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le journal



MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL
Québec

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Vik Muniz

Reflex

October 4, 2007 to January 6, 2008

Double Mona Lisa (Peanut Butter and Jelly)
 (After Warhol), 1999
 Cibachrome print
 121.9 x 152.4 cm
 Courtesy Sikkema Jenkins & Co.,
 New York

Toy Soldier (Monads), 2003
 Chromogenic print
 243.8 x 182.9 cm
 Courtesy Sikkema Jenkins & Co.,
 New York

Cloud Cloud, Miami (Pictures of Clouds),
 2006
 Gelatin silver print
 50.8 x 61 cm
 Courtesy Sikkema Jenkins & Co.,
 New York

Since the mid-1990s, Brazilian artist Vik Muniz has produced photographic works documenting the ephemeral compositions he creates from an astonishing variety of materials, including soil, cotton, sugar, thread, chocolate syrup, peanut butter, colour chips, plastic toys, diamonds, caviar and trash. Familiar and yet strange, his images are generally inspired by photographs of current events or works of art, or reminiscent of famous figures. Upon recognizing them, the viewer immediately realizes that these images are not what they first seemed. According to Muniz, it is a matter of creating “the worst possible illusion”: an illusion that can initially fool the spectator but that, at the same time, provokes thought about the nature of perception, and the power of images and the ways they are manipulated.

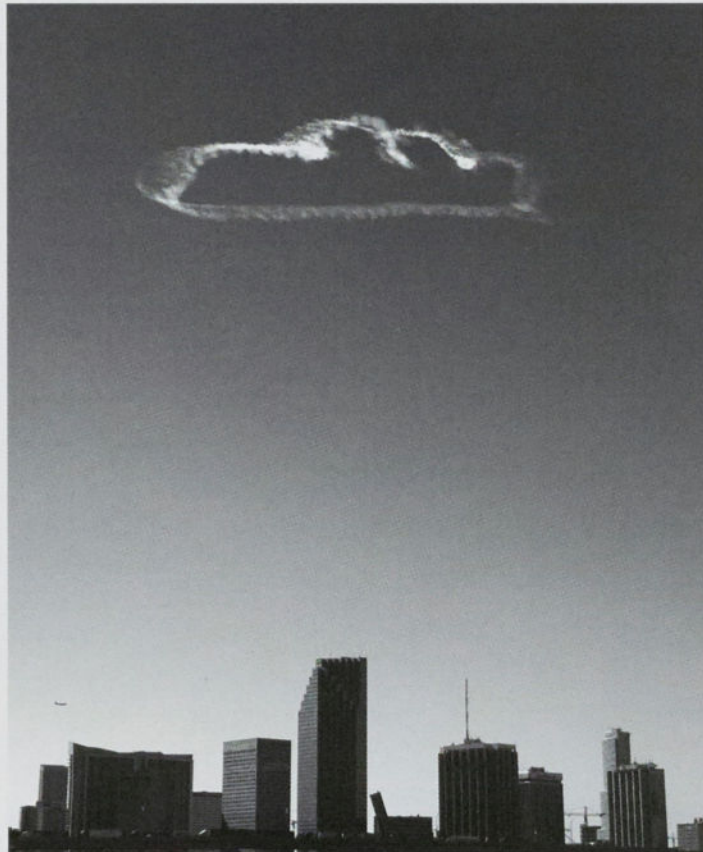
Muniz examines the traditions of visual representation; he honours them, but he also subverts them, walking a fine line between object and illusion, figurative representation and abstraction, idea and image, means and ends. His clever and witty work raises pressing questions about how the spectators’ view and interpretation of an image are affected by scale, medium, content, and their own subjectivity. Muniz has often been described as a photographer, but his continual exploration of materials and techniques tells us that he is also an accomplished draftsman, a painter, sculptor, designer, conjurer, critic and historian.

Organized by the Miami Art Museum, the exhibition comprises over 110 works, from 27 major series produced by Muniz since 1988. It includes photographs from the *Best of "Life"* series (1988-1990): well-known illustrations, drawn from memory, that appeared in *Life* magazine; the *Equivalents* series (1993): simulations of cloud formations, created with cotton balls; the *Pictures of Thread* series (1995-1999): reproductions of artworks, made out of thread; the *Sugar Children* series (1996): portraits, drawn with sugar, of children of Caribbean sugar cane workers; the *Pictures of Chocolate* series (1997-2001): compositions in chocolate syrup; *After Warhol* (1999): images fabricated out of perishable materials such as peanut butter and jelly; *Pictures of Clouds* (2001-2006): clouds sketched by a plane against a blue sky; *Monads* (2003): images created from figurines and assorted plastic toys; and, finally, *Pictures of Magazines* (2003-2004): images of famous artworks and portraits, re-created with thousands of little, round pieces of paper punched from magazines, one of which—the masterly *Iris*, after Van Gogh (2004)—is part of the Musée Collection.

Born in São Paulo in 1961, Vik Muniz moved to the United States in 1984, settling in New York. He has exhibited widely on the international scene since 1989, in group shows as well as solo exhibitions at such institutions as the International Center of Photography, New York, in 1998; the Museu de Arte Moderna, São Paulo, Museu de Arte Moderna, Rio de Janeiro, and Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, in 2001; the Fundació Joan Miró, Barcelona, and Menil Collection, Houston, in 2002; the Centro Gallego de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostela, and Museo d'Arte Contemporanea Roma, Rome, in 2003; and the Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, and Irish Museum of Contemporary Art, Dublin, in 2004. Muniz represented Brazil at the 49th *Venice Biennale*, in 2001.

Vik Muniz: Reflex was organized by the Miami Art Museum, Miami, Florida, with support from the Miami Art Museum's Annual Exhibition Fund and additional support provided by Duggal Visual Solutions.

Sandra Grant Marchand



Karel Funk

Untitled #19, 2006
Acrylic on panel
78.6 x 61 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Courtesy the artist and
303 Gallery, New York

Karel Funk, who is Winnipeg born and based, creates painted portraits, the most obvious or even spectacular characteristic of which is undoubtedly their extraordinary illusionism. Produced in acrylic on wood panels, they present male subjects shown in head-and-shoulders view and dressed in protective outdoor wear. Each model is set against a neutral, practically uniform white ground that outlines the figure while placing it in a vague space that lacks any real depth. Furthermore, the viewer is rarely allowed to meet the models' gaze, since when they're not seen in three-quarter profile or from behind, they usually have their heads bowed or else covered with a hood that hides their eyes.

The originality of Funk's work rests in large part on the tension that is created between the extreme precision of the rendering and an undeniable psychological restraint. This fundamental quality is complemented by various implicit references to art history (in particular, to certain Renaissance portraits), which add to the evocative potential of a practice that both stems from a long tradition and is firmly rooted in the present. Aside from its amazing technical mastery, Funk's painting is remarkably rich on a semantic level, as evidenced by the subtlety with which the artist analyses the power relations inherent in the portrait—relations revolving around control, to be sure, but definitely less unambiguous than at first appears. Through his work, Funk reminds us that the painted portrait is above all a surface, and one that, in contrast to the flatness of formalism (which denies all depth), constitutes an interface where all the players involved—artist, model, spectator—meet and confront one another. In the impression they give of being absorbed or otherwise remote, his models thus call to mind, among other things, the painter's own state of concentration while he is producing a work.

This presentation, Funk's first solo museum exhibition, features a group of works produced over the past five years. It is being held in the Banque Laurentienne Gallery. **Pierre Landry**





Civil Society
Aid Industry

Thomas Hirschhorn

Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake

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Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn draws us into a world that has been painstakingly reconstructed out of an accumulation of objects and materials typical of everyday life, and an extensive range of writings and reference works. He offers a lucid view of the issues of contemporary society and reinvents, through the overabundance of information, a unique space for discourse and reflection, and ultimately, for commitment and action.

Soon after completing his studies in graphic design in Zurich, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Hirschhorn moved to Paris and joined the collective of politically engaged graphic designers known as Grapus. He did not practise as a graphic designer, however, because he could not bring himself to compromise his creative freedom in order to promote any particular client or ideology. The coinciding of art and life, of artistic expression and political activism, demands (underlies) his exclusive attachment to humble materials, packing materials, salvaged materials. Hirschhorn favours simple, readable strategies of appropriation of space—displays, wall panels, allusions to furniture, to architecture—occasionally accompanied, however, by a certain impression of disorder, of incompleteness and temporariness.

A work that is spectacular in every respect, *Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake* (2000), a recent major acquisition of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, was first shown at the Chicago Art Institute, in 2000, and then in Paris, at the Musée national d'art moderne/Centre Pompidou, in 2005, as part of the group exhibition *Dionysiac*. The artist totally fills, and drastically alters, the white cube of the museum space. While, at first glance, the title “Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake” may seem playful, it actually conjures up a metaphor on the state of the world, the end of certain important twentieth-century utopias, and the urgent question of hunger. This monumental grouping of fabricated, figurative, but non-realistic “sculptures” that inventively and caustically recycle found objects and materials (wood, cardboard, sheets of aluminum foil, plastic wrap, adhesive tape, garbage bags, folding tables, mirrors, metal chains, pails, spoons, ladles) presents an eclectic yet tightly focused compendium of knowledge and information at the same time as it develops a vaguely delirious, tragic, *fin de siècle* vision.

The twelve large spoons of the title appear as monuments to the memory of entities or individuals the artist associates with failed utopias: Mies van der Rohe, Rosa Luxemburg, Malevich, Nietzsche, Venice, China, the moon, guns, fashion, the exhibition of “degenerate” art held by the Nazis in 1937, Rolex Swiss watches and the Chicago Bulls basketball team. These carefully chosen references to history, to cultural and art history as well as to society's major trends, literally encircle the “big cake”—a round, disturbing image, magnified in three dimensions, of excessive consumption and existential chaos. The work clearly comprises all the elements that characterize the *Hirschhornian* aesthetic, an aesthetic that readily refuses to hew to good taste and conventional criteria of beauty, an aesthetic that is above all rooted in a modesty of artistic means, transparency and the desire to illustrate and tell, and an aesthetic of destabilization and dissonance shaking up received notions. Emerging insistently through the appearance of disorder conveyed by the “trash” look of the resolutely disparate environment is the vulnerable nature of the human condition.

Jumbo Spoons and Big Cake (detail), 2000
Mixed media and various materials
17 x 12 m (variable dimensions)
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Courtesy Stephen Friedman
Gallery, London
© Thomas Hirschhorn/SODRAC (2007)

If light can be said to reveal and modulate our environment, sound—noises, the sigh of the breeze, melodies—literally fills out our life. The harmony of sounds, as well as their discordance, accompanies our every action, occupies the space of our thoughts and gives a definite rhythm to the progress of time. So much so that an area of total silence is now practically a utopian notion. Sound has plainly become one of the main features inherent in the contemporary image. In the movies or video, in sculpture or multimedia assemblage, the role played by the sound track, whether musical or not, over-amplified or discreetly perceptible, even inaudible, consequently embodies, crystallizes and energizes some of the most powerful artistic projects on the current art scene.

November 3, 2007 to April 13, 2008

Sound Images

Thematic Exhibition of Works from the Collection

The ten or so works brought together in this exhibition incorporate sound, the idea of sound or occasionally, and more dramatically, the absence of sound, in the very nature and form of the work. The artists represented share the same marked interest in sound or music, the temporal dimension it creates and the space it fills or suggests, even as their various means of expression lie resolutely within the realm of the visual. The relations they have chosen to develop with technology, with the different devices for transmitting and broadcasting sound, along with their use of the acoustic, the analogue and even the mechanical, vary the act of hearing and listening, and reposition it among the formal parameters of experience.

From Michael Snow's silkscreen image illustrating a keyboard being played, all in black-and-white sequences, to Yannick Pouliot's extraordinary Baroque music room, from Jean-Pierre Gauthier's deserted, gleaming, inspired piano to the erudite, improbable scenarios of Raymond Gervais, a range of forceful images that draw on the sources of musical performance are revealed.

Sylvain Bouthillette's pictorial and sculptural installation suggests, in a seemingly voluble tone, ambiguous connections with the physical, narrative and sonic space. Linda Covit also formalizes, in spare though substantial fashion, the paradox of a "voiceless bell," while Jean-Luc Vilmouth puts together a hilarious sound system that proves to be a disconcerting illustration of the relationship between nature and culture.

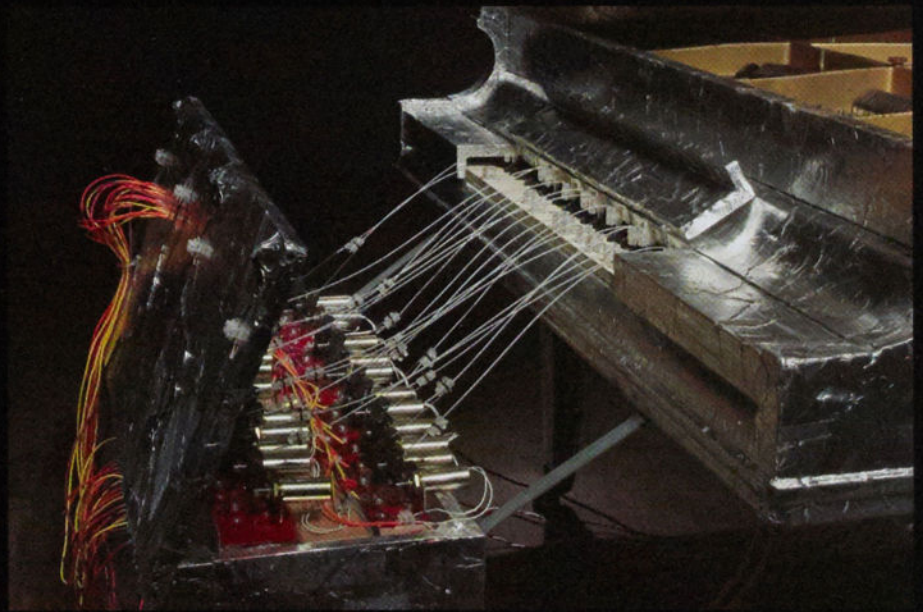
The kinetic whirling and gliding of Ann Hamilton's majestic, diaphanous curtains compose a series of almost melodic rustlings. The hypnotic nature of this unique atmosphere is also found, albeit in different form, in Darren Almond's dazzling high-definition triple projection of the train journey to the roof of the world. The chanting of the Tibetan monks is etched insistently in the mind, with an effect similar to that of persistent, repetitive "white noise" like the sounds produced by Michèle Waquant. And finally, reiterating the phenomenal importance of the cinematic image in the collective imagination, Christian Marclay's video proposes a brilliant, highly abridged exposé of the combined merits of the sound track, dialogue and editing.

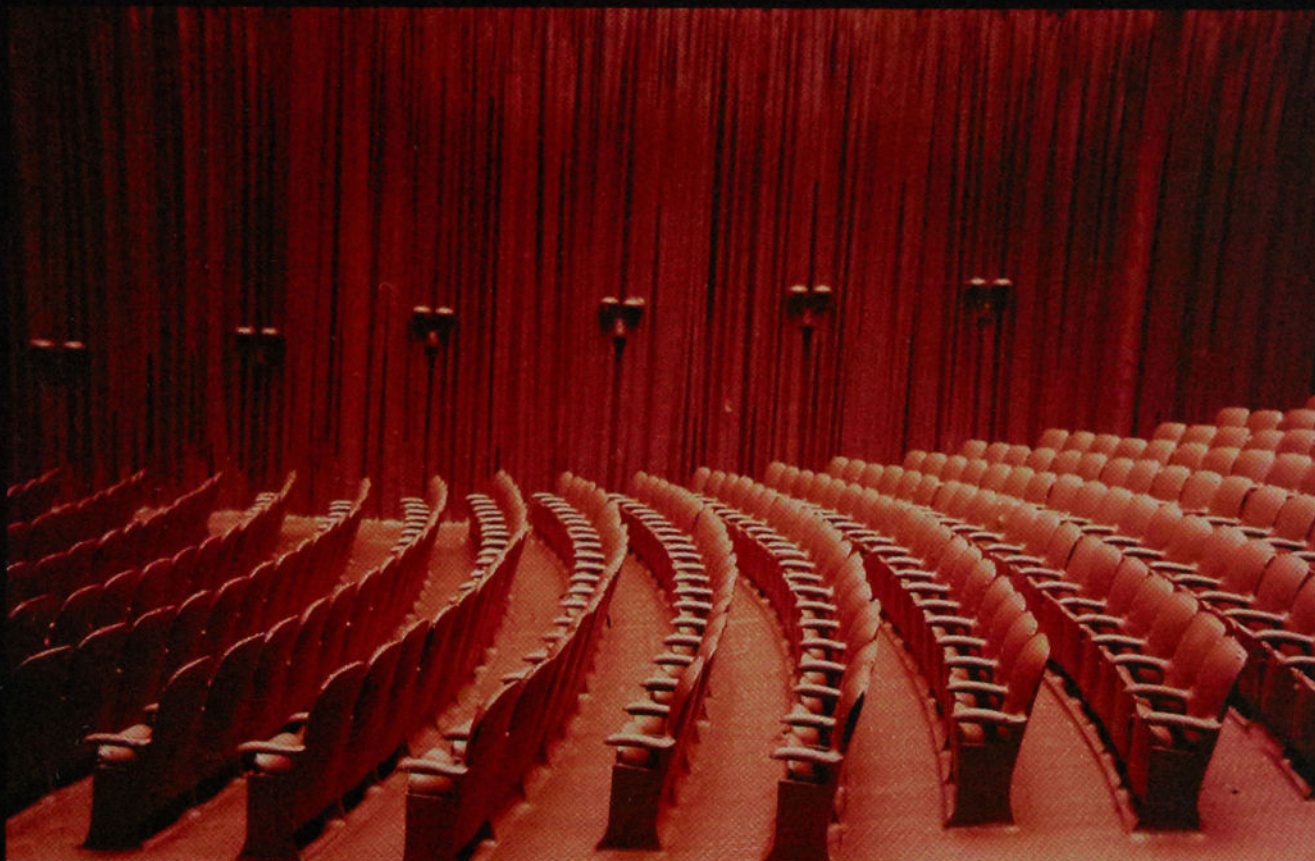
The exhibition offers a selection of works in which sound plays a concrete role, along with others, just as relevant, that speak volumes with their silence, in a poetic to-and-fro between an intrusive propagation of sound and its silent, poignant or playful ideality.

Josée Bélisle

Jean-Pierre Gauthier
Battements et Papillons, 2006
Piano and various objects
162 x 143 x 214 cm
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

Ann Hamilton
(bearings), 1996
Silk organza curtains, metal track,
motors, steel rods and rings
Variable dimensions
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Courtesy Sean Kelly Gallery,
New York





Projections



Stills from *Trailer*, 2005
 DVD for projection
 10-minute loop
 Photos: Courtesy Maureen Paley,
 London

October 3 to November 30, 2007

Saskia Olde Wolbers *Trailer*, 2005

Dutch-born, London-based artist Saskia Olde Wolbers creates narrative video works that pull us into unknown worlds somewhere between dreams and imagination. Her videos are fables, pure fiction, in which the narrative is conveyed through words uttered by off-screen voices. Her work is distinctive for the high quality of its writing and the subtle balance between image and sound. These stories are loosely based on actual events reported in the newspapers, anecdotes and documentary films. In the recounting of these brief news items, there are always gaps, a lack of information, and it is there, in these chinks and holes, that the artist's imagination unfurls; it is there that her narratives and images take form and come together. Without either action or dialogue, the suggestive power of the off-screen voice draws us into the most unlikely of stories, closer to dreamland than the real world, set within the inner life of protagonists we will never see. In all of Olde Wolbers' works, characters find themselves in a microcosm that contains, hidden within it, the keys to their existence, a space that fits them and transcends them. *Trailer*, for example, starts out somewhere in the vast Amazonian jungle, among the native plants with exotic Spanish and Latin names, and gradually slides into the dark red of an Ohio movie theatre.

In 1997, Saskia Olde Wolbers won the First Base Award, presented by the London organization ACAA to promising young artists. Since her first solo exhibition in 1998, her works have earned her many other awards, including the Charlotte Köhler Prijs, in the Netherlands, and the Beck's Futures. *Trailer* is presented in connection with the *Mois de la Photo à Montréal*, which will explore the question of the narrative in contemporary art.



December 5, 2007 to January 30, 2008

Mark Lewis

Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside, 2005

Still from *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside, 2005*
35-mm film transferred to DVD,
4-min 12-s loop, 2/3
Collection of the Musée d'art
contemporain de Montréal
Photo: Courtesy Monte Clark Gallery,
Toronto

Mark Lewis has been pushing the cinematic envelope since the mid-1990s. He has chosen to use film and work with the technical tools of the movies, but without trying to make a “real” film in the narrative sense of the term. Adopting an approach he describes as “cinema in parts,” he endeavours to dissect the grammar of cinema in a presentation that is distanced from the different processes that go into it, in order to make us aware of the pervasive influence of the film image. He explores cinema in its various parts to create a work out of these small parts, these moments. Most of his works have no sound track, and instead plunge us into a silence that prompts us to look more closely. In 1995, the Musée presented his famous *Two Impossible Films* in the exhibition *L'Effet cinéma*. In recent years, his work has moved away from the cinematic system of references to reveal a closer connection with the pictorial tradition of experiencing and representing time. In the 2005 work *Rush Hour, Morning and Evening, Cheapside*, which was recently acquired by the Musée and will be screened this coming December and January, Lewis captures the effect of the oblique light of the low sun, which stretches out shadows on the ground. He shot shadows moving along a sidewalk, as a steady stream of pedestrians marches across the screen. This slice of time presented in an endless loop illustrates the agitated evanescence of passers-by whose bodies remain mostly hidden. A native of Hamilton, Ontario, Mark Lewis lives and works in London.

Louise Simard-Ismert



Journées de la Culture: Slam at the Musée

Words break free of the works in the exhibition *De l'écriture/With Writing*, now on at the Musée. In the mouths of slam poets Mario Cholette, Carl Bessette and Ivan Bielinski (IVY), these words come alive and, in the process, fire our imaginations too. A unique adventure featuring a variety of sound environments, asides and lively performances, in the spirit... and letter of the slam.

The slam breathes fresh life into traditional poetry readings, gives words new vitality and puts performance front and centre. A full-fledged oratorical genre, the slam has become a phenomenon with media and public alike, wherever it has taken hold. And for good reason. Faced with an audience that votes on their performance, slammers must apply poetic strategies to win the listeners over, without the benefit of any props, music or costumes, and within a strict time limit of no more than three minutes. The winner is selected by judges chosen at random from among the audience members.

The hermetic literary genre of poetry becomes a spectacular, communicative event when set on stage. "In poetry, the audience must step into the poet's world. In a slam, it's the slammer who draws us in," says Ivan Bielinski.

Sunday, September 30, from 2 to 4 p.m.
Free activity for all, with family or friends

You Too Can Be An Art Critic

After visiting our new exhibitions, you can record your impressions online. They will then be posted on the Musée website (www.macm.org), allowing you to share your views with other members of the public.

At the end of each exhibition, the museum will hold a draw for a copy of the catalogue among all those who have sent in their comments.

Subscribe to the Musée's E-mail Newsletter

To find out more about what's going on at the Musée, add your name to our electronic mailing list and get regular updates on our exhibitions and events. On the website's home page, simply enter your contact details in the "e-mail newsletter" window.

Carl Bessette, Ivan Bielinski and Mario Cholette
 Visual effects: Ivan Bielinski
 Photo: Biberian-Orselli



Photo: Jocelyn Michel

Musée Nocturnes

The Nocturnes are a new way to visit the Musée, see everything it has to offer, and get together with friends. Since June 1, 2007, on the first Friday of every month, the museum has stayed open late, from 6 to 9 p.m., for an entertaining evening with tours of the exhibitions, original cocktails, live music, and more. These Friday Nocturnes are a chance to connect with the vibrant Montréal music scene.

DJ Champion kicked off the first Nocturne, followed over the summer by the Blandiloquentia duo, DJ Pillow & Mademoiselle, and aKido and Serge Nakauchi Pelletier of Pawa Up First. In September, the Musée welcomes We Are Wolves. Later this fall, the Nocturnes will showcase the group The National Parcs, made up of three artists: Vincent Letellier, alias *Freeworm* (words and music), Chimwemwe Miller (words and music) and Ian Cameron (video production), with a music/video project in which music and video develop together. Their recent album, *Timbervision*, combines samples of sounds and images recorded in the midst of nature, out in the forest of Parc de la Vérendrye. The National Parcs will be at the Musée for the Nocturne on Friday, November 2. The Nocturne on Friday, October 5, will hoist the colours of Martin Tétrault's cosmix mix mix mix aesthetic, while the December 7 event, featuring Moment Factory and Moondata, will revolve around the theme of dreams.

Admission to the Friday Nocturnes is open to all. No reservation necessary. With your regular Musée ticket or your Wired card, you can see it all—the Collection, exhibitions, screenings—and hear it all! To start the weekend in congenial company, the Musée is becoming a new place to meet, mingle and discover. See you there!

Louise Simard-Ismert

*Caminante no hay camino
se hace el camino al andar.*

Walker, there is no road
the road is made by walking.

Antonio Machado¹

¹ Canto XXIX, *Proverbios y cantarés, Campos de Castilla*, 1917.

² "Le meilleur du Net," *Le Monde interactif* (special supplement), May 19, 2000, p. 13

She Who Walks



Michelle Gauthier and Jesús Nuñez Domingo
Photo: Chantal Charbonneau

She has the solid character of mountain folk: determined, humble, thoughtful and generous. Not a superfluous word. She uses her strengths to carry the team. She has the gaze of those who scale great heights, that of the visionary and lead climber. To her colleagues at the Musée, website visitors and researchers, she is Michelle Gauthier, head of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal Media Centre since 1987. Today, Michelle is turning to new challenges, including earning a PhD in information technology at the Université de Montréal. Her research topic: "E-mail dissemination of information in museums of contemporary art."

Michelle Gauthier is the person responsible for the Media Centre as we know it today, both the physical place and the virtual address. With her much-loved team, she raised the standards of library science to an exceptional level. In the space of a few years, the Media Centre gained international recognition, and earned the remarkable ranking, as we entered the new millennium, as one of the world's 350 best sites (with the maximum possible score) by the prestigious newspaper *Le Monde*,² in such illustrious company as the Louvre, Metropolitan, MoMA and Beaubourg. A manager and educator, dedicated to research and development, Michelle instituted projects over the years that have helped build the reputation for excellence and exemplariness enjoyed by the Media Centre and the Musée: the downtown museum plan and move, computerization of the Collection, creation of the Media Centre website, management of staff and volunteers, supervision and training of interns, and welcoming of numerous researchers. In 2003-2004, she took part in the ambitious DigiCulture project led by a team of information science researchers, and published no fewer than three studies, all applied to the case of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal: system—an inventory of digital cultural content; meta-analysis—a re-examination of reports of user studies conducted at the museum since it was established; and exploration—information needs of programmers of public events.

Sherpas are said to have the gift of great stamina under high-altitude conditions. Michelle is one of those people whose intellectual rigour and human qualities also reach tremendous heights, to our benefit. Thank you, Michelle, for having been a source of inspiration to us for twenty years, and continuing to be a trailblazer today.

P.S.: As in the usual biobibliographical notes, we should mention that Michelle Gauthier divides her time, and her passions (outdoor activities, biking, hiking, bread baking and Spanish), between Québec and Spain.

Élaine Bégin and Danielle Legentil

2007 Ball

Marc Mayer, Anik Trudel, Michèle Dionne and Liza Frulla
Photo: Déclik Communications



The Musée Foundation

Annual Ball: A Big Hit!

A full dance card

In the company of the Honorary Chair of the evening, Michèle Dionne, and the gala's organizer, Anik Trudel, Musée Foundation President the Honourable Liza Frulla welcomed more than 325 attendees this past May 24 to the Annual Ball celebrating the museum's fifteenth anniversary downtown. The sold-out event saw the many guests stroll down the red carpet, enjoy a preview of the *Bruce Nauman* exhibition and cut the anniversary cake. An elegant evening enlivened by a convivial atmosphere was the consensus as they all headed home. Ms. Dionne also shared her love of art with the assembled guests: "A passion for art is one of those loves that last a whole lifetime. I had the tremendous privilege of realizing very early on that art was accessible. That it truly enriched my life. This lifelong passion of mine is something I have shared for years with my husband and children." Québec premier Jean Charest was in attendance, as were the provincial Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, Christine St-Pierre; Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal Chairman Marc DeSerres; Musée Director Marc Mayer; the President and Chief Executive Officer of Tourisme Montréal, the Honourable Charles Lapointe; the spokeswoman for Montréal Museums Day, TV host Pénélope McQuade; and many collectors, business leaders and aficionados of contemporary art.

A magical, convivial atmosphere

The organizing committee displayed boundless imagination, delighting guests with a myriad of thoughtful details: a splendid decor made up of a mass of roses and bamboo, created by Blume; a gourmet five-course dinner catered by Fairmont-Le Reine Elizabeth and expertly served under the guidance of the hotel's head of receptions, Armando Arruda; harmonious wine and food pairings chosen by the SAQ and Univins; a draw for a prestigious prize donated by Air Canada (a pair of tickets in Executive First Service to Paris, London or Frankfurt); continuous makeup sessions provided by the Giorgio Armani Parfums team; "star" photos by Déclik Communications; and generous gifts, courtesy of Joanel and Holt Renfrew. To heighten the festive atmosphere, the hostesses were dressed all in pink and black silk by designer Yves-Jean Lacasse. The sponsors also included Célébrations, Enzamar, Planterra and Lichen.

Record proceeds

The 2007 Ball was also a great financial success. With net proceeds of over \$150,000, it posted the best results of the last twenty years. The Musée's next Ball is already marked on the calendar: Thursday, May 22, 2008. Make it a date!

Board of Directors: The Honourable Liza Frulla, President, Marcel Côté, François Dell'Aniello, Marc DeSerres, Manuela Goya, Mélanie Joly, Marc Mayer, Anik Trudel.

Permanent staff: Sylvie Cameron, Director, Claire Forget, Rosalie Archambault, Frédéric Lago.

Volunteers: Claire Archambault, Monique Augustin, Thérèse Benoit, Tamira Cahara, Patricia Candio, Chantal Charbonneau, Lisa Delisle, Alexandra Derome, Michèle Deschênes, Pauline Laporte, Monique Mathieu, Marguerite Filion-Tessier, Danielle Legentil, Émilie Legentil, Guo Yi Luo, Yolande Pellas, Aurélien Rasfiengas, David Scotte, Annie Thuy Pham, Jason Ververgard and Olga Zozoula.

Thank you to the Foundation volunteers

At special events and all year long, the Foundation can count on the generous participation of its volunteers who give of their time to enhance the museum's vitality. Many of them were present on the evening of the Ball. The Foundation would like to take this opportunity to express its heartfelt gratitude for their loyalty, their enthusiasm and their dedication.

Yolande Pellas, volunteer in charge of the cloakroom
Photo: Christine Bourgier



This fall, we are presenting the work of three completely different artists: a Swiss living in Paris, a Brazilian living in New York, and a Canadian, living and working in Winnipeg, where he was born. Actually, they do share one quality in common, besides being very good artists. Neither Hirschhorn, Muniz nor Funk is afraid of hard work! This is not an insignificant observation if you think back to a time in our culture, not so long ago, when hard work, like skill, was not considered particularly interesting in vanguard circles. Art as a form of specialized labour was pushed aside in favour of art as a specialized form of thought. Today, as exemplified in the work of these three artists, art can be both at once.

Message from the Director

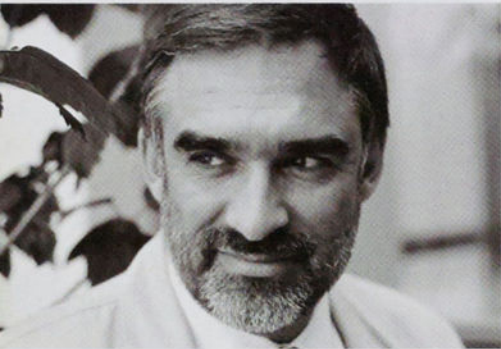


Photo: Nat Gorry

Big Spoons and Jumbo Cake is a well-travelled major installation by Thomas Hirschhorn that is now in our collection. Having one of the great collections of installation art already, we are particularly proud to have acquired this important work, as Hirschhorn is clearly among the most original and relevant artists of our time. Overwhelmed with information and tragic poetry, the mind fairly gags in this cardboard pastry shop of failed utopias and futile diversions.

Vik Muniz does not stop at metaphors, but has been known to use actual food, like peanut butter and strawberry jam, in his work. We thought that this survey exhibition, organized by Peter Boswell, Assistant Director for Programs/Senior Curator, Miami Art Museum, could provide a useful context for another recent acquisition. Muniz is known for his re-creation of familiar images, many of them iconic, in highly unorthodox materials. His time-consuming work provides us with jarring lessons in perception and scale, and in the relation of the part to the whole. In fact, each work is an art lesson in itself, as our educators will be pleased to demonstrate for you.

Providing a context for yet another acquisition, our exhibition of portraits by Karel Funk—surprisingly the artist's first in Canada—will surely expose the unusual rigour and coherence of his project. Always depicting the same subject, an anonymous male around his own age, lost in deep concentration, and always painted with an absurdly painstaking attention to detail that itself required deep concentration, Funk also shows us the fundamental difference between painting and photography. Given the same accuracy and scale, the painting will always trump the mechanical print as an object of wonder. Even if the genius of our machines continues to stupefy me, I know that I am not alone in gasping before the sublime products of our bare hands.

Since we launched our new \$10 “wired”-level card three months ago, we have tripled our membership. This is good news for all the lovers of new art in Montréal because it helps us demonstrate to governments and businesses that more people want more out of this institution. If we play our membership cards right, this fact will translate into more money for exhibitions, education, public programs and acquisitions as we set up our new development service. We are also very pleased with the success of our new First Friday Nocturnes. Like artists, we aren't afraid of hard work either, so keep coming!

Marc Mayer

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