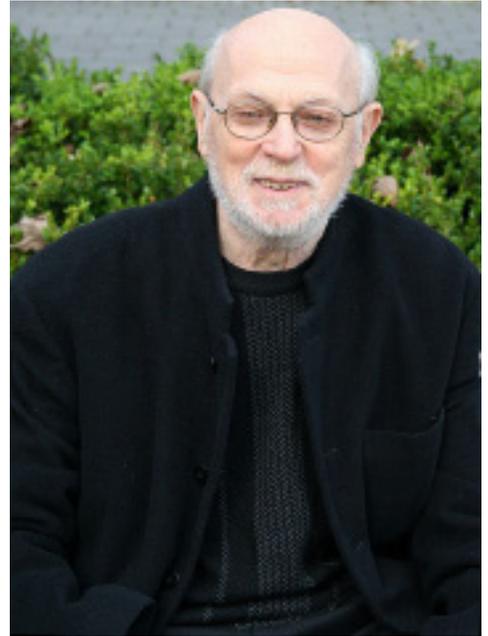


# BIG IDEAS

## King and Queen

Sorel Etrog (Toronto, Canada)

**WHO MADE THIS SCULPTURE?** Romanian-born Canadian artist Sorel Etrog is the sculptor of *King and Queen*. Etrog was born in 1933 and currently lives in Toronto. Arguably the most critically celebrated Canadian sculptor alive today, Etrog's impressive and multi-faceted career has spanned more than 40 years. In that time he has been prolific as a sculptor, a painter, an illustrator, a poet and a filmmaker. His work has been displayed at major international galleries around the world from Israel to Singapore, from India to Switzerland. In North America his position is secure in many of the most prestigious private and public collections. These include the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and Le



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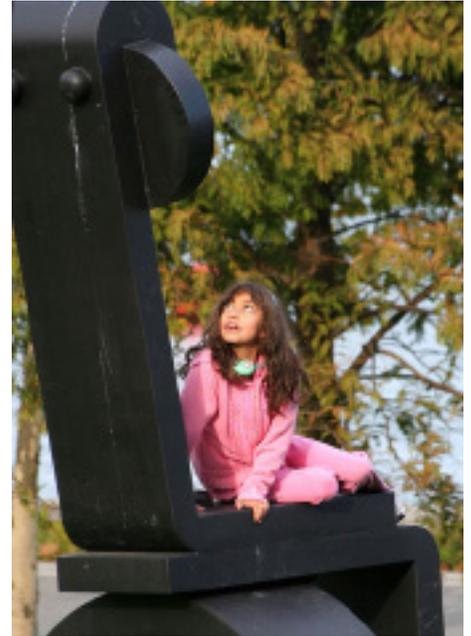
Musee des Beaux Arts in Montreal. For decades Etrog's sculpture has played an important role in the development of the Canadian Arts. In 1988, he was commissioned to represent Canada with a sculpture for the Summer Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea. In 1994, the Government of Canada donated the sculpture *Sunbird* to Normandy, France, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the liberation by Canadian forces. In 1967, Etrog was commissioned by Expo in Montreal to create two large sculptures for the World's Fair and in 1968 he was asked to create the small statuettes that would serve as the Canadian Film Awards. Though these awards are now more famously known as "The Genies," they were originally called "Etrogs." Throughout his career Etrog has been closely associated with many of the twentieth century's greatest thinkers and artists. He has collabo-

rated with distinguished international literary figures Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco and also maintained a close working relationship with Canada's famed communication theorist Marshall McLuhan. In 1995 Etrog was named a Member of the Order of Canada and in 1996 was appointed Chevalier of Arts and Letters by the Government of France.



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**WHAT IDEAS ARE BEING EXPLORED IN THIS SCULPTURE?** In *King and Queen*, Sorel Etrog makes manifest the complex relationship between man and machinery and the conflict between individual agency in craft and industrialized mass manufacturing in the modern world. The machinery, tools and processes of industrialization—steel plating, sheet metal, bolts, rivets and hinges become the dominating visual elements in this work. The laps of the two figures beckon visitors and in spite of its formal, rigid and machine-like quality, *King and Queen* has been a favourite Legacy piece for children to climb and sit on.



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**HOW WAS THIS SCULPTURE MADE?** Many parts of the sculpture were actually constructed at DeMonte Fabrication in Windsor, Ontario, a machine factory producing parts for the construction and automotive industries.



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**HOW DOES THIS WORK CONNECT WITH THIS ARTIST'S OTHER WORKS?** The many stages of Etrog's career include such media as painted wood, screws and bolts, hinges, steel constructions, composites and bronze sculptures. He has been described as "...this poet of the physical is not only a sculptor, but also a writer, designer, film maker, illustrator, raconteur, painter, philosopher, and existential comedian." Etrog has developed a complex visual vocabulary to create an art that explores the tension of our time. Sorel describes his art as "tension created by pulling together and pulling apart, with being stuck and being freed, a world of grabbing and holding on and losing hold... bringing shapes together but at the same time giving each an independence."

"Etrog's images take up where the machine left off with its transcendence of primitive abstract art."—Marshall McLuhan

**TO LEARN MORE:**  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorel\\_Etrog](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sorel_Etrog)

**WHO PUT THIS SCULPTURE ON DISPLAY IN VANCOUVER?** This sculpture is part of Vancouver Biennale 2009-2011 Exhibition. The Vancouver Biennale is a non-profit charitable organization that celebrates art in public space. Each exhibition transforms the urban landscape into an Open Air Museum, creating globally inspired cultural experiences where people live, work, play and transit. The Biennale features internationally renowned and emerging Contemporary artists that represent a diversity of cultural perspectives and artistic disciplines including sculpture, new media, performance works and film. The objective is to use great art as a catalyst to transformative learning and social action.

The Vancouver Biennale also creates supporting public programs, events and publications including the award-winning BIG IDEAS Education program, the International Artist Residency Program inspired by Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream", the CineFest LIVE documentary film festival and the Tour de Biennale and BIKennale arts & culture cycling events.

**TO LEARN MORE** you can search the terms **BIENNALE**, **PUBLIC ART** or **OUTDOOR SCULPTURE PARKS** on-line. Also Visit the Vancouver Biennale website at [www.vancouverbiennale.com](http://www.vancouverbiennale.com)

#### IMAGE CREDITS:

- 1 Artist portrait; Dan Fairchild
- 2 *King and Queen* (installation); Dan Fairchild
- 3 *King and Queen*; Dan Fairchild
- 4 *King and Queen* (installation); Dan Fairchild
- 5 *King and Queen*; Dan Fairchild
- 6 *The Hand*; Steven Harris
- 7 *The Yellow Sonata*, 1967; Simon Fraser University Collection

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