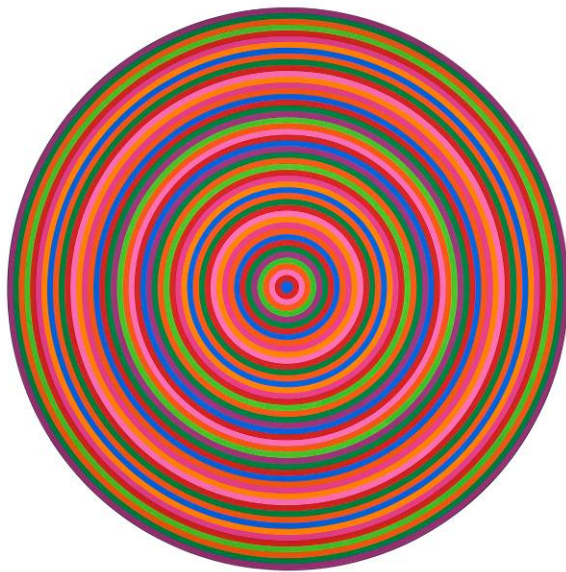


COMING EXHIBITION

THE PLASTICIENS AND BEYOND MONTREAL 1955-1970

7 FEBRUARY TO 12 MAY 2013



“I . . . discovered that within a certain structure, colour acquired an enormous vibrational quality and that these pure chromatic vibrations opened up a whole new field of artistic inquiry.”

– Claude Tousignant

The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and the Varley Art Gallery of Markham, Ontario have teamed up to conceive and organise the exhibition *The Plasticiens and Beyond. Montréal 1955-1970*. Consisting of more than 70 works – primarily paintings, but also works on paper and a few sculptures, along with archival documents – this exhibition is the very first devoted to the ideas of the Plasticien movement in Montreal between

1955 and 1970. In addition to this look back, the exhibition highlights the decisive contribution of artists such as Guido Molinari, Claude Tousignant, Yves Gaucher and Charles Gagnon throughout this period to the geometric abstraction underway in both Paris and New York. The exhibition will bring the Plasticiens’ journey back to life, from their beginnings to the explosion of the “post-Plasticiens” on the international scene in the mid-1960s.

In the wake of the revolution set in motion by the Automatists in the late 1940s, a veritable second avant-garde soon emerged in Montréal. In 1955, an initial group of artists – Jauran (Rodolphe de Repentigny), Louis Belzile, Jean-Paul Jérôme and Fernand Toupin – showed their work at the café-restaurant L’Échourie and adopted the name “Plasticiens”. On this occasion, they also published a manifesto which, in response to the spontaneous exuberance of Automatism, proclaimed the need for a geometrical abstraction founded primarily on stylistic expurgation and the arrangement of the plastic elements. This aesthetic approach overlapped with ideas being developed at the same time by Fernand Leduc as he pursued his quest for geometric order strictly determined by a state of balance amongst the various formal elements.

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In 1956, however, Guido Molinari and Claude Tousignant took these ideas to more extreme lengths in respective solo exhibitions of hard-edge paintings whose surface was defined by their flatness and non-referential quality. With Jean Goguen and Denis Juneau, they were quickly identified as the second group of Plasticiens. In 1959 this group, with Belzile, Leduc and Toupin, showed their work in the *Art abstrait* exhibition at the École des beaux-arts de Montréal, whose catalogue took the form of a manifesto in favour of geometric abstraction.

In the early 1960s, Molinari and Tousignant took the project even further through the use of pure colour as a structural element and source of energy commanding considerable visual activity on the part of the viewer. The principal elements of this “post-Plasticien” concept were shared and reinterpreted by Yves Gaucher and Charles Gagnon respectively. Through a number of masterful works which left no doubt as to their specificity and authority, these four cutting-edge figures made a considerable contribution to asserting a singular approach to abstract painting at a time when, with the first exhibitions of post-painterly abstraction, Op Art and minimalism, hard-edge painting was at the centre of a broader debate in North America and internationally. *The Plasticiens and Beyond. Montréal, 1955-1970* highlights this outstanding stage in the history of abstract painting in Québec in order to gauge its reach on an international scale.

The exhibition *The Plasticiens and Beyond. Montréal 1955-1970*, co-produced and circulated by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec and the Varley Art Gallery of Markham, was conceived by Roald Nasgaard and curated by Roald Nasgaard, head curator at the Art Gallery of Ontario from 1978 to 1992, and Michel Martin, curator of contemporary art at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec from 1978 to 2008. The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication including texts by the two co-curators and others by Lise Lamarche and Denise Leclerc.

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COMING EXHIBITION

KALEIDOSCOPE VARIATIONS ON GLASS

16 MAY TO 13 OCTOBER 2013



A kaleidoscope uses mirrors and pieces of glass to create an infinite variety of forms and colours.

The exhibition *Kaleidoscope: Variations on Glass* provides an overview of contemporary glass work and presents a structured approach to its many variations. More than thirty objects have been brought together around four themes to explore some of the paths taken by Québec glass artists.

The selection includes lampwork, blown and etched glass, cut and polished lost-wax crystal cast glass and joined pieces of thermoformed glass that will fascinate and baffle you at the same time. Works by Susan Edgerley (*Chatoiement*, 2008), Maude Buissière (*Dans ma tête: Circulation*, 2007) and others illustrate the theme *Transparency and Aura* in the way they bring out the play of transparency and opacity, shadow and light. The work of Bruno Andrus (*Vase Totem*, 2005) and Karina Guévin (*Cerise*, 2011), among others, takes up the theme *The Object and Sculpture*, when glass lends itself to various artistic projects between these two different approaches. In *Narrative and History*, artists such as Donald Robertson (*Casque avec chevaux*, 2008) and Michèle Lapointe (*Mes mille peaux de bêtes*, 2009) evoke memory, dream states and the paradox of the past and present. For *Nature and Life*, artists including Caroline Ouellette (*Vénus II*, 2006) and Carole Pilon (*Fracture*, 2005) breathe a spark of life into this inert substance. A kaleidoscopic survey awaits you. You don't want to miss it!

The exhibition *Kaleidoscope: Variations on Glass* is organised and circulated by the MNBAQ. Following stops practically everywhere in Québec it will land at the Musée – a first!

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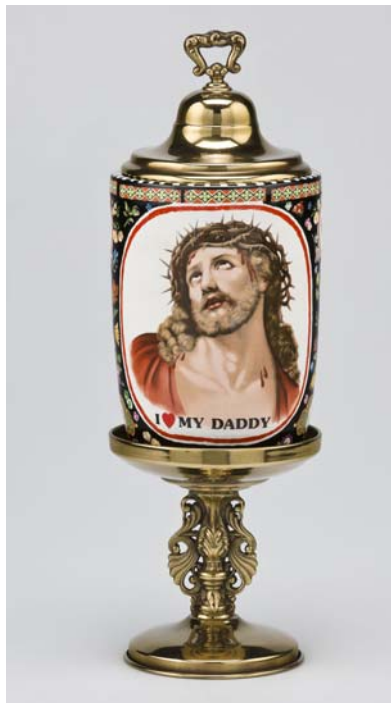
COMING EXHIBITION

LÉOPOLD L. FOULEM SINGULARITIES

16 MAY 2013 TO 5 JANUARY 2014

“I believe that authentic art is a matter of concepts, certainly not of the means of expression or of style, or even of execution. My work in ceramics expresses ideas. My artistic production has nothing to do with individual expression or a quest for beauty. I see myself as a composer and a theorist, not as a virtuoso.”

– Léopold L. Foulem



Léopold L. Foulem has exhibited his work in more than 40 solo shows, and his career is now in its fifth decade. He is undoubtedly the best-known Canadian ceramist on the international scene. His rigorous and uncompromising artistic project, whose arsenal includes humour, irony and provocation, is a constant claim for recognition of ceramics as a sovereign art form.

With *Léopold L. Foulem: Singularities*, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec presents the first true retrospective devoted to this artist who places ceramics – as a discipline and not as a material – at the centre of his concerns. The positions he has staked out on the hierarchy of genres have also led him to a few successful forays into sculpture, in which the bronze becomes a distorting mirror of the quality of the materials.

Ceramic work is handicapped by several preconceived ideas which make of it an art associated with the sphere of manual labour, hobbies and, in the end, with the feminine. This is the lot of the fine crafts in general, which have been stigmatised by the champions of modernism, stamped with the anathema of the “decorative” and described as figures of otherness. Foulem’s work, playing on these stereotypes and on those around homosexuality, creates a two-fold ambiguity.

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The object, and especially the art object, is under the sway of the hegemony of precious and so-called lofty matter. Foulem, in one of his key solo exhibitions, addressed this question, stating that “matter doesn’t matter”. The bronze is the rhetorical figure of this discourse on matter. Similarly, within the discipline, some techniques are viewed as superior to others. Finally, his use of found objects (from the dollar store, refuse bin or antique store) is a way of thumbing his nose at this supposed superiority of one material over another.

Since the 1980s in particular, Léopold L. Foulem has explored the transformation of objects into images, the movement from use to intellect. To do so, he has worked with negative forms, containers with no inside surface, solidified voids and surfaces on which images and words call into question our manner of perceiving the object and our propensity to always privilege what it says rather than the history of the object itself.

Foulem’s base material is not so much clay as it is this history of ceramics. By revisiting and parodying several genres and forms he puts ceramics on the pedestal of tradition, but with this highly contemporary touch, which constantly destabilises its basis.

BIOGRAPHY OF LÉOPOLD L. FOULEM

Born in 1945 in Caraquet, New Brunswick, Léopold L. Foulem holds a master’s degree in visual arts from the University of Indiana. As a public speaker and author, he is known for his views on the importance of a discourse unique to the discipline. An acknowledged expert on Pablo Picasso’s ceramics, in 2004 he co-curated the exhibition *Picasso et la céramique*, co-organised by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. He received the Jean A. Chalmers National Crafts Award in 1999 and, in 2001, the Saidye Bronfman Award in recognition of excellence in the fine crafts (today one of the Governor General’s awards in visual and media arts). In 2003, he received the Éloizes Award for artist of the year in the visual arts in Acadia. He divided his time between his studios in Montréal and Caraquet. His work can be found in several prestigious collections, including the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and the Los Angeles County Museum, and is included in major international exhibitions.

The exhibition *Léopold L. Foulem: Singularities* will be accompanied by a publication containing essays by Paul Bourassa, collections and research director of the MNBAQ, and by Jorunn Veiteberg, professor at the Academy of Art and Design in Bergen, Norway, preceded by an introduction by Garth Clark (Santa Fe, New Mexico), author of more than 60 volumes on modern and contemporary ceramics.

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COMING EXHIBITION

ALFRED PELLAN IN THE STUDIO

13 JUNE TO 15 SEPTEMBER 2013



“Painting is an essentially unencumbered activity. It is founded on emotions and revelation, making use of unpredictable means of artistic and poetic inventions to express itself.”

– Alfred Pellán

This summer, enter into the private world of Alfred Pellán (1906-1988) through an astonishing and participative space inspired by the studio of this Québec master. This exhibition highlights Pellán’s creative process and sources of inspiration as well as the countless facets of his exceptional career spanning almost half a century. Paintings in a rich range of colours, a wide variety of pictorial experiments, transformed objects, an infinite variety of graphic compositions and personal documents – in many cases never before seen publicly, as they form part of the large bequest recently granted to the Musée – present a wealth of opportunities to be touched, fascinated and amused by the whimsical imagination and creativity of a remarkable artist.

Throughout his prolific career, Alfred Pellán demonstrated an unusual degree of artistic curiosity, marked by the exploration of a great variety of forms and media. His impressive output of paintings, drawings and sculptures, in addition to his interventions on objects, furniture and even his own home, are signs of an almost vital need to create. This lively creative thirst behind his work is conveyed in the exhibition. Some forty paintings and more than 300 sketches, drawings and experimental works will transport viewers into a profoundly poetic visual world.

Alfred Pellán: In the Studio will immerse viewers in the teeming world of this emblematic figure of twentieth-century art. It is your invitation to discover Alfred Pellán the way you never have before.

Thanks to an exceptional bequest of more than 1,000 art objects by his wife, the late Madeleine Polisenno-Pellán, the MNBAQ is now the largest depository of Pellán’s work in Québec. This generous contribution has inspired this exhibition, the first on such a scale in 20 years. The exhibition will be accompanied by a profusely illustrated publication.

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COMING EXHIBITION

THE WILLIAM S. PALEY COLLECTION A TASTE FOR MODERNISM

10 OCTOBER 2013 TO 5 JANUARY 2014



“It all comes down to this:
to have sensations and to read nature.”
– Paul Cézanne

A selection of major works from the William S. Paley collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York will be presented at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec in the fall of 2013. From Cézanne to Bacon by way of Degas, Rodin, Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Matisse, Derain and Picasso, the exhibition *The William S. Paley Collection: A Taste for Modernism* brings together 62 paintings, sculptures and graphic works to create a magnificent panorama of French Impressionist and post-Impressionist painting from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

The American media pioneer William Samuel Paley (1901-1990) founded the CBS television network. A member of MoMA’s board of directors, he devoted more than 50 years of his life to the museum, to which he bequeathed his collection of more than 80 works. Paley discovered the Impressionists and post-Impressionists while travelling in Europe in 1933. At a time when American collectors were more interested in the old masters of Renaissance and Baroque European painting, Paley’s first acquisition was a self-portrait by Paul Cézanne, purchased from the painter’s son. He then acquired a landscape of Estaque and a large drawing by Degas of girls dancing. Major work by Gauguin, Matisse and Picasso entered his collection in 1936. William Rubin, Director Emeritus of MoMA’s painting and sculpture department, explains that Paley’s interest in modernism probably came from the fact that his achievements and fortune were tied to new technologies. Modern painting, with its free use of colour and brush strokes, also brought with it a kind of immediate sensation that Paley enjoyed and which he described as “voluptuous aesthetic delight”. With the outbreak of World War Two his purchases slowed in pace. In the 1960s, he acquired two masterful works by Picasso from the prestigious Leo and Gertrude Stein collection: *Nu aux mains jointes* (*Nude with Joined Hands*), a large-format canvas, an extraordinary

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example of Picasso's rose period, and *La Table de l'architecte* (*The Architect's Table*), a remarkable example of so-called analytical Cubism. These works were donated to the MoMA after Paley's death and became part of the collection in 1992, a significant addition to the museum's holdings.

Organised by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, *The William S. Paley Collection: A Taste for Modernism* is being shown in North America between September 2012 and June 2014. The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is the only Canadian stop on this tour. The exhibition is accompanied by the English-language catalogue of the collection, edited by William Rubin and Matthew Armstrong of the MoMA. A 32-page illustrated album in French will be published on this occasion by the MNBAQ.

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