

PRESS RELEASE

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VENICE BIENNIAL:
BRENER AND GOULET REPRESENT CANADA

The Roland Brener-Michel Goulet exhibition will open its doors to the public on June 26 at the Canadian Pavilion of the Giardini di Castello in Venice. Chosen to officially represent Canada at the 43rd Venice Biennial, the exhibition was conceived and prepared by Commissioner France Gascon; it centres on recent works by two sculptors whose reputations continue to grow throughout Canada and abroad. This year's exhibition was organized by the *Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal* and will run until September 25.

The exhibition will also offer the public an opportunity to admire the newly restored Canadian Pavilion of the Giardini di Castello. Generously financed by the National Gallery of Canada, work was begun some time ago to restore the original character of the unique architecture and reestablish the close ties with nature originally intended by the spiral layout of the building, which opens onto an interior garden.

Roland Brener and Michel Goulet

Despite the pronounced differences in their cultural and geographical backgrounds--Roland Brener is from Victoria, British Columbia and Michel Goulet lives in Montréal, Québec--the two sculptors have much in common. The two bodies of work show the same desire to redefine the terms of interaction with their public, which brings out the immediacy and quasi-universality of their creations and the experience they present. Both artists are also profoundly attached to the act of sculpting itself. And the work of both Roland Brener and Michel Goulet features an immensely moving dialogue between an industrial, mechanized environment and that of the creative impulse, in which the ingenuity and perspicacity that shape the basic message of the twentieth-century artist are expressed through various forms of craftsmanship and manipulation.

Roland Brener's works are presented in the form of electromechanical constructions that recreate scenes in a theatre of repetition. The initial humour of these pieces, however, soon gives way to a more disturbing vision. Like an archeologist of the industrial age, Brener has appropriated different elements from mass production to form the basic components of his pieces. The repetitive cycles in them are emphasized by sound, as well as an unsettling anthropomorphism, which serves to accentuate the dramatic impact of the work.

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As for Michel Goulet's work, each piece proposes a true cosmogony, which represents the logic that inspired him and that he expresses in formal, technical and symbolic, as well as narrative terms. The greatest variety of found objects are brought together and subjected to Goulet's specific requirements. Some elements are tampered with, manipulated or excessively adorned to give the pieces the impact of a virtual performance, in which the artist's investment in the production of his works is easily gauged.

Publication accompanying the exhibition

A 72-page trilingual (French, English, Italian) catalogue has been published to accompany the Roland Brener-Michel Goulet exhibition. The illustrated portion of the catalogue was designed to recreate the impact of the original works displayed in Venice, while author France Gascon included a section called "Visual Biographies of the Artists" to give the reader a retrospective of the works of Roland Brener and Michel Goulet. There are also a number of insightful texts that enhance the rich iconography. Graphic design was by Lumbago of Montreal, recipient of several international graphic design awards.

Support and sponsorship

The exhibition was organized at the instigation and with the financial support of the Canadian Department of External Affairs, the National Gallery of Canada and the Canada Council. Air Canada was a major sponsor of the project. Additional funds were provided by the *ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec* and the British Columbia Ministry of Tourism, Recreation and Culture. The exhibition is presented with the support of the Canadian Embassy and the *Délégation générale du Québec* in Italy. The *Direction de la traduction et de l'interprétation* of the *ministère des Communications du Québec* provided special assistance.

See appendix for a list of works in the exhibition.

Colour and black-and-white photographs available on request.

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