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# le journal

 MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL  
Québec 

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At first glance, the brilliantly paradoxical work of Rodney Graham appears to offer a unique synthesis of rigour and melancholy, humour and erudition, coherence and eclecticism; an utter refusal to be confined to a single medium, a single style, a single content; and an inspired—and vaguely encyclopedic—search for meaning within the vast realm of art and knowledge.

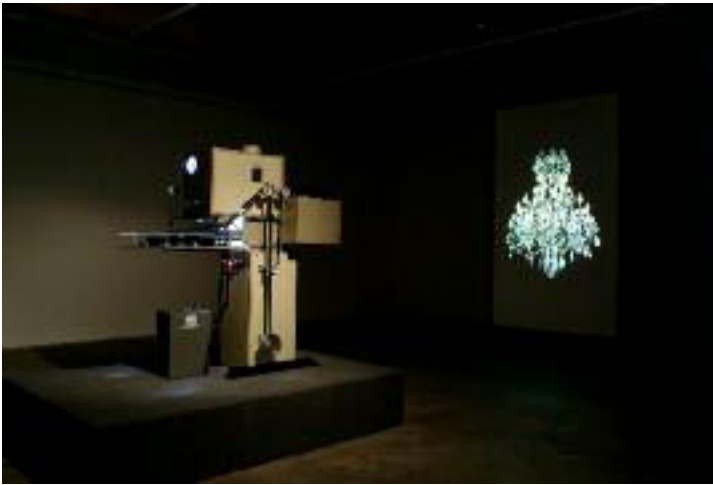
Since the mid-1970s, Graham has worked through installation, photography, music, video and film, among other media, to explore and exhibit different spheres of science and culture that had an impact on the twentieth century. Freudian psychoanalysis, literature (from Edgar Allan Poe to Ian Fleming) and music (by Frederick the Great of Prussia, Wagner and, closer to the present, Nirvana and the Rodney Graham band) are among the sources behind his production of cerebral, philosophical, critical and sometimes even humorous works that freely re-examine certain foundations of Western culture. Often the featured player in his photographs and films (since 1994), the artist liberally appropriates selected literary genres, the musical-score format and the ready-made as the raw material of his works.

Borrowing from the mass media as well—certain movie genres (adventure, period), music videos, country music ballads or rock songs (*I'm a Noise Man*,<sup>1</sup> he tells us)—this multidisciplinary, and above all, conceptual work is thoroughly unique, and deliberately blurs the conventional boundaries between pop culture and contemporary art. Graham has also developed a fondness for drawing and painting. With irresistible ease, but without indulgence or any concession to current fashion, he produces small series that explore specific visual idioms.

Organized by the Musée, this exhibition highlighting the artist's recent output features ten major works, including two new pieces—*Three Musicians (Members of the Amis de Dufay Consort Performing Matteo of Perugia's "Le Greygnour Bien" in the Unitarian Church of Vancouver, September 8th 1977)* and *Awakening* (2006)—and two spectacular works that are part of the museum's collection: *How I Became a Ramblin' Man* (1999) and *Screen Door* (2005).



*How I Became a Ramblin' Man*, 1999  
35-mm colour film transferred to DVD,  
9-min loop, sound, 1/4  
Collection of the Musée d'art contemporain  
de Montréal



*Torqued Chandelier Release*, 2005  
35-mm colour film, 35-mm projector, 5-min loop,<sup>2/3</sup>  
Screen: 305 x 185 cm  
Collection of Bob Rennie, Rennie Management, Vancouver

*Allegory of Folly: Study for an Equestrian Monument in the Form of a Wind Vane*, 2005  
Diptych, light-boxes, A.P.  
306 x 114 x 18 cm (each)  
Private collection  
Courtesy 303 Gallery, New York  
Photo: Dave Morgan, courtesy of the Lisson Gallery, London

# Rodney Graham

Firmly grounded in a wild, idyllic, natural landscape and filmed in 35 mm, *How I Became a Ramblin' Man* offers us an amused vision of the American movie epic from the viewpoint of the great western tradition featuring a lone hero. Shown in an elastic, luminous endless loop, the work re-examines the stylistic conventions of film and proposes a pictorial aesthetic that celebrates the romance of the West and the American dream in a blue and ochre palette in which it formalizes, in the expanded time of these shots that could almost be freeze frames, the existential dimension of the wandering of the post-modern hero. The artist himself plays the part of the singing, dreaming cowboy who has traded in his gun for a guitar.

The typical Graham hero is constantly grappling with the trials and tribulations arising from his role. He moves inevitably through cycles of repetitions and recurrences imposed by the conceptual and practical demands of the loop, the circular structure. For the viewer, this prompts a simultaneous sense of an apparent insouciance and a necessary perseverance. In the same way that music, or the idea of music, pervades all his work—from ancient music to his own brand of rock—and that literature and high art fill and sustain the world unfolding before our eyes that makes no sense and yet makes perfect sense, Rodney Graham offers us, in *tableau* after *tableau*, performance after performance, hints of a “personal story” and bravura works in which self-depiction has no fear of self-mockery—nor of transgression.

Josée Bélisle

<sup>1</sup> Title of an installation by Rodney Graham presented at the Kunsthalle in Vienna in 1999.

*Screen Door*, 2005  
3/3  
Silver  
203 x 82 x 12 cm  
Collection of the Musée d'art  
contemporain de Montréal  
Photos: Richard-Max  
Tremblay



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# Recent Acquisition

Confirming its interest in the multidisciplinary and profoundly original work of Canadian artist Rodney Graham, last March the Musée acquired *Screen Door*, an astonishing sculpture produced in 2005 that suggests both an ordinary, deceptively utilitarian object and a precious object, an object... of desire. *Screen Door* immediately fits the very idea of the classic, exemplary work, although the sum of its possible meanings gives it an extremely rich, pertinent, didactic and even museum potential. It is actually a replica, in silver, of the original screen door on the back entrance to Graceland, Elvis Presley's famous mansion. Here is what the artist has to say about it: "When Elvis decorated Graceland in 1968 the original door was removed and put into storage. In 1999 it was sold, along with his bible, his Walther PPK handgun, his Texaco credit card, and other Presley ephemera, at an auction at the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. When I saw the image of the screen door, of an absolutely ubiquitous type all over North America, I wanted to do something with it. I finally decided to make it into a very large piece of jewelry."<sup>1</sup> Simply leaning against the wall, the humble yet surprising silver door indeed takes on the appearance of a precious jewel, whose large size is rather reminiscent of all of the King's excesses, his taste for luxury and kitsch, and his importance among cult figures of the last few decades. As well, the door motif could not be more evocative: the archetype of passage, entry, beginning, end; the near-transparency of the screen which gives us a glimpse of everything beyond; the gleaming patina that suggests a reflective mirror... Neither painting, nor sculpture strictly speaking, and yet both at once, this work urges us to cut through appearances and transports us *through the looking glass* (like Alice in Wonderland). It can also become a true doorway into contemporary art and a possible key to its many different discourses.

Josée Bélisle

1 Artist's notes.



September 14, 2006 to January 7, 2007

# Neo Rauch

For some time now, young German painters have, without doubt, excited the keenest interest on the international scene. These artists have surprised and captivated viewers with their amazing ability to give renewed life to pictorial language, as well as their complete technical mastery and the depth of the subjects they tackle. Leipzig is one of the places where some of the painters who have captured the most attention have emerged in recent years.

Neo Rauch, who was himself trained in Leipzig, at the city's Hochschule in the 1980s, has quickly become a leading figure in the new figurative painting and somewhat of a model for the generation that came after him. Since the mid-nineties, in particular, he has developed an original,

disconcerting pictorial language in which numerous influences and references come together. His work bears the stamp of a certain East German tradition of illustration and a retro advertising imagery, as well as traces of an industrial symbolism and a hint of Socialist Realism.

The instant we lay eyes on a Rauch painting, we cannot remain indifferent. The nature of the subject matter, the treatment of space, ruptures of scale and incongruity of certain motifs conspire to rivet our attention and destabilize us. Its strangeness arises above all from the unexpected combination of iconographic and visual elements from different worlds. The figures in Rauch's works, who are represented in fixed, expressionless attitudes and cannot quite be placed historically, are engaged in various pursuits generally connected with work, in settings that consist of industrial sites and modernist housing complexes. His painting actually resists our attempt to read it. Although we may recognize motifs and identify the subject of some fragments, its overall meaning eludes us.

Rauch's art cultivates contradictions and in a way symbolizes the difficulty of incorporating traces of the past. His images are above all tinged with reminiscences of his childhood and



*Lösung*, 2005  
Oil on canvas  
300 x 210 cm  
Private collection  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York, and  
Eigen + Art, Berlin/Leipzig

personal past, as well as his immediate surroundings and his country's geopolitical affiliation. They are also meant to be timeless—virtually suspended between a certain future that has not taken place and a more or less distant past, in what seems like a continual overlapping of different times.

For Rauch, painting is not a premeditated activity but a form of appropriation carried out with no particular intention. He thus considers the components of his works to be creations of his imagination rather than representations that relate to reality. Like the world he conjures up, his art is also a closed system, a deliberately closed structure within which similar elements are repeatedly reused and rearranged, as if to explore the infinite possibilities of the medium.

This exhibition organized by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, the artist's first in Canada, features a selection of recent works. It offers an opportunity to take stock of Rauch's contribution to the current art scene and to highlight some of the specific aspects that distinguish his work and make him such a prominent, influential figure in German painting today. **Réal Lussier**



*Sekte*, 2004  
Oil on canvas  
250 x 210 cm  
Private collection, Oyster Bay, N.Y.  
Courtesy David Zwirner, New York, and  
Eigen + Art, Berlin/Leipzig

November 4, 2006 to March 25, 2007

# Recent Acquisitions



Jacques Hurtubise  
*Coaltar à l'oeil* (de la série *Maskarade*, 1989), 1989  
Acrylique sur papier goudronné découpé et collé en plein sur toile  
207,8 x 244,5 cm  
Don de monsieur Patrice et de madame Andrée Drouin  
Collection du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Charles Gagnon  
*Cactus, près de Tucson - Arizona*, 1991 (tirage entre 1995 et 1998)  
Épreuve à la gélatine argentique, 1/3  
27,8 x 35,3 cm  
Don de madame Michiko Yajima Gagnon  
Collection du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Serge Murphy  
*Les Bois flottés* (détail), 2004  
Matériaux divers  
Don anonyme  
Collection du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal



Collecting for the public is not the same as collecting for oneself. In theory, private collectors have only themselves to please by their acquisitions. Although some private collections are carefully planned, sometimes in parallel with museum collections and with an eventual donation in mind (we love those), they are composed of works that do not necessarily need to make sense as a group to anyone but their owners.

On the other hand, public art collections not only need to make sense, they must be useful as well to an entire community. First of all, especially in our case, they should be an accurate reflection of that community at its best. Luckily, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal has for over forty years aspired to the highest fidelity in its flattering representation of the local scene. As you

will see from this exhibition of acquisitions from the last two years, things have not changed. Secondly, the national and international holdings of a great public collection like ours need to be a source of information and pride for our audience. Through the fine examples of international work in this collection, our public and our artists can enjoy access to living art from around the world and see their own work in a challenging international context at home. Moreover, paired with the best art being made here, such works can provide a context of overall quality that makes a favourable impression on knowledgeable foreign visitors who may be unfamiliar with the Québec scene. We want them to know that, just as our international standards are high, our own artists are equally remarkable.

We are excited to show you some of the acquisitions we have made over the last two years. As in the past, because our independent means are modest, the value of gifts to the collection continues to outpace the value of our direct purchases. Happily, we can report that our local collectors made some wonderful gifts recently, too many to show. For example, among a number of works by Jacques Hurtubise that we received is a stunning suite of paintings (from the *Maskarade* series, 1989), donated by Patrice and Andrée Drouin, and *Alexandra* (1965), donated by Élise Pilon and Serge Gendron, which further confirm the comprehensiveness of the Musée's collection in terms of this important figure. But there were more major gifts from the golden age of Montréal abstraction—our great strength—such as a breathtaking stained-glass window by Marcelle Ferron, donated by Jacques Guevremont; a magnificent large painting by Yves Gaucher, which was yet another generous gift by Germaine Gaucher; and a complete set of 111 photographs by Charles Gagnon, an extremely useful addition to our holdings, offered by our good friend Michiko Yajima Gagnon. Finally, Claude Tousignant has just graced our collection with a gift of two large and beautiful works from different periods in his brilliant career. A third important piece by Tousignant was donated by Dr. René Crépeau. We are very grateful to all these donors who are helping to make the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal the pantheon of modern Québec art.

Sculpture provided some notable additions to our collection recently, perhaps the most newsworthy being Rodney Graham's *Screen Door* (see Josée Bélisle's article here). Of equal interest, though, should be an extraordinary work representing a successful and unexpected departure for Claude Tousignant into unfamiliar territory. In a very different vein, we were happy that our budget permitted us to keep *Tympans* (2002–2004) by Laurent Pilon, a favourite work from his exhibition here. As well, Serge Murphy gave us one of his most lyrical sculptures. Shifting gears

again, we acquired a road sign by Vancouver-based word artist Ron Terada. We hope that it will help situate the museum more precisely in the world. In yet another mode entirely, we obtained a mysterious and exquisitely crafted object by Liz Magor, who is among Canada's most consistently fascinating artists; this convincingly realistic stack of sweaters is also a bundle of actual cigarettes.



In fact, high realism—one could also call it extreme craft—has become a significant trend in art making lately, one we are following closely. Continuing with sculpture, we acquired an uncanny group of mushrooms by the American artist Roxy Paine, known for his life-size trees in stainless steel and for his ambitious synthesis of nature, culture and technology. In New York, we discovered a young artist from Toronto, Kevin Yates, who weds exceptional skill to a punning wit. Take a close look at his extension cords on the floor: they are entirely carved of birch wood. Beneath one of the sockets lurks a tiny brass snake like a doomed metaphor. Perhaps our most

satisfying acquisition in the area of extreme craft, however, is a portrait painting by Karel Funk, a young Winnipeg-based artist who is better-known abroad than at home. There is much to say about this artist's rigour with regard to his subject matter and about his shrewd positioning of the viewer, but you may find it hard to get beyond the sheer force of the work's verisimilitude, because it touches the sublime. We are planning the country's first exhibition of the work of this talented Canadian in 2007.

If you think that hyperrealism is the exclusive domain of drawing, painting and sculpture, you have not seen Nicolas Baier's recent work. He has taken photography, a medium that already epitomizes pictorial facsimile, and pushed it into a form of minimalist theatre. We could not resist acquiring two works this year: a photograph of a blackboard that passes for an actual blackboard, and a photograph of a mirror that stops just short of reflecting the viewer. Also, we are particularly grateful for Baier's recent gifts, most notably *Petits Riens* (2002), a monumental piece of prospective archaeology now on long-term installation in the staircase leading to the museum's lower level. The painter Guy Pellerin has also been extremely generous to the Musée in recent years, and we were delighted to purchase the 48 elements of his exemplary pictorial installation inspired by Ozias Leduc, entitled *N° 356 – Cathédrale Saint-Charles-Borromée, Joliette* (2004). Finally, we have increased our collection of works by painter Raymond Lavoie by purchasing an outstanding picture that achieves a perfect equilibrium between abstraction and figuration.

Surely no one could accuse us of not waving both our blue flag and our red one, but we have an international mandate too. Happily, a growing number of Canadian artists, like Rodney Graham, now fall under that heading as outright stars. Unhappily, as has been widely reported, spiking prices in an overheated international art market make it increasingly difficult for us to be active in this area, and gifts of foreign art are few. Still, we did manage to acquire large-scale photographs by such fixtures on the current international scene as Candida Höfer and, in advance of his exhibition here next year, Vik Muniz. Thanks to our good friend Irving Ludmer, we can now also boast of having one of the largest works by British artist Ken Currie, and one of his most effective as well.

We bought photographic works by exciting young local artists as diverse as Isabelle Hayeur, Gwenaël Bélanger, Chih-Chien Wang and the Sanchez Brothers. Our biggest news in the field of photography, however, is Edward Burtynsky's extraordinary gift of twenty-seven of his works, representing every period. He is an artist whose generosity is almost as great as his talent.

Photography may still be the artistic paradigm these days, and we take the medium very seriously, but video is not far behind. Indeed, video is an area of increasing strength in our collection, as the medium remains exemplary of this time in art history. We acquired Alex Morrison's *Homewrecker*, for example, the best-known work to date by this young West coast artist whose work follows skateboard culture the way Gauguin followed Tahitians. We also feel that *Any Time Prime Time* (2004) by Turkish artist Fikret Atay is a judicious addition to the collection and we hope to have more of his stirring work. Also, for those of you who enjoyed German artist

Liz Magor  
*Carton II* (détail), 2006  
Gypse polymérisé, tabac, gomme et allumettes  
29,2 x 53,3 x 48,2 cm  
Collection du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Karel Funk  
*Untitled No. 18*, 2006  
Acrylique sur panneau  
78,7 x 61 cm  
Collection du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

Photos : Richard-Max Tremblay



Thomas Köner's exhibition here, you should know that four of his films are now part of our permanent collection. If you saw *L'Envers des apparences* last year, you may agree with us that Kelly Mark's video installation *Porn* (from the *Glow Video Series*) was one of the highlights, along with Euan MacDonald's excruciatingly slow video portrait of a snail. We felt that such marvellous examples of these artists' work should stay in Montréal. Also exhibited in that same show was a painting by Taras Polataiko, *Lucio Fontana, "Spatial Concept Attesa,"* based on the original by Lucio Fontana. We want to thank Polataiko most heartily for the gift of this insightful work, and for the other gifts he has made to the collection this year.

Physically, the largest gift that we acquired during this period came from Toronto artist Spring Hurlbut. *Le Jardin du sommeil* consists of a hundred nineteenth-century wrought-iron cribs from France and Québec. Obviously, we cannot show this magnificent work here for the moment, and you may well wonder why we would accept so enormous a gift if we have so little room to display our permanent collection. The answer, simply, is that we should not let our physical plant compromise the quality and scale of our acquisitions, which should be governed by the logic of the collection itself, and not the number or size of our galleries. As has been reported elsewhere, we are working hard to find solutions to the shortage of exhibition space for our extraordinary collection, and we ardently hope that you will support us in these efforts. One day, with your help, we will have enough room to make the best of our collection permanently available to you, and to display large enough parts of it so that you can have some sense of the coherence and relevance of this important aspect of our mission.

Marc Mayer

## Projections

Video made its appearance in the visual arts world forty years ago, at a time when the boundaries between the different artistic disciplines were becoming less pronounced, and when artistic creation was becoming interdisciplinary and multimedia. Artists follow all kinds of paths, and video has opened up new fields of experimentation to them. Some, concerned with the growing and pervasive hold of television in Western households, have explored its critical potential; others have focused on its technological aspect and visual possibilities. Conceptual art and performance have also had a great impact.

For a number of artists, what counts is the idea more than the medium employed to express it. They use video as an extension of their bodies, as a witness or partner to record or stage a performance. In such cases, critics speak of an aesthetics of narcissism. This rather strong term is associated with works in which the artist's body plays a fundamental role. However, between the experience of self-awareness, exploration of identity and the gesture made to convey a thought, the range of performance video is vast and mixed.

"There are those who call it narcissistic.... Why not call it generous?" says Sylvie Laliberté in *Bonbons bijoux*, her first video piece, made in 1996. Originally a performance artist, she simply stepped in front of the camera to speak in an innocuous way about everything or nothing at all, with humour, whimsy and, above all, wit. Fully knowledgeable and aware of the history of art and the critical gaze, she defuses the narcissistic trap and makes a game of it.

As part of our *Projections* series, we will be offering a program in November consisting entirely of videos by artists from different backgrounds and generations who, in their respective practices, appear before the camera to tell a story, make a gesture, draw a line, or experience an extreme or intensely poetic action. Somewhere between presentation and representation, in an experience of a connection to time, place and the world that is both physical and emotional, the artist's body steals into the picture and enters a thought there.

# Multimedia

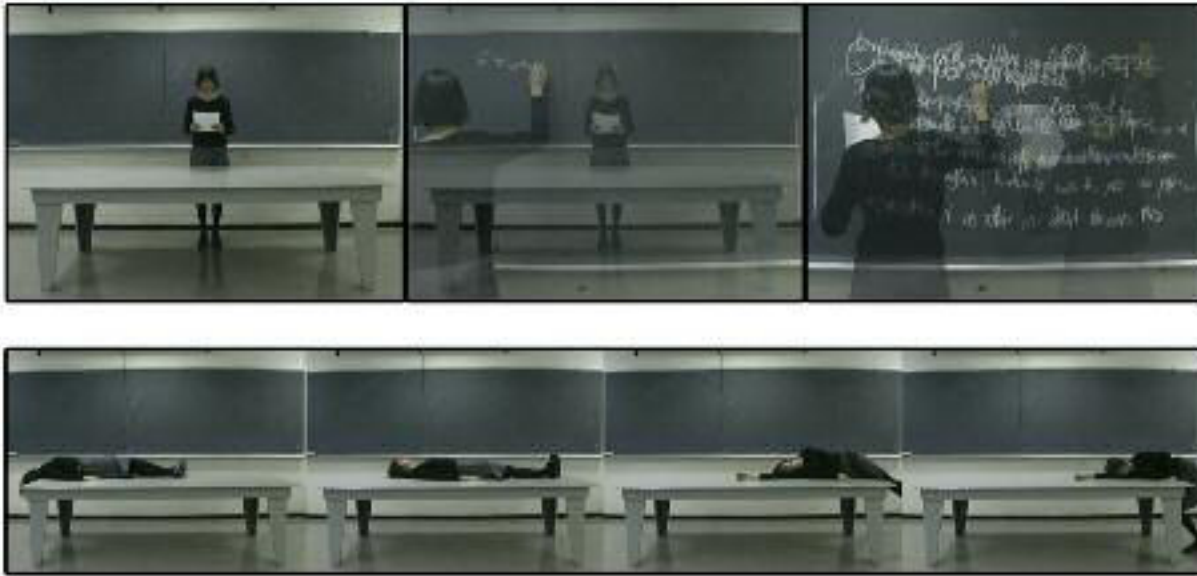


Katleen Vermeir  
*Waterdrawing*, 1999  
 Courtesy Koraalberg Art Gallery, Antwerp,  
 Belgium, and Galerie Thérèse Dion, Montréal

Manon de Pauw  
*Corps pédagogique*, 2001  
Courtesy the artist

Rodney Graham Band  
Cambrian Hall, Vancouver,  
February 3, 2005  
Photo: Scott Livingstone

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# events

## The Rodney Graham Band in Concert

Thursday, October 5, 2006

A singer and guitarist (among his many other talents!), Rodney Graham has been performing for more than thirty years. In 1978, with Frank Raminez (Frank Johnston), Ian Wallace and Jeff Wall, he formed UJ3RK5 a “new-wave-art-rock” group that developed a cult following on the Canadian music scene. Then, in 1995, he founded the punk rock group The Volumizers. Between June 1998 and February 2000, in his North Vancouver studio, Graham recorded the seventeen songs on his first CD, *The Bed-Bug, Love Buzz and Other Short Songs in the Popular Idiom*, released by the DIA Center for the Arts in New York. He recorded *What Is Happy, Baby?* for an exhibition at the Lisson Gallery in London, and subsequently released *Live in London, Rock Is Hard*. And now he is offering us *Never Tell a Pal a Hard Luck Story (You'll Only Get a Hard Luck Story in Return)*, his latest CD. In concert, Graham is backed by four other musicians—on drums, keyboard and guitar.



## Music Video: New Works

To follow up our initial program of music videos, from July 12 to October 1, 2006, which presented some twenty-six titles providing an overview of the work of the last thirty years, in summer 2007 we will offer a program made up exclusively of recent productions. All professional artists and music video directors interested in submitting their work can find the pertinent details on the Musée website: [www.macm.org](http://www.macm.org).

Louise Simard-Ismert

# Journées de la culture 2006

In conjunction with the guided tours presented by Place des Arts (PDA), the Musée is offering the public a chance to discover its storage vaults this Saturday, September 30. Come enjoy a rare opportunity for a look behind the scenes!

## Saturday, September 30

Guided tour of the Musée's storage vaults (length: 90 minutes). Tours leave from the main hall of PDA. Maximum 15 persons per tour. Starting times: 11 a.m., and 1, 2 and 3 p.m. Free for all.

## Sunday, October 1

Screening of music videos in the museum's Beverley Webster Rolph Hall. An international selection of video clips provides a sense of how far this art has come since 1981, when MTV broadcast its first clips, and an appreciation of video directors' artistry. A special invitation to young music-video fans! Free. From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Backstage tours of Place des Arts

On both days, Place des Arts is offering guided backstage tours of its theatres, and is also opening the Opéra de Montréal costume shop up to the public. Length: 60 minutes. Free. Starting times: Hourly from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (except 12 noon). Tours leave from the main hall of PDA. Maximum 30 persons per tour. Activities are scheduled at Place des Arts from 10:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. continuously on Saturday and Sunday.



The Musée's conservation laboratory  
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

## Making the Museum Even More Accessible

The Kéroul organization which, through information and lobbying, promotes and develops accessible tourism and culture for people with limited physical ability and the elderly, recently evaluated the museum's facilities with a view to granting it official certification as an institution that meets its access standards. Fifteen percent of Quebecers live with a motor, visual or auditory impairment; eighty percent of these people would like to travel.

That is how the Musée came to be listed as a cultural attraction in the new publication *Route accessible* launched this past June by Kéroul. This brochure enables its target readership to group together, on the same itinerary, tourist activities and services adapted to their needs.

Among the evaluation criteria noted at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, all the galleries are wheelchair accessible; the elevators are equipped with audible signals and floor numbers in Braille; and the direct lighting in the exhibition galleries greatly facilitates viewing for people with reduced vision.

The Musée's reception and education staff were given special training by Kéroul last spring, to help ensure that elderly visitors and those with disabilities enjoy their museum experience. As well, specially adapted tours for visitors with reduced mobility and the visually impaired are offered for groups of six to eight, at no additional charge. Reservations required (two weeks in advance): call 514-847-6253.

# The Musée Foundation

## New Board of Directors for the Foundation

The Fondation du Musée d'art contemporain proudly elected a new Board of Directors at its June 2006 meeting.

The new Chair of the Foundation is the Honourable Liza Frulla. Ms. Frulla is already well known, having enjoyed a remarkable political career. She was Minister of Canadian Heritage from 2004 to 2006, and Minister of Culture and Communications of Québec from 1990 to 1994. In fact, it was when she was in the latter post that the museum moved to its new downtown home, in 1992. A professional communicator, Ms. Frulla has always served the cause of art and culture with enthusiasm and dedication. She immediately set out two goals for her two-year term at the helm of the Musée Foundation: support the museum's growth, and make art and the museum a space of social mediation.

The Board of Directors can also count on the energetic support of all its members elected for the 2006–2007 year: Manon Blanchette, Richard Chagnon, Lyse Charette, Marcel Côté, François Dell'Aniello, Manuela Goya, Mélanie Joly, Louise Laframboise, Pierre Nolin, Jean Saucier, Anik Trudel and Diane Vachon. Marc DeSerres, Chairman of the Board of the Musée, and Marc Mayer, the Director, also sit on the Foundation Board as representatives of the Musée.

The Foundation wishes to take this opportunity to express its heartfelt thanks to the outgoing Chair, Jean Saucier, for his generous commitment over the last seven years.



The Honourable Liza Frulla



Photo : Odile B. Beauchemin

## The Luminescence Ball: A Hit!

Last spring's Luminescence Bal was a great success, in terms of both quality and financial proceeds, which totalled over \$85,000. The Foundation is deeply grateful to Board member Anik Trudel, who chaired the Ball's organizing committee, for the leadership and time she so generously volunteered. Under her guidance, the Ball has regained its momentum and promises to be a regular springtime highlight for art patrons and donors. For its next edition, on May 24, 2007, the Ball will again offer pleasures of the palette and the eye, and an inside view of the art at the Musée. And so, once more, art, gastronomic delights and fine nectars will, for the space of an evening, form a happy ménage à trois!

## No Christmas Without the Musée Boutique

Let's be clear: the place to find everything you need for your Christmas shopping is the Musée Boutique. There will be something for every taste and every pocketbook. Jacinthe Vallée has a wealth of new ideas in store for us to help ensure an original touch for that well-appreciated one-of-a-kind gift. And remember, all of the Boutique's profits go to the Musée Foundation.

### Hours

The Musée Boutique is open Wednesday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday to Tuesday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### Address

185 St. Catherine Street West (corner Jeanne-Mance), Place-des-Arts metro.  
Telephone: 514-847-6904

### Manager

Jacinthe Vallée



# Message from the Director

If you ask typical, non-Canadian, contemporary art lovers today to name three Canadian artists, they may hesitate a bit before giving you three names of artists living in Vancouver. The hesitation comes from the fact that, in art, specific locality tends to trump nationality, as countries are more abstract entities than cities. Nowhere is that more the case than in complicated Canada with its three solitudes: Montréal, Toronto and Vancouver. More about that some other time.

Anyway, of the three names, Rodney Graham's will certainly be one. Prolific, versatile, skilful, original, and above all intelligent, Graham is for me the embodiment of today's artist, a public intellectual whose relationship to artistic media is entirely pragmatic. His corpus is so extremely multifarious that I can imagine someone—perhaps a fellow artist who may have dedicated an entire career to exploring just one medium—accusing him of being fickle and unfocused. But formalism is now long dead as the paradigmatic attitude in art and, besides, Graham's works are all so sophisticated in their craftsmanship, and so consistently fascinating in the interrelationship of their various parts with their subject, that such criticism would ring hollow. Although each project is self-contained and distinct, there is a certain similarity between many of his highly diverse works. Whether it is a rearrangement of a score by Wagner, a looped story by Edgar Allan Poe or our own reproduction of Elvis Presley's screen door, they tend to be the artistic equivalent of perpetual motion machines, dynamic closed systems that generate sensations and ideas like so much electricity. Thanks to Josée Bélisle's careful selection of works by Graham, you are in for some serious stimulation.

Getting back to famous art cities, in the last couple of years Leipzig has emerged as a major centre of attraction in the art world for its many good painters, from magazine cover stories to major travelling group shows and newsworthy auction results. At 46, Neo Rauch is the senior painter of this "school," and in my estimation the most beguiling. Simultaneously reviving both the aesthetic language of the former GDR and an authentic surrealist grammar, Rauch's paradoxical pictures are as beautiful as they are nightmarish, and curator Réal Lussier masterfully unpacks their mysteries for us. If you were among the 72,000 people who saw our Anselm Kiefer exhibition earlier this year, you will still be remembering the power of that artist's command of his country's history and its culture. A fellow German and a fellow painter, Rauch follows a very different approach to the same subject. A visit to this show will give you a greater sense of the incomparable depth and dimension of national self-reflection in Germany, as embodied in its visual arts.

Again on the subject of famous art cities, I am convinced that Montréal is destined to become one soon. Our artists are superb, our many cultural and educational institutions all dynamic and progressive, our tradition of government funding remarkably generous and intelligent in the Canadian context, and our general population among the most creative and inquisitive anywhere in the world. The Musée is striving to be as useful as possible to the success of Montréal as an art centre. I hope that you will pay close attention to the exhibition of our recent acquisitions, which I myself organized. It may convince you that we are right to bet on Montréal as the next Vancouver, rather than the next Leipzig, not only for the work that is being made here now, but for the superlative quality of the work that came before and the excellence of the art from elsewhere that interests us here.

Marc Mayer