

2012 AT THE MONTREAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

ONLY CANADIAN PRESENTATION OF THREE MAJOR EXHIBITIONS:
THE FIRST RETROSPECTIVES IN NORTH AMERICA OF
LYONEL FEININGER AND TOM WESSELMANN

IMPRESSIONIST MASTERPIECES FROM THE CLARK
ON THEIR FIRST WORLD TOUR

ROBERT LEPAGE MAKES A FORAY INTO THE MUSEUM

FESTIVITIES AT THE REINVENTED MUSEUM REVOLVE AROUND THREE MAIN THEMES:
FROM OLD MASTERS TO MODERN ART THIS WINTER,
DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN IN THE SPRING AND WORLD CULTURES IN THE FALL
AND
EDUCATION AT THE HEART OF THE MUSEUM

Montreal, November 29, 2011 – In 2012, programming at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (MMFA) will be extraordinarily rich in terms of both exhibitions and collections. The Museum will feature the only Canadian presentations of three major exhibitions and will continue to implement activities revolving around the newly reinstalled collections in its expanded gallery spaces. The 4,000 restored, researched and reinstalled works of this encyclopedic collection, unique in Canada, are being presented in new layouts, in clear and consistent circuits in each of the four pavilions.

Nathalie Bondil, the Museum's Director and Chief Curator, who is celebrating five years at the helm of the institution, declares, "What is remarkable is that the Museum never closed during this profound transformation but continued to design, produce, present and export ambitious exhibitions, with the gratifying result that it can now boast over 61,500 members (an astonishing number, as the previous record was 44,000). The MMFA has more memberships than any other museum in Canada, an astounding achievement considering that admission to the collection is free at all times."

In 2012, the Museum will continue to mount major exhibitions (Wesselmann) and export others (Gaultier), while continuing to offer a contemporary art programme that is always accessible free of charge. Just as important, however, is to make the public aware of the complete reconfiguration of the collections in the expanded Museum. The gallery spaces have been extended to present a far greater percentage of our works, from 5.5 % to 11% of the holdings. Visitors will discover not only beautiful colours on the gallery walls but an in-depth reorganization of all the collections.

“We now have a range of new scholarly and educational tools at our disposal, as one of the next major projects at the MMFA is education at every level, starting with the expansion of the spaces devoted to it. We will no longer be obliged to turn down visitors for our educational activities for lack of space: in the next five years we hope to double educational attendance from 100,000 to 200,000 adults, students, families and school groups (among our 600,000 visitors each year), an ambitious but crucial goal.”

In terms of exhibitions, the year will commence on January 21 with the opening of **Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus**, the first major posthumous retrospective in North America devoted to this American artist, an important Expressionist. In May, the Museum will produce another retrospective, also a North American premiere, of the oeuvre of **Tom Wesselmann : A retrospective**, one of the most famous Pop artists. In October, we will host the only presentation in Canada of one of **the finest collections of Impressionist paintings** on the continent, that of the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute of Art, on its first world tour. And finally the Museum will embark on a new partnership with the **Montreal International Biennial of Digital Art** to present an installation by **Robert Lepage** in April.

2012 EXHIBITIONS at the MMFA

- ***Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus***

January 21 to May 13, 2012

The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts will present ***Lyonel Feininger: From Manhattan to the Bauhaus***. The exhibition will offer a comprehensive panorama of the oeuvre of this American painter (1871-1956) who spent most of his life in Germany. A multi-talented creator, he was a celebrated illustrator, painter, draftsman, engraver, photographer, musician and composer who became one of the leading figures of Expressionism and of the Bauhaus School. The exhibition will highlight the astonishingly modern approach of this multidisciplinary artist, who was equally interested in the fine arts, the applied arts and music. Music will be very much part of the programme for this show, both in the galleries and in the Bourgie Concert Hall, where a festival will be presented. Feininger, a gifted musician, sought to reproduce the structures of the fugue in his pictorial output and in his musical compositions, declaring that Bach was the artist who had influenced him the most. The exhibition will reinforce the importance of music at the MMFA. The presentation features 240 works, including paintings, watercolours, prints, cartoons, carved toys and, for the first time in a Feininger retrospective, photographs taken by the artist and his son Andreas, a renowned photographer of the American modernist school, whose estate has given the Museum a group of photographs that will be exhibited for the first time.

This retrospective was organized by the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in collaboration with the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and with funding from the Terra Foundation and the Volunteer Association of the MMFA.

A fully illustrated catalogue, produced under the general editorship of Barbara Haskell, Curator, Whitney Museum of American Art, accompanies the exhibition, offering a fresh perspective on the artist's life and art by drawing on his vast private correspondence and new German scholarship and critical methodologies. It was published in English by Yale University Press. The French edition is being produced by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, in collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art and Somogy. It is the first major publication on Lyonel Feininger in the French language.

• ***Tom Wesselmann: A Retrospective***

May 18 to October 7, 2012

Initiated and organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts with funding from the Tom Wesselmann Estate, New York, this important exhibition will examine the development of the artist's oeuvre, focusing on the process of stylization that made him an heir to the classical great masters like Ingres and Matisse. Tom Wesselmann (1931-2004), celebrated yet little known, was undoubtedly one of the three great artists of American Pop Art. And yet, of all the artists of his generation associated with this key movement of the twentieth century, he is the only one who has not been the subject of a retrospective in North America. The exhibition will feature some 150 works, including many spectacular large-scale works, lent by major institutions and private collectors (seventy-five paintings, plastic bas-reliefs, découpages and polychrome wood carvings) representing the artist's seminal series, together with seventy-five preparatory sketches and models that are being exhibited for the first time. This presentation will include numerous archival documents (photographs, letters, books and reviews, advertisements, etc.), and the catalogue will shed light on many aspects of Wesselmann's oeuvre, such as his penchant for country music as both a musician and a composer, his innovative work methods. After its presentation in Montreal, the exhibition will travel to the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.

• ***A History of Impressionism***

Great French Paintings from the Clark

October 12, 2012, to January 20, 2013

On a world tour for the first time to distinguished institutions in Europe, (Palazzo Reale, Milan, Musée des impressionnismes, Giverny, Caixa Forum, Barcelona, Royal Academy of Arts, London), North America (Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas) and Asia (Mitsubishi Ichigokan Museum, Tokyo, Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Art, Kobe), one of the finest Impressionist collections on the continent will be seen in only one city in Canada: Montreal. The MMFA will be the sole Canadian venue for this exceptional tour, undertaken during expansion work at the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The exhibition comprises seventy-four paintings, chosen for their outstanding quality, by Bonnard, Corot, Degas, Gauguin, Manet, Monet, Morisot, Pissarro, Sisley, Toulouse-Lautrec and other great

French masters, including an outstanding selection of twenty-one canvases by Renoir and Degas's famous sculpture *Little Dancer Aged Fourteen*. These works provide a stunning history of Impressionism from its beginnings with the painters of reality to Postimpressionism. The inclusion of works by Bouguereau, Gérôme and Stevens, among others, will give visitors an opportunity to understand the extent to which Impressionism constituted a revolt against academicism. This astonishing collection is the achievement of Robert Sterling Clark (1877-1956), who, for almost half a century, secretly built up one of the foremost art collections in the United States.

Robert Lepage at the Museum
International Biennial of Digital Art of Montreal (BIAN)
April 18 to September 23, 2012

The Museum is a partner of Montreal's first International Biennial of Digital Art. The BIAN will be launched on April 18, 2012, with the unveiling of Robert Lepage's first digital installation, *Fragmentation (ReACTOR)*, in the MMFA's Contemporary Art Square, where it will be displayed until September 2012. Admission is free.

THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTIONS EVEN MORE TO (RE)DISCOVER, AND STILL FREE OF CHARGE

After the fall 2011 season devoted to Quebec and Canadian art, in connection with the opening of the new Claire and Marc Bourgie Pavilion, 2012 will showcase the Museum's other collections.

WINTER 2012: FROM OLD MASTERS TO MODERN ART

"Where can you see works by Veronese, El Greco, Poussin, Lorrain, Ruisdael, Rembrandt, Tiepolo, Gainsborough, Daumier, Corot, Monet, Pissarro, Cézanne, Matisse and Picasso? In Quebec, only one museum can boast of owning such works; in Canada only three museums have collections encompassing Old Masters to modern art; but only one of these institutions presents them free of charge at all times: the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. This is the more surprising given that our collection is priceless, unbelievably valuable, and could never be reconstituted nowadays. It has now been enriched, studied, explained and ennobled by an elegant presentation laid out in an entirely rethought and logical circuit for the first time in over twenty years, since the opening of the Jean-Noël Desmarais Pavilion in 1991. It is the (re)discovery that we have longed to share with our public", says Nathalie Bondil.

Arranged chronologically, the new circuit makes it possible to follow the development of the principal European art movements in a totally reconfigured layout that brings together

paintings, sculpture and decorative arts. It was designed by Nathalie Bondil, the Museum's Director and Chief Curator, with Hilliard T. Goldfarb, Associate Chief Curator and Curator of Old Masters, in association with the Montreal architectural firm Architem. Entirely rethought and expanded, it revolves around 360 works from the Medieval period to modern art, providing a clear and consistent reading of the major movements of art history, underpinned by new educational content. The Empire gallery, featuring nearly ninety works, created with the donation of the Ben Weider collection and inaugurated in 2008, completes the circuit. The selection of contemporary art presents an annual rotation of works. Its area has doubled in size since 2009.

SPRING 2012: DECORATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN

The Museum's Liliane and David M. Stewart Pavilion is now devoted to this collection, comprising some 16,000 objects – one of the largest in North America – and covering seven centuries of decorative arts from the Renaissance to current design. Curators Rosalind Pepall and Diane Charbonneau designed the circuit created by interior designer Nathalie Crinière of the NC firm, which showcases almost 900 objects, 300 of them never before displayed, on three floors. It is structured both metaphorically and architecturally around a red ribbon that runs from floor to floor, enabling visitors to follow the evolution and metamorphoses of objects arranged in thematic groups: typological (jewellery, chairs), stylistic (rococo versus neo-classical), monographic (Streamline design), formal (anthropomorphic design) and by materials (glass, table silver), providing an exciting tour that can be read on many levels.

In May, numerous activities will revolve around the fifth anniversary of Montreal UNESCO City of Design. At this time the Museum's new Sculpture Garden, installed on a street that will become a pedestrian thoroughfare for six months a year (from May to October), will be opened in a new cityscape created by the Ville de Montréal.

FALL 2012: WORLD CULTURES

New galleries will be devoted to Asian Art, imagined by Laura Vigo and designed by Nathalie Crinière. The new presentation will feature theme-based zones so as to place objects according to the art movement they belong to, their use and their context. Some 1,240 works will be displayed in the expanded galleries. Chinese art from the Neolithic era to the last Qing dynasty will cover *Tomb Art*, *Art for Daily Life* and *Temple Art*. The collection of Japanese art focusses mainly on the Edo period. An impressive wall display of 1,000 kogo, or incense boxes, will introduce the themes of *Serenity*, *Nature* and *Pleasure*. These ancient cultures are still foreign and exotic for many people, and this is particularly the case with the Asian civilizations.

New gallery space devoted to Islamic art will benefit from the expertise of Valérie Béhiery. Pre-Columbian art – recently enriched by some outstanding donations – and African art and Oceanic art will be seen in updated displays. By maximizing the space devoted to them, the Museum reinforces its encyclopedic profile.

EDUCATION AT THE HEART OF THE MUSEUM

The presentation of the collection *A History of Impressionism: Great French Paintings from the Clark* will opportunely coincide with the opening of the Museum's new educational spaces, the StudiO Arts & Education Michel de la Chenelière. Many educational activities will be provided on this occasion, especially for families and school-age children. Family Weekends on the subject of the Impressionists with art workshops led by educators and Tours-in-a-Wink led by guides will be available. A Gallery game on the subject of Impressionist landscapes will be offered to families every Saturday and Sunday. A professional artist will demonstrate painting on canvas in the manner of the Impressionists.

THREE SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS ABOUT THE COLLECTIONS

Having published volume I on the Quebec and Canadian art collection, the Museum will launch volume II, *Decorative Arts and Design*, in May, and volume III, *World Cultures and Fine Arts*, in September 2012. Produced by the MMFA's Publishing Department, the French edition will be distributed by Les Éditions de La Martinière, Paris, the English edition by Abrams, New York. Never before in its history has the Museum invested so much effort in studying and researching its collections.

- *Decorative Arts and Design (vol. II)*

Under the editorship of Rosalind Pepall, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts, and Diane Charbonneau, Curator of Contemporary Decorative Arts, this volume (over 400 pages, 550 colour illustrations) offers an original, in-depth study of the collection showing the development of shapes and techniques from the Renaissance to the present day. Organized in seven chapters, 450 objects are studied by thirty international experts in terms of their styles, decoration, techniques and materials.

- *World Cultures and Fine Arts (vol. III)*

Under the editorship of Nathalie Bondil, the third volume on the collection, *World Cultures and Fine Arts, from the Old Masters to Contemporary Art*, will be published in the fall of 2012. Covering a vast selection of important and notable works, this 500-page book includes a thousand colour reproductions and discusses 775 artworks and objects, some of them never previously studied. Mediterranean archaeology, the world cultures of Islam, Africa, China, Japan, Oceania, pre-Columbian art and the rich collection of European art from the Middle Ages to the present are newly documented, discussed and illustrated in entries written for the book by thirty experts, including the Museum's curators and international scholars.

MUSICAL AUDIOGUIDE FOR EUROPEAN ART

The new musical audioguide invites you to a musical exploration of the collection of European art from the twelfth to the twentieth century. Each of some fifty paintings and sculptures — portraits, genre scenes, landscapes, still lifes, religious and mythological figures and city scenes — is linked to a piece of music lasting from one to three minutes. These pieces were chosen in relation to the period of the artwork, its place of origin, its cultural milieu and its specific theme, and all are outstanding performances of the works in question. As with the circuit of Quebec and Canadian art, this musical stroll consists of some fifty stations totalling approximately 100 minutes of music. Produced by François Filiatrault, early music lecturer, writer and consultant, with the assistance of Claude Nadon, in close association with the Museum's Education and Community Programmes Department and the Arte Musica Foundation, this original tool will be available to visitors free of charge starting in February 2012.

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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.