



MONTREAL  
MUSEUM OF  
FINE ARTS

Press release



**LA BALADE POUR LA PAIX: AN OPEN-AIR MUSEUM**  
A public art exhibition along one kilometre of Sherbrooke Street West  
Created by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts  
for Montreal's 375th anniversary

**Montreal, June 5, 2017** – The major international public art exhibition *La Balade pour la Paix: An Open-Air Museum* is part of the official programming for Montreal's 375th anniversary celebrations. Designed and organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA), with the support of McGill University, the exhibition runs from June 5 to October 29. The route features 67 stations (30 sculptures and 42 photographs) by Canadian and international artists. It is lined with the flags of the close to 200 member countries of the United Nations, along with those of Canada's 13 provinces and territories.

Since the theme of Montreal's 375th anniversary is building bridges, the MMFA has taken the initiative to bring together two museums and two universities in this inspirational artistic and educational project in the heart of the city. *La Balade pour la Paix* links, for the very first time, two of Montreal's major institutional and international sectors – Concordia University and the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts at one end, and McGill University and the McCord Museum at the other. The route also includes the MMFA's Pavilion for Peace, inaugurated in November 2016 – the Quebec government's first legacy project for Montreal's 375th anniversary.



This exhibition also commemorates two other important events: the 50th anniversary of Expo 67 and the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. The *Balade* is a reminder of how Expo 67, attended by 50 million visitors, was a window on the world – a watershed moment for Quebec and Canada.

**The Honourable Louise Arbour, ambassador for *La Balade pour la Paix*** and the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, notes: “I accepted Nathalie Bondil’s invitation to be the ambassador for *La Balade pour la Paix* without hesitation. This exhibition expresses fundamental values of humanism and peace that are so important to me. Expo 67 helped to open Montreal and all of Quebec to the world. Now, 50 years later, people from across the globe live here, sharing their culture and hope for peace. This exhibition is a wonderful gift to all Montrealers of all origins as we celebrate the city’s 375th anniversary.”

The Museum is proud to participate in celebrating Montreal’s 375th anniversary. The Museum was founded in 1860, seven years before Canadian Confederation. It has played a leading role in Montreal’s cultural, social and community life for the past 157 years. We are continuing to innovate and develop outstanding exhibitions and projects that raise our international profile and celebrate Montreal’s cultural vibrancy,” said **Jacques Parisien, chairman of the Museum’s Board.**

In the words of **Nathalie Bondil, Director General and Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**, “*La Balade pour la Paix* is an open, generous and unifying project that invites everyone to enjoy the wonders of art in the heart of the city. This tribute is designed to strengthen ties within our global village and renew Montreal’s message of peace during Expo 67, captured by the theme Man and His World.

Featuring the flags of close to 200 countries, in reference to the UN Headquarters in New York City, the installation is a reminder that Montreal remains an island of peace for so many immigrants in the 21st century who have fled political, economic and climate-related tragedies. Many people don’t know that Montreal is one of North America’s most important consular cities, as well as a leading university town. These are just some of the strengths that we want to underline through this unique partnership between four major institutions – two museums and two universities – as we celebrate Montreal, a centre for culture and learning.

This initiative follows the recent inauguration of the Michal and Renata Hornstein Pavilion for Peace, the Museum’s fifth pavilion and the Quebec government’s first official legacy project to mark Montreal’s 375th anniversary.

We would like to thank all of the artists and institutions who have loaned works and contributed to this ambitious public art exhibition, which was particularly complex to mount on a site as busy as Sherbrooke Street!”

**France Chrétien Desmarais, President of The Society for the Celebration of Montreal’s 375th Anniversary**, stated: “As a Montrealer and President of the Society for the Celebration of Montreal’s 375th Anniversary, I am proud to see *La Balade pour la Paix* come to fruition. Those who attended Expo 67 remember the vital role of art on the Man and His World site. The *Balade* is similarly an international exhibition that invites visitors to admire the works of Canadian and international artists, along with the flags of close to 200 countries – a stunning display of

peaceful coexistence. This major event for Montreal is a reminder that art and beauty can unite the peoples of the world.”

**Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre** concurred: “I applaud the work of The Society for the Celebration of Montreal’s 375th Anniversary and all of the partners who helped to create *La Balade pour la Paix*. This unique exhibition reflects one of Montreal’s greatest assets: a vibrant cultural scene that is accessible to all and reflects a variety of perspectives, with a focus on peace.”

“Montreal is a beacon of freedom and peace, recognized for its diversity and its openness to the world. Featuring artists from all over the world, this exhibition is a reflection of the creative, cosmopolitan city we are proud to celebrate this year,” said **Martin Coiteux, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Land Occupancy, Minister of Public Security and Minister responsible for the Montreal region.**

“In this momentous year of Canada 150 celebrations, unique and promising projects such as *La Balade pour la Paix* will have a major impact,” said the **Honourable Mélanie Joly, Minister of Canadian Heritage.** “This remarkable initiative conveys the values of diversity, inclusion and openness, which are fundamental to who we are. This exhibition is not only an incredible showcase for our artists, but will also make art even more accessible to people from all backgrounds.”

**Mohawk Council of Kahnawake (MCK) Chief, Christine Zachary-Deom** stated, “ Art is a tremendous vehicle to promote Respect, Education, Healing and Reconciliation. The MCK is firmly behind the ideas of understanding and education for our various cultures. This we hope, will lead to Better knowledge and respect for our Peoples, and the MCK applauds this objective. Now is the time for Montrealers to Know and understand us“

#### **An exhibition inspired by peace and sharing**

A true open-air museum, *La Balade pour la Paix* was designed to complement the urban landscape and architecture along Sherbrooke Street. The route is marked by two monumental artworks: at the western end, opposite the MMFA, is *Residential School Totem Pole* by Canadian artist Charles Joseph from the Kwakiutl Nation; at the eastern end, on the McGill University campus, is *Dancing Nana (Rouge d’Orient, Bloum)* by the French artist Niki de Saint Phalle.

This public art exhibition features sculptures and photographs from the 1960s to the present, all of which convey a message of peace and hope, in keeping with the universal values of humanism, tolerance and openness that inspired Expo 67.

#### **A manifesto for public art**

A total of 30 monumental sculptures by contemporary artists from 11 countries and Canada’s five regions have been chosen to reflect Montreal’s universal artistic ethos. These works have been generously loaned by museums, private collectors, art galleries and artists who are delighted to participate in this major celebration. Their collaboration has been invaluable, given the complexity of ensuring the safety of both the works and passersby on a busy street like Sherbrooke.

In addition to works by Canadian artists Luben Boykov (Newfoundland), Robert Murray (British

Columbia), Sorel Etrog (Ontario), Ivan Eyre (Saskatchewan), Joe Fafard (Saskatchewan), Rose-Marie Goulet and Catherine Sylvain (Quebec), Charles Joseph (Kwakiutl Nation) and Robert Davidson (Haida Nation), there are pieces by sculptors from Belgium (Wim Delvoye), China (Zhang Huan, Wang Shugang), the United States (Jonathan Borofsky, Alexander Calder, Jim Dine, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Dennis Openheim, Richard Prince), France (César Baldaccini, aka César, and Niki de Saint Phalle), Great Britain (Barry Flanagan), Italy (Giuseppe Penone, Michelangelo Pistoletto), Japan (Yayoi Kusama), Mexico (Betsabé Romero), Poland (Magdalena Abakanowicz), Switzerland (Ugo Rondinone) and Taiwan (Ju Ming).

The monumental abstract sculpture *Man (Three Disks)*, by American artist Alexander Calder, originally gifted to Montreal for Expo 67, has been restored for the occasion and installed in front of the MMFA.

### **Photographs of a changing world**

Along the route, 42 sets of photographs are displayed on the front and back of 21 stands. Visitors can stroll along Sherbrooke Street among works by contemporary Montreal photographers who have travelled the world to capture images inspired by openness, peace and diversity. This public “album” illustrates the importance of living together in harmony and promotes peace, inclusiveness, diversity and difference—fundamental elements in an innovative conception of otherness. A variety of approaches are shown, including documentary photography and the photographic essay, in which art and life are closely intertwined. The photographers capture their subjects in a generous and humane way. Some turn their lens on the environment and Earth’s riches, while others invite us to marvel at the places that inspired them. The images speak to the sculptures in the exhibition, creating a dynamic narrative.

The photographers hail from Quebec, Canada and around the world: Benoit Aquin, Raymonde April, Olga Chagaoutdinova, Darren Ell, Angela Grauerholz, Isabelle Hayeur, Michel Huneault, Jean-François Lemire, Aydin Matlabi, Valérian Mazataud, Jon Rafman, Kim Waldron and Robert Walker.

### **Flags of 200 countries, and Canada’s provinces and territories**

As a nod to Expo 67, the exhibition route will be lined with the flags of UN member countries and Canada’s 13 provinces and territories. The Canadian flag will mark the beginning of the route, opposite the MMFA. Flags from other countries will be displayed in alphabetical order, alternating between the north and south side of Sherbrooke Street. The flags of Canada’s provinces and territories will be positioned according to their date of entry into Confederation. Finally, the flag of the City of Montreal will mark the end of the route, opposite the McCord Museum.

### **Acknowledgements and curators**

The curators for *La Balade pour la Paix* are Nathalie Bondil, Director General and Chief Curator of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Diane Charbonneau, the Museum’s Curator of Modern and Contemporary Decorative Arts and Photography, and Sylvie Lacerte, a public art consultant and art historian.

The route was designed by Claude Cormier + Associés, an international landscape architecture firm based in Montreal. The urban furniture is by Quebec industrial designer Michel Dallaire.

The organizers wish to thank the project's many artists, lenders, collaborators and institutional and private partners, as well as the Ville de Montréal and the residents of Sherbrooke Street, who have agreed to accommodate these sculptures, photographs and flags.

### **The 375MTL mobile app**

Visitors can download the 375MTL app at [www.375mtl.com/app](http://www.375mtl.com/app) to access educational content as they explore *La Balade pour la Paix*, including a word of introduction by the Honourable Louise Arbour, ambassador of the exhibition; audio commentary by Nathalie Bondil and exhibition curators Sylvie Lacerte and Diane Charbonneau; and longer text descriptions of the works on display.

### **Guided tours**

From the opening date of *La Balade pour la Paix*, MMFA volunteers will be offering guided tours of the portion of the exhibition between the MMFA and Peel Street. In addition, McGill University will be offering tours of works displayed on its campus.

MMFA Guided tours schedule – June 5 to October 29

- Thursdays, at 2 p.m. (English) and 2:30 p.m. (French)
- Sundays, at 2 p.m. (English) and 2:30 p.m. (French)

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### **About the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**

The MMFA welcomes a million visitors annually. Quebec's most visited museum, it is one of the most popular museums in Canada, and ranks twelfth among art museums in North America. With their original designs, its temporary exhibitions combine the artistic disciplines (fine arts, music, film, fashion and design) and are exported around the world. Its rich encyclopedic collection, distributed among five pavilions, includes international art, world cultures, decorative arts and design, and Quebec and Canadian art. The MMFA complex also includes a concert hall that seats 460, Bourgie Hall. In addition, the MMFA is one of Canada's leading publishers of books on art in French and English, which are distributed internationally. Finally, the Museum houses the Michel de la Chenelière International Atelier for Education and Art Therapy, the largest educational complex in a North American museum of art, enabling the MMFA to offer innovative education, well-being and art therapy projects.

### **About the Society for the Celebration of Montréal's 375th Anniversary**

The Society for the Celebration of Montréal's 375th Anniversary is a non-profit organization whose mission is to organize the celebrations and socioeconomic contributions that will mark Montréal's 375th anniversary in 2017. With a focus on promoting Montréal expertise, it acts as a catalyst for local forces in carrying out its mandate: to mobilize the community, implement a funding strategy, rigorously manage public funds, develop quality programming and ensure the visibility of the celebrations.

The Society benefits from the support of the Ville de Montréal, the Québec government, the Canadian government and private funding from 12 Great Montrealers. For more information, see <http://www.375mtl.com>.

You can find all our press releases and additional pictures and videos in our virtual [press room](#).

Get all the latest news in real time on our [Twitter feed: @375Mtl](#).

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To learn more about the contribution of the Québec government to Montréal's 375th anniversary celebrations, [click here](#).

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Press kit and images: [mbam.qc.ca/media](http://mbam.qc.ca/media)

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