

## BIG BANG

### *Giving free rein to creativity*

**OR HOW THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION INSPIRES OUR ARTISTS**  
**A FREE, FESTIVE EXHIBITION-EVENT**

Montreal, November 2, 2011—Inspiring today's artists with the works from the past. Revitalizing the collection with creations by our contemporary artists. Paying tribute to creativity in Quebec. Providing free access to all. These were the intentions of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in designing and producing the multidisciplinary exhibition ***Big Bang***, which gives carte blanche to some twenty artists with just one condition: choose one or more works from the Museum's collection. Presented from November 6, 2011, to January 22, 2012, this exhibition-event was created and produced by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts as part of the celebrations for the opening of the new Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art and the reinvented Museum, following the complete reinstallation of all of its collections. A total of 4,000 works will be reinstalled in its four pavilions.

"Why *Big Bang*? Because it is the ultimate symbol of creation: a mysterious and ancient creation that is nonetheless still living and expanding. In the same way our collections energize us: their stored radiation travels through time, surprising us, questioning us, moving us. The *Big Bang* is also the sound of an explosion: I love the notion that these artists, on boarding the Museum, hijack our artworks and carry them off to the unknown shores of their own imaginations, far from the conventional academic narratives and codes of art history. In this way *Big Bang* is truly an ode to liberty: this exhibition is a total (re)creation, a permissive and poetic event whereby the Museum becomes an incubator for art, its collection an open work. This unifying project emphasizes our institution's primary mission: to conserve yesterday's works to inspire all of us today, whether or not we are artists, whoever we are, regardless of our fields of study or beliefs. It reflects our gratitude and commitment to the artists without whom the Museum would simply not exist", explains Nathalie Bondil, the MMFA's director and chief curator. In accordance with its policy, the Museum offers free admission to this contemporary exhibition at all times.

Nearly twenty artists, several of whom are internationally renowned, responded to the Museum's invitation: Jennifer Alleyn and Nancy Huston (film and literature), Denys Arcand and Adad Hannah (film and visual arts), Melissa Auf der Maur (music), Geneviève Cadieux (visual arts), Marie Chouinard (dance), Collectif Rita (design), Claude Cormier (urban design), Jean Derome (music), En masse (mural art), Pierre Lapointe and Jean Verville (music and architecture), Renata Morales (fashion), Wadji Mouawad (theatre), Jeannot Painchaud (circus arts), Roland Poulin (sculpture), Michel Rabagliati (comics) and Gilles Saucier (architecture). Many of them, such as En Masse are exhibiting in a fine arts museum for the first time. Representing all disciplines, they each gave free rein to their imagination to create an installation, in partnership with the Museum's team, based on one or more works in the collection. These unique creations reveal not only the personal ties they formed with the work or works of their choice, but also the fact that the Museum's encyclopedic collection is a powerhouse of inspiration.

This collective exhibition invites visitors on a journey of discovery to encounter a range of artistic approaches that reveal a more personal aspect—touching, unexpected or playful—of these artists, whose motivation and means of expression are as varied as their talents and their mediums. The show is the polymorphic and polyphonic outcome of a dialogue among cultures, eras, genres and individuals. It illustrates the resolutely inclusive dimension of the MMFA's cross-disciplinary programming, which is open to current practices—from design and fashion to multimedia and music.

The Museum would like to thank all the artists who agreed to take on the *carte blanche* challenge, which had only one condition: choose one or more works from the Museum's collection.

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts would like to acknowledge the important support it received from the borough of Ville-Marie of the Ville de Montréal for this unifying project. It thanks ARTV, whose involvement was inspiring and highly appreciated, as well as its loyal media partners, Astral Media, *La Presse* and *The Gazette*, and its official airline, Air Canada. The Museum also thanks Fatboy, distributed by Nüline Distribution.

The Museum is grateful to the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine du Québec, the Conseil des arts de Montréal and the Canada Council for the Arts for their steadfast support.

The Museum would like to acknowledge the invaluable support of the Volunteer Association of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. Lastly, it thanks all its members and the many individuals, corporations and foundations who support its mission.

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**Big Bang**

Free admission

Jean-Noel Desmarais Pavilion

1380 Sherbrooke St. West

Tuesday to Friday – 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday – 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday – 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Images of several of the works are available on the Museum's website at [mbam.qc.ca/media](http://mbam.qc.ca/media). Instructions: The work of art must be reproduced in its entirety, without cropping, bleeding, guttering, overprinting or any other alteration, and the caption and photo credit must accompany the illustration.

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

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts has one of the highest attendance rates among Canadian museums. Every year, 600,000 people visit its encyclopedic collection, which is unique in Canada, free of charge, and its original temporary exhibitions, which combine artistic disciplines (fine arts, music, film, fashion, design) and feature innovative exhibition design. The Museum designs, produces and circulates many of its exhibitions in Europe and North America. It is also one of Canada's leading publishers of bilingual art books, which are distributed worldwide. More than 100,000 families and school children take part in its educational, cultural and community programmes every year. In 2011, the Museum is opening a fourth pavilion—the Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art—and Bourgie Hall, a 444-seat concert hall featuring a rare collection of Tiffany stained glass. At the same time, the Museum's rich collections are being reinstalled in the three other pavilions devoted to world cultures, European and contemporary art, as well as the decorative arts and design. Music is now an integral part of the Museum, providing another perspective on the visual arts, through musical audioguides and other innovative activities organized in cooperation with the new Arte Musica Foundation. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts is a private, non-profit institution that must generate the funds for nearly 50% of its annual operating budget and nearly 100% of the acquisition of works for its collection.