

PRESS RELEASE 2

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The Max Stern Donation

Paintings and sculptures by more than forty artists whose talent is acclaimed in Canada and abroad have been donated from the Max Stern collection to the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art (Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal). This generous gift is worth over \$1.5 million today and significantly develops the permanent collection of the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Arts.

Gathering together the works of artists as renowned as Rodin, Maillol, Moore, Arp, Borduas, van Dongen and Roussil, the Stern donation shows the discerning choice of an expert. Doctor Max Stern received his doctorate in art history from the University of Bonn and has devoted his entire life to art. Founder of the well-known Dominion Gallery on Sherbrooke Street, Max Stern was one of the first in Montreal to organize exhibits of international abstract art and artists now famous such as Kandinsky, Braque, Léger and Picasso. Also an ardent defender of the young artists who were born here, Max Stern held exhibits at his Sherbrooke Street gallery right from the early 1940s for painters like Borduas, de Tonnanc and the group known as Les Automatistes. Among the important works of contemporary Quebec artists in the Stern donation to the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art, there are two major paintings by Borduas dated 1955 and 1956 as well as five paintings and a large gouache (watercolour) by Jean Dallaire. The works in the Stern donation span not only contemporary art but also include a series of Canadian landscapes from the early 20th century by artists like Emily Carr, David Milne, James Wilson Morris and Alexander Young Jackson.

Two monumental sculptures were also donated by Max Stern to the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art in 1982. Exhibited in front of the Dominion Gallery, these are Auguste Rodin's Jean d'Aire, le bourgeois de Calais (1890) and Henry Moore's Upright Motive No. 5 (1955-56). Initially commissioned in 1885 to commemorate a historical event, le bourgeois Jean D'Aire is an excellent example of the particular expressiveness and perfectionism of the style that Rodin brought to sculpture at the end of the 19th century. This bronze was cast for Max Stern by the Rodin Museum in Paris, using moulds the sculptor left them at the time of his death. The other work, Upright Motive No. 5, was created by the British sculptor Henry Moore during 1955 and 1956. Characteristic of Moore's work throughout the 1950's, this bronze illustrates the visual relationship of the human form to nature and represents the contours of the female body and the massive shapes of nature in a unique way that underscores verticalness.

To offer a tribute to the generosity of Max Stern as a patron of the arts, the Montreal Museum of Contemporary Art will host a special soirée on November 26th. Nearly two hundred guests have been invited to honour Max Stern's important contribution to the scope of art exhibits and to public knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art.

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