

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate release**

**Exhibition Yesterday's Tomorrows  
at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal  
May 21 to September 6, 2010**

Montréal, May 19, 2010. Why are so many contemporary artists revisiting the forms, ideas and aspirations of early Modernism? That highly topical question is the crux of the exhibition *Yesterday's Tomorrows* that brings together works by ten Québec, Canadian and international artists who re-examine this pivotal period in the twentieth century. Seductive functional objects, elegant glass and steel houses, large-scale urban projects—Modernism is predicated on a utopian belief in the role that art could play in making a better world. To contemplate this era so full of contradictions, the artists featured here have established a dialogue or collaboration with a particular Modernist architect or designer. You, in turn, can take a fresh look at the works of Mies van der Rohe, Buckminster Fuller or Eileen Gray through the photographs, installations, films and videos presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from May 21 to September 6, 2010.

Each of the works in the exhibition revisits a particular moment in the Modernist canon, telling the (hi)story of an object, a building or a theoretical approach. The contemporary work *contains* the history of the original—including its inscription in a social context and its significance within the Modernist canon—but attaches new meaning.

Some revisit visionary monuments created by the masters of Modernism. The work of American artist Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle, for example, focuses on Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House; Austrian artist Dorit Margreiter films a house by John Lautner which, incidentally, was used in the production of various television series and films like *The Big Lebowski*; British artist Simon Starling takes recycled materials to remake the lamps of Danish designer Poul Henningsen; and Slovenian artist Tobias Putrih draws inspiration from Buckminster Fuller's geodesic domes.

Others investigate peripheral or overlooked figures: Torontonians John Massey photographs a house designed by his father, Hart Massey, his fellow Torontonian Paulette Phillips has created an installation based on architect and designer Eileen Gray's villa E-1027 and Montrealer David Tomas deconstructs a villa designed by Ludwig Wittgenstein, while the installation by Iranian-German artist Nairy Baghramian is the result of a close collaboration with French industrial designer Janette Laverrière.

Finally, two of Britain's Brutalist architects are the subject of two other pieces: Scottish artist Toby Paterson examines Basil Spence's British Pavilion for Expo 67, and Arni Haraldsson, from Vancouver, looks at Ernő Goldfinger, who was the reluctant source of the name of a James Bond movie and one of whose projects served as a location for the film *A Clockwork Orange*.

While avoiding nostalgia, the artists in the exhibition cast a sympathetic eye over these tomorrows of yesterday, which had their failures and contradictions, but which are firmly embedded in the collective cultural landscape.

A program of films complementing the exhibition will feature works by the following artists: Johanna Billing, Domènec, Terence Gower, Ursula Mayer, Sadie Murdoch, Pia Rönicke and Judi Werthein.

### **Organization and catalogue**

The exhibition was organized by Lesley Johnstone, curator at the Musée. The film program was put together by guest curator Hajnalka Somogyi, curator at the Ludwig Museum–Museum of Contemporary Art, Budapest.

An extensive, 156-page bilingual catalogue accompanies the exhibition. It contains essays by Lesley Johnstone, independent curator Philip Ursprung and the ten featured artists, a list of works, a biobibliography and numerous colour reproductions of the works. The publication may be purchased for \$34.95 at the museum's Boutique or from your local bookseller.

### **Meet the artists**

A meeting with some of the artists in the exhibition and curator Lesley Johnstone will take place (in English) on Friday, May 21 at 12 p.m. at the Musée. Free of charge.

### **Point[s] of View Series Wednesday, June 2, 2010**

As part of the Point[s] of View series, a guided tour of the exhibition will be led by the curator on Wednesday, June 2 at 6 p.m. (in English) and 7 p.m. (in French) in the exhibition galleries. Free of charge.

### **Art videos**

In conjunction with the exhibition, two portraits of architects will be screened in the Gazoduc-TQM Room:

June 1 to August 1

*Infinite Space: The Architecture of John Lautner*. Director: Murray Grigor. Ojai, Calif.: The Googie Company, 2008 (90 min), in English.

August 4 to September 6

*Ordinaire ou super: Regards sur Mies van der Rohe*. Directors: Joseph Hillel, Patrick Demers. Montréal: Quatre par Quatre Films, 2003 (52 min), in French.

### **Guided tours**

Guided tours of the exhibition *Yesterday's Tomorrows* will be offered by the education team on Wednesday evenings at 5, 6 and 7:30 p.m. in French and 6:30 p.m. in English, and on Saturdays and Sundays at 1 and 3 p.m. in French or English. Free of charge.