

For immediate release

**Dorothea Rockburne: First Canadian Retrospective**  
**At the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts**  
**Free admission**

Throughout my life I have been able to see in my mind's eye the painting I want to paint and the path I need to take to get there. I believe that a part of my memory is, in fact, part of a larger collective memory.  
Dorothea Rockburne

Montreal, November 2, 2011 – Montreal, November 2, 2011 – From November 6, 2011 to April 8, 2012, the MMFA is presenting ***Dorothea Rockburne. In My Mind's Eye***. Comprising over fifty works, it is the first Canadian retrospective of this internationally famous artist, one of the leading figures of Post-minimalism. Born and educated in Montreal, Dorothea Rockburne moved to the United States, where her works feature in the collections of numerous institutions, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art and MoMA. The exhibition is part of the the fall celebrations of the opening of the new Claire and Marc Bourgie pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art, and exhibitions are dedicated to our own artists. Admission is free at all times for everyone.

Born and raised in Montreal, Rockburne's early art training at that city's École des Beaux-Arts established a strong foundation for technique and a lifelong involvement with materials and process. In 1950 she enrolled at the legendary Black Mountain College in Asheville, North Carolina, where she studied painting with Franz Kline, Jack Tworkov, and Esteban Vicente, dance with Merce Cunningham, and music with John Cage; classes with mathematician Max Dehn would have a seminal influence on her work. With fellow students Robert Rauschenberg, Cy Twombly, and John Chamberlain, she thrived in the unique cross-disciplinary curriculum at Black Mountain and brought this sense of exchange and collaboration when she moved to New York, working in dance and performance in renowned early pieces with Rauschenberg, Claes Oldenburg, and Carolee Schneemann. Rockburne's work, with the use of materials such as cardboard, sheet metal, and crude oil, began to gain wide attention in New York in the 1960s; in 1971 she had her first solo exhibition at the famed Bykert Gallery. From this early minimalist vocabulary, Rockburne has expanded the discourse to include investigations of, among other subjects, the Golden Section, the solar system, and the writings of Pascal—all seamlessly joined in an ongoing synthesis of rigorous intellect and ardent pursuit.

To underscore the continuity of Rockburne's career, the exhibition installation follows a nonlinear trajectory, emphasizing the themes and variations that appear and reappear through the work. Groupings highlight these affinities while underscoring the artist's meticulous explorations of surface, transparency, and permutation—all essential investigations in the process of her art-making. Among the more than fifty works in the exhibition are the monumentally-scaled wrinkle finish paint on steel *Tropical Tan* (1967–1968); such iconic early

works as *Locus* (1972); the remarkable shaped canvases, including *I am Pascal* (1986); and the recent *Geometry of Stardust* series. Works informed by such wide-ranging concerns as mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy may initially present a daunting obstacle to the nonspecialist viewer but Rockburne contends that expertise is unnecessary to appreciate the work: “The work is a visual experience. You don’t have to know the composition of water to swim in it.”

The exhibition is organized by Alicia G. Longwell, the Parrish’s Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Chief Curator.

Stéphane Aquin, curator of contemporary art at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art, is in charge of the Montreal presentation of the exhibition.

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**Images of a number of works in the exhibition are available on the Museum’s website at the following address: [mmfa.qc.ca/media](http://mmfa.qc.ca/media). Instructions to follow for reproducing works of art:** The work of art is to be reproduced in its entirety without cropping, bleeding, guttering, overprinting or any other alteration of any kind, and the caption and photo credit must accompany the illustration of the work.

#### ***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, its 600,000 visitors enjoy its encyclopedic collection, unique in Canada and free to all at all times, 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 schoolchildren take part in its educational, cultural and community programmes every year. In 2011, the Museum has open a fourth pavilion – the Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion of Quebec and Canadian Art – and a 444 seat-concert hall housing a rare collection of Tiffany stained glass – Bourgie Hall. At the same time, the Museum’s rich collections have been 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 co-operation 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.