

femmes
volcans
forêts
torrents

asinmajaq
jacynthe carrier
maria ezcurra
caroline gagné
anahita norouzi
nelly-eve rajotte
sabrina raité
sonia robertson
malena szlam

An exhibition of works by
asinnajaq, jacynthe carrier,
maria ezcurra, caroline gagné,
anahita norouzi, nelly-eve rajotte,
sabrina ratté, sonia robertson,
and **malena szlam**



Malena Szlam, *Archipelago of Earthen Bones* (film still), 2024.
16 mm film to digital; three-channel video installation, colour,
multi-channel sound, 19 min approx. each. Edition 1/5.
Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Sonia Robertson, *Umiku Nekauí-Assi | Sang de la terre-mère*, 2014-2024.
Fabric, rope, embroidery thread, monofilament, brooch,
acrylic medium, sand, waxed paper.
Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Maria Ezcurra, *Migrants néotropicaux*, 2018-2024.
Wood pencils, markers and pens on recycled cardboard,
dimensions variable.
Photo: courtesy of the artist.

femmes volcans forêts torrents

femmes volcans forêts torrents brings together nine artists living in Québec whose works are permeable to the lands that they explore. As they lend their ears and eyes to the natural elements and come into contact with communities of living beings, they ground their reflections in various ecosystems, from the waters of the St. Lawrence River to the soil of the tundra.

They make us aware of the power of water and let us hear the heartbeat of the earth and the pulse of volcanos. And they remind us that trees in forests communicate with each other, that migratory birds bear the histories of diasporas, that each plant carries the weight of the travels of its species, that all humans sustain a torrent within themselves.

malena szlam translates the relational fabrics of life through an embodied visuality in synchronicity with natural elements and the wrinkles that time has inscribed in them. She anchors her approach in a decolonial position towards the geopolitics of natural phenomena, attending to the affective properties of analogue processes and the porous relations between the filmed environment and the materiality of the medium. Her installation *Archipelago of Earthen Bones* draws on geology and volcanology, beneath Earth's crust. Interweaving images, soundscapes, and infrasound, it documents the pulse of a constellation of ancestral volcanic sites. The work reimagines horizontal relations between humans and the natural world, revealing vibrant landscapes and their geological life. szlam expresses the spirit of place with deep respect and does not ascend the mountains' ancestral summits.

Umiku Nekai-Assi | *Sang de la terre-mère* [Blood of Mother Earth] embodies the material traces of a search inspired by the spirit of the river and expressed in an animistic perspective. The Innu artist and knowledge keeper **sonia robertson** uses organic materials to re-create a space dedicated to reflecting on water as a resource to protect. The installation follows the course of a river through the space and is accompanied by words, embroidered on wax paper, that carry a prayer or an intention to heal the water. Raising our awareness of the fragility of water, robertson's approach is based on a search for unity, gratitude, history, and traditional knowledge. Each time the work is mounted, Robertson invites women to contribute to it and enhance its imaginary by adding embroidered words to the sand at the outflow of the river's current, designed in resonance with the course of the nearby St. Lawrence River.

Today, as population movements are being more and more tightly controlled, migrating animals cross barriers that humans call borders, and **maria ezcurra** underlines the contradictions of mobility in contemporary geopolitics by raising her gaze to the sky. Marking out a huge field site for observation and documentation, she created an inventory of neotropical migratory birds that land in Québec, specifying how threatened by extinction each species is. On packing boxes, once used for the circulation of goods, she drew specimens from each community that flies from one America to the other along choreographed migration routes and transmits its knowledge of the land over generations. She thus invites us to consider the complex interdependence between human and non-human migrations and the environment.



anahita norouzi nests her approach at the intersection of colonial histories, experiences of immigration and displacement, and questions of identity and memory. The sculptural installation *Constellational Diasporas* addresses the ecological, cultural, and social aspects of migratory issues from the angle of plants not native to Québec. Enclosed within delicate glass balls are seeds of Persian hogweed, a plant imported from Iran in a context of international botanical diplomacy. Today regarded as an invasive plant in Québec, Persian hogweed was desirable until it was no longer useful for colonial exploitation of non-Western geographies.

Human beings based modernity on the establishment of productive relations with their environment, using nature as a warehouse of resources available for consumption. **jacynthe carrier** grounds her work differently, highlighting the permeability of interactions between bodies and with the environment. For her project *Huis clos / l'étendue de nos souffles* [Behind Closed Doors/The Expanse of Our Breaths], she develops a form of ecology of attention to relational gestures. In this performative composition produced for the camera, she probes the space between the dancers and the tension that they share. The sequence of shots, filmed in a way to make the energy that links them perceptible, is superimposed on the image of a waterfall situated close to the artist's home. This dialogue between two animated worlds creates a new form of synesthesia, enabling us to reconsider the

Anahita Norouzi, Constellational Diasporas (detail), 2022. 550 Persian hogweed seeds, blown glass, resin, dimensions variable. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Jacynthe Carrier, Huis clos / l'étendue de nos souffles, 2021. Video and photographic installation; 16 mm film to digital, 2k, 16:9, sound, 19 min 50 s, monitor on wallpaper, dimensions variable. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

presentness of natural elements beyond the conventions that govern usage and function.

The temporality of nature proves to be fundamentally different from that which paces the daily grind of our short lives. In the performative video titled *rock piece (ahuriri edition)*, the artist **asinajaj** underlines the cyclical nature of the world that hosts humans for the instant of their existence. At first covered with stones, she slowly and carefully emerges from the heap, referring to a ceremonial gesture that symbolizes, for the Inuit community, the cycles of life and death. She portrays human time in dialogue with nature's time, composed of periods of growth, full presence, regression, dormancy, and regeneration.

As glaciers melt at an ever-increasing rate due to global warming, the artist **caroline gagné** amplifies the sounds of their presence, as an audible warning, in her poetic and scientific works. *Le bruit des icebergs* [The Noise of Icebergs] is a sound and video installation that lets us experience the proximity and materiality of these behemoths of nature. Shot in the region of St. Lunaire-Griquet, in the Great Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, the work encourages us to reflect on the precariousness of ecosystems and the impacts of material culture.

Taking up sound imagery used by forestry engineers, **nelly-eve rajotte's** installation is titled *Les arbres communiquent entre eux à 220 Hertz* [The Trees Talk to Each Other at 220 Hertz], in reference to the frequency at which the creaking of tree roots is audible. Until recently, men and

asinajaj, rock piece (ahuriri edition) (video stills), 2018. Video installation, sound, colour, 4 min 2 s. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Caroline Gagné, Le bruit des icebergs (video still), 2016. HD video, colour, sound, 18 min, loop, glass panel, and 5 speakers, dimensions variable. Collection Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

women walked through forests to report on their health (and potential commercial value). Over the last few years, the LiDAR digitizer has come into use to inventory and record on 3D files the great catalogue of land assets, including the natural heritage of the Québec forest. rajotte uses this technology to create an immersive cinematographic space, offering viewers an opportunity to question the principle of nature conservation. From a bird's-eye view, we rediscover the forest and its language made of roots, leaves, and pollen.

The work *Floralia* offers a speculative future, within which **sabrina ratté** introduces a reflection on ecosystems, their agency, and the coexistence of their different temporalities and materialities. Plant specimens – including native roses and hydrangeas – are preserved in a virtual archive room, which is transformed under the effect of interference caused by the memory emanating from the museified plants. With the act of *transplantation* of reality into a virtual environment, ratté recontextualizes the psychological influence exercised by digital architecture and environments on our perception of the world. Traces of the past stir the specimens. The digitized plants in their natural environment bear witness to the resilience of the plant world – but also to its precarity.

Each in their own way, the works by these nine women are permeable to the relational fabric of nature and non-human life. These artists transgress the productivist, extractivist, or dominant conception of connections with the environment. They renew the spatial-temporal dimensions of fixed and moving images, fertilize our relationship with the world with other epistemologies, and pay particular attention to the affective and invasive properties of the elements. All highlight the porous links between the subjects addressed and the material aspects of the medium.

Their research probes the connections and divisions that have built borders and cultures and explore how these have modeled our perception and hierarchized conceptions of nature. They attend to, and sometimes tend to, the relationship among nature, ecology, and society, in a way that challenges definitions, cartographies, and dominant representations of nature that shape contemporary culture and geopolitics.

At a time when the disappearance of wild territories and wetlands is accelerating, when the number of non-human living species is plummeting, we must bring to light the amplified traces of their sounds and their fragile presence. Although art cannot solve today's ecological problems, these works offer us opportunities to re-establish our attention and make up for our lack of sensitivity and knowledge with regard to the diversified living world, which needs us to listen to and respect it.

marie-eve beaupré
guest curator

Nelly-Eve Rajotte, Les arbres communiquent entre eux à 220 Hertz (video still), 2024. Three-channel video installation, 4k, generative sound, 25 min, modular synthesizer, electrodes, tree. Photo: courtesy of the artist.

Sabrina Ratté, Floralia, 2021. 4 HD videos, colour, sound, loop and wallpaper, 1/3, Dimensions variable. Purchase, with the support of the National Bank Private Wealth 1859, Collectors Symposium 2021 and the contribution of BMO Banque de Montréal, Diane Boissonneault, Antoine Chagnon, Louise Chagnon-Bucheit, Sanimax, Guthrie Stewart, M. Vincent Chiara et Mme Stella Vassallo and the Famille Yoon-Shareck. Collection Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Photo: Greg Carideo, courtesy of Arsenal Contemporary Art, New York.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

(Exhibition) walkthroughs:

asinnaq and Léuli Eshraghi: Wednesday, April 24, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
Malena Szlam and Marie-Eve Beaupré: Wednesday, May 1, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
Anahita Norouzi and Marie-Eve Beaupré: Wednesday, May 15, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
Caroline Gagné, Jacynthe Carrier and Marie-Eve Beaupré: Wednesday, June 12, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.
Sonia Robertson, Maria Ezcurra and Nuria Carton de Grammont: Wednesday, July 3, 2024, at 5 p.m.
The visit will be followed by a public discussion in Spanish with the artists in the exhibition, at 6 p.m.
Sabrina Ratté, Nelly-Eve Rajotte and Marie-Eve Beaupré: Wednesday, July 10, 2024, at 5:30 p.m.

Conference

Sandra Volny, artist and researcher, « L'art de l'écoute » [The art of listening]: Wednesday, June 19, 2024, at 6:30 p.m.

ART WORKSHOPS

En famille at the MAC: for the entire family (6 and older) (\$) Every first Saturday of the month:
From May 4, 2024, to August 3, 2024, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.
Friday, July 5 and Friday, August 2, 2024, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.

Creative Moments: Workshops for adults (\$) On Tuesdays, May 7, 14, and 21, 2024, 1:30 to 4 p.m.
On Wednesdays, May 8, 15, and 22, 2024, 1:30 to 4 p.m.
On Saturdays, May 11, 18, and 25, 2024, 1:30 to 4 p.m.

Tandem Workshops / Group Visits

School groups (free)
Community groups (free)
Adult groups (\$)
From April 17 to August 16, 2024

ART MEDIATOR IN THE GALLERIES

An art mediator is present in the galleries to exchange with visitors on the issues raised by the exhibition and answer questions. Bilingual interactive tours are offered without reservation during these periods (included with admission).

SCHEDULE

Thursdays and Fridays

Presence of an art mediator from 4 to 7 p.m.
Interactive tour at 5:30 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays

Presence of an art mediator from 2 to 5 p.m.
Interactive tour at 3 p.m.

Tours are also offered with a reservation for groups of 10 or more. Reservations and information at 514 847-6253 / reservation.education@macm.org Please visit the Musée's website for more details and other events to come.

ACCESSIBILITY

Many resources are available online and on site, including audio descriptions of works. Large-print exhibition texts and a tactile map of our galleries are available at the reception desk. macm.org/accessible

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