 1619*, 2010, produced in the manner of the Old Masters, also refers to the phenomenon of the aurora borealis. To offer a masterly demonstration on a deliberately reduced scale, the artist (who called upon the expertise of conservators at the Louvre) presents an idealized landscape suffused with chiaroscuro effects and specific, minute details.

Succinctly connecting distant moments in the history of art and science, the two works illustrate the evolution of different artistic disciplines and the diversity of the environment observed in these new images of reality, which find a poetic echo in the idea of a northern Québec landscape. **Josée Bélisle, Curator of the Permanent Collection**

A major First Nations work, *The Night of September 12, 1759*, produced in 2011, has been added to the museum's Permanent Collection, thanks to a gift by the artist, Kent Monkman.

Monkman's works—paintings, installations, photographs, performances, films, videos—are currently contributing to a renewed prominence of the figure of the Native North American, to a revisiting of myths, customs and cultural representations, and a reinterpretation of events by suggesting an entirely different version of their narratives. This re-appropriation of history is embodied in a fictional, emblematic character by the name of Miss Chief Eagle Testickle. She appears in allegories inspired by eighteenth and nineteenth-century works documenting the colonial period in North America. Through his demonstrated mastery of the canons of this time in art history—for example, paintings by George Catlin (1796–1872) or Cornelius David Krieghoff (1815–1872)—Monkman inverts the romantic depiction of First Peoples and the European colonizers, cheekily and comically shown in extravagant, sometimes explicitly sexual, or even homosexual, poses.

The Night of September 12, 1759 is a remarkable example of the humorous way in which the artist “dresses up” certain historical figures to tell a totally different version of history, cultures and customs. The installation consists of two tents symbolizing the camps of the French and British generals (Montcalm and Wolfe) just before the battle of the Plains of Abraham, and two pictures in which Miss Chief appears with each of the two men separately. Determinedly ambiguous, the scene is inspired by the Biblical stories of Mary Magdalene's washing of Christ's feet and Delilah's betrayal of Samson, as it revisits the symbolism of hair, an attribute of beauty and triumph.

Of Cree and Irish ancestry, Kent Monkman was born in 1965. He currently lives and works in Toronto. His works have been featured in several solo exhibitions, at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery, Concordia University, in Montréal; Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, in Toronto; Winnipeg Art Gallery; and Art Gallery of Hamilton. He has also participated in many group shows, including *Nous venons en paix. Histoires des Amériques* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal.

Marie Fraser, Chief Curator

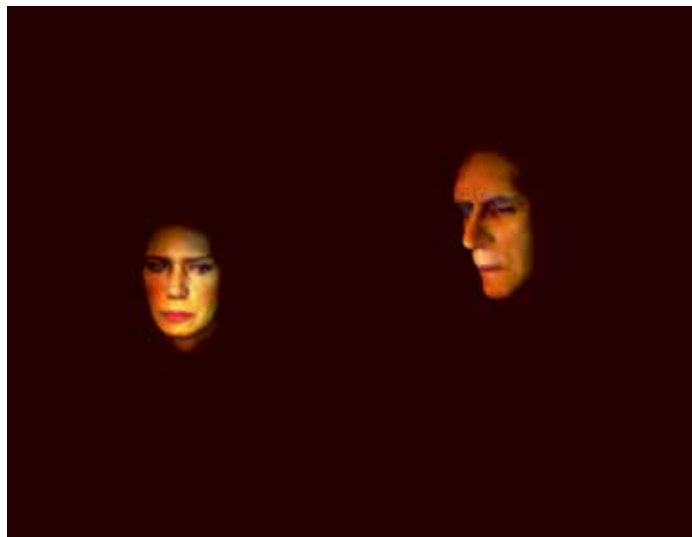
Kent Monkman



The Night of September 12, 1759, 2011
2 acrylics on canvas, 2 painted screens,
rhinestones, wooden dowels, 2 pillow-
cases with embroidered monogram
and monotype print, sound
Variable dimensions
Anonymous gift in honour of
W. Bruce C. Bailey
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal

Les Aveugles Technological Phantasmagoria

February 22 to March 11, 2012



Devised and directed by: Denis Marleau
Artistic collaboration: Stéphanie Jasmin
With Céline Bonnier | Paul Savoie
Creative team: Angelo Barsetti | Éline Hamel | Yves Labelle |
Pierre Laniel | Michel Pétrin | Claude Rodrigue | Nancy Tobin
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

To celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the UBU theatre company, Denis Marleau is returning to the Musée with *Les Aveugles*, in the very same place where he gave form to this creation ten years ago. As artist in residence at the museum in 2001, Marleau decided to mount the play *Les Aveugles*, by Belgian symbolist poet Maurice Maeterlinck, in a radical, new way, without the physical presence of actors on stage. In this technological phantasmagoria, we heard the voices of Céline Bonnier and Paul Savoie, whose faces, multiplied into female and male figures, formed a choir of six women and six men—all blind—waiting in a dark forest. After 700 performances in seventeen countries, to international critical acclaim, the work will be presented at the Musée from February 22 to March 11, 2012, in a coproduction of UBU, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the Festival d'Avignon. As readers may recall, Marleau staged his first work, *Cœur à gaz et autres textes Dada*, in 1981 at the Musée, which was then located at Cité du Havre. He founded UBU the next year and has been its Artistic Director ever since.

Louise Simard, Head of Multimedia Events

A New Web Presence

The opening of the *Québec Triennial 2011* this past October was the moment chosen by the Musée for the launch of its new website. Apart from the fact that it was time for a technological overhaul, the museum wanted to highlight the many activities it offers the public: performances, lectures, art videos, tours, workshops, and more. They are all now clearly displayed in their own section.

Other new features: a clickable calendar that makes it easier to plan your visit, an enhanced Education section, a Publications section that lists our splendid catalogues and photo galleries enriching virtually every page.

The site also allows visitors to share their likes by e-mail or on their favourite social media. The more technologically inclined can also sign up for our RSS feeds to find out all about coming events and exhibitions. www.macm.org

Valérie Sirard, Promotion and Web Coordinator



Friday Nocturnes

For the first Nocturne of 2012, on Friday, **February 3**, and in keeping with the exhibition program spotlighting women artists, the Musée welcomes *Misstress Barbara with Girls on a Ducati*. An influential figure on the electronic music scene, with numerous productions released by some of the top international labels, the Italian-born Montrealer has earned an unstoppable reputation over the last sixteen years with her DJ sets at the most important clubs around the world. Accompanied by her group for her most recent LIVE project, Misstress Barbara trades her turntables for a microphone, keyboards and a guitar, and reveals yet other facets of her talent.

On Friday, **March 2**, *Organ Mood* will take over the imposing Rotonde and Atrium space. Born out of a collaboration between a visual artist and a musician, Organ Mood immerses audiences in a spellbinding environment. Whatever the setting, the duo aims to shrink the distance between artist and audience. Mathieu Jacques' projections of abstract, geometric and organic motifs inspire and support the repetitive, melodic, hypnotic compositions of Christophe Lamarche-Ledoux. The vibrations of the organ are echoed in the hot lighting of Jacques' overhead projectors, which layer coloured or live-manipulated transparencies on top of the music.

The Nocturne of Friday, **April 6** will take place under the auspices of Montréal trio K.A.N.T.N.A.G.A.N.O. formed in 2008 and made up of Jonathan Parant (Fly Pan Am, Feu Thérèse), Alexander Wilson (Olek, Parabolik Guerilla) and Alexandre St-Onge (Klaxon Gueule, mineminemine, Shabali Effect). Since their first European tour in 2008, the trio has played several times in Montréal, at the Festival Voix d'Amérique and at Mutek in 2009, and at the Festival d'été de Québec in 2010. For their Nocturne, the group will offer brand-new electro-noise material in an immersive visual environment that reacts to the sounds generated.

On Friday, **May 4**, to mark the first International Digital Arts Biennial and inaugurate the presentation of his work *uni display*, Berlin artist Carsten Nicolai will perform using the actual installation, which will be on view at the Musée until May 27. A leading figure on the minimal electronics scene, visual artist/musician Carsten Nicolai is as well known in the world of contemporary art (*Documenta X*, 49th and 50th Venice Biennale, *Sonambiente* 2006, Yokohama Triennale in 2011) as on the electronic-music scene.

Louise Simard, Head of Multimedia Events



National Bank Private Wealth 1859 Collectors Symposium



The Collectors Symposium, sponsored by National Bank Private Wealth 1859, celebrated its fifth anniversary on October 20. Céline Robitaille Lamarre was the Honorary Chair of this event organized by the Fondation du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and the evening was chaired by Diane Vachon.

The goal of this benefit evening is to allow participants to share in the experience of sitting on an art acquisition committee. The proceeds generated by the event allow the Foundation to purchase a work to be added to the Musée Collection.

This year, three major works, by artists Adrian Paci, Chih-Chien Wang and Medrie MacPhee, were submitted by Musée curators Josée Bélisle, Marie Fraser and Mark Lanctôt. The guests selected the video installation *Last Gestures*, 2009, by Adrian Paci. This four-channel projection presents four scenes, tinged with a certain solemnity, showing the “last gestures” of a young couple just before they go through the marriage ceremony. The bride’s serious, reflective manner is accentuated by the ritual nature of the family’s gestures. The notion of moving on to another stage in life, abandoning the relative comfort of the present and being called to a new and different life is read and experienced at a sometimes decreased pace and against a backdrop of images of great pictorial beauty.

Danièle Patenaude



Paulette Gagnon, Céline Robitaille Lamarre, Diane Vachon, Marc DeSerres, François Dufresne and Éric Bujold

Janine Bombardier, Diane Vachon, Luc Beauregard, Nathalie Bissonnette and Éric Bujold

Photos: danielchoiniere.com

Adrian Paci
Last Gestures, 2009
Four-channel video installation
Overhead loop projection
Edition of 6
Purchased with the support of the
National Bank Private Wealth 1859
Collectors Symposium 2011
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal

None of the institutions is more important than the MACM—a standard setter when it comes to constantly looking at where art can and may well take us. It is the MACM which pushes the limits of our imagination and motivates us all to have the courage to break new ground.

David McAusland



Organizing Committee. Front row:
Debbie Zakaib, Marie-Claude Tellier,
François Dufresne, Chantal Dufresne
Back row: Robert Côté, Nathalie Goyette,
Eleonore Derome, Dominique Lanctôt,
Katerine Rocheleau, Danièle Patenaude
Absent from the picture: Sophie Clermont

Dick Walsh, Paulette Gagnon,
Gérald Tremblay, Suzanne Tailleux

Photos: Philippe Casgrain

Musée d'Art Contemporain de Montréal Ball

The Annual Ball of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal took place this past September 10, under the leadership of Honorary Chairs Bernard Derome, journalist, and David McAusland, partner at McCarthy Tétraut. One of the fall's most popular events, the Ball dazzled the 450 guests who gathered to launch the season in style.

The spectacular artistic design by Dick Walsh, the amazing performance by the Hi-Fi Show Band, the music of the incredible DJ Abeille and the feast laid on by the Fairmont Queen Elizabeth combined to create an unforgettable celebration.

Once again this year, the Musée Ball had the privilege of being able to count on the remarkable dedication and infectious enthusiasm of Debbie Zakaib, Chair of the Organizing Committee. Her team was made up of Sophie Clermont, Robert Côté, Eleonore Derome, Chantal Dufresne, Nathalie Goyette, Dominique Lanctôt, Danièle Patenaude, Katerine Rocheleau and Marie-Claude Tellier. Next edition: Saturday, September 15, 2012.

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Claudine and Stephen Bronfman Family Foundation |
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Danièle Patenaude



LEC
BISTRO
LE CONTEMPORAIN

One of the Montréal en lumière 2012 Festival's Fifty Finest Tables
Creative cuisine inspired by the Automatist palette of Borduas, Riopelle and, of course, Mousseau.
Chef: Antonin Mousseau-Rivard

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal / 185 rue Sainte-Catherine Ouest, Montréal / 514 847-6900 www.macm.org
Photo: Maude Chauvin