

**Press Release**  
New Exhibition  
Opens 20 February 2014

# Jean Paul Lemieux

## *Of Silence and Space*



Parc des Champs-de-Bataille  
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**Québec City, Wednesday 19 February 2014** □ As part of the redeployment of its collections in the new museum complex, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is pleased to devote a gallery to Jean Paul Lemieux with the exhibition *Jean Paul Lemieux: Of Silence and Space*. The Charles Baillairgé pavilion is now the go-to place for the four major artists in the history of Québec art included in the exhibition *Four Figures of Modern Art in Québec*: Jean Paul Lemieux, Alfred Pellan, Fernand Leduc and Jean-Paul Riopelle.

Through a judicious selection of works covering Jean Paul Lemieux's entire career, from the 1930s to the 1980s, the exhibition *Jean Paul Lemieux: Of Silence and Space* will plunge the viewer into the world of this painter with an individual style who always followed his own path. From the narrative painting tinged with regionalism of his early years, Lemieux gradually moved to existential and universal themes: "The heart laid bare, without fail, in its irrefutable manifestness," Anne Hébert said. The early 1940s were a time of an almost caricatural primitivism, influenced by the naïve painters of the Charlevoix region. There then began in the 1950s the mature period, during which a formal simplification took place. From this point on, and particularly during his so called "classical" period, the figures in Lemieux's paintings appear to move about in a world "of silence and space." Adopting traditional painting methods and

drawing nostalgically on his immediate surroundings, Lemieux created a body of work from his haunting reality, nevertheless infusing it with the soothing gentleness of a dream. By the end of his life, this oneiric quality had achieved a cosmic dimension that was not without a degree of anxiety, modifying his approach to painting.

## *Works by Lemieux from every period*

The MNBAQ holds the largest collection of works by Lemieux in Canada: nearly 100 works, including 44 paintings. Among the masterpieces brought together for the exhibition are a few no one will want to miss: *Les Beaux Jours (Summer Days)*, a painting from 1937, depicts the awe-inspiring landscapes of Port-au-Persil, where Madeleine Des Rosiers and Jean Paul Lemieux spent their summers; *La Fête-Dieu à Québec (Corpus Christi, Québec City)*, from 1944, one of the artist's best-known paintings, takes us back to the era of great liturgical events in Québec; *Les Ursulines*, created in 1951, is one of the principal icons of modern figurative expression in Canada; the *Autoportrait (Self Portrait)* of 1974 depicts the stages of Jean Paul Lemieux's life, then aged seventy; and finally, *Tourné vers le cosmos (Turned towards the Cosmos)*, created between 1980 and 1985, depicts humankind in its search for meaning in the Universe, echoing the existential crisis Lemieux was going through at the end of his life, particularly with respect to the future of humanity.

Among the exceptional loans of work obtained for the first four months the exhibition will be on view are two absolute must-see masterpieces: *Julie et l'univers (Julie and the Universe)*, from 1965, one of the paintings shown by the Musée in several European cities in the 1970s, including Paris and Moscow; *1910 Remembered*, created in 1962, one of Lemieux's most famous canvases, which evokes his pleasant childhood and shows a young boy with a piercing, merry gaze posing between his parents. These two paintings have fetched dizzying sums at auction in recent years and round out this fascinating body of work which will be sure to give rise to a host of emotions in lovers of the art of Jean Paul Lemieux.

*The Four Figures of Modern Art in Québec exhibitions have received funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.*

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## Chronology

**1904**

Jean Paul Lemieux is born on 18 November in Québec City.

**1925**

Lemieux apprentices in the studio of Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté in Montréal.

**1925-1934**

During this period, Lemieux is admitted to the École des beaux-arts de Montréal (ÉBAM), where he wins several awards and distinctions. He attends life model classes at the studio of Edwin Holgate and sojourns in Europe from 1929 to 1931.

**1935-1937**

Lemieux is named professor of the drawing course at the École du meuble in Montréal.

**1937**

On 12 June, Jean Paul Lemieux marries Madeleine Des Rosiers, whom he met at the ÉBAM. He then teaches at the École des beaux-arts de Québec until 1965.

**1951**

Lemieux wins first prize in the Concours artistiques de la province de Québec for his painting *Les Ursulines* (*The Ursulines*).

**1954-1955**

Thanks to a grant from the Royal Society of Canada, Lemieux spends a sabbatical year in France.

**1958**

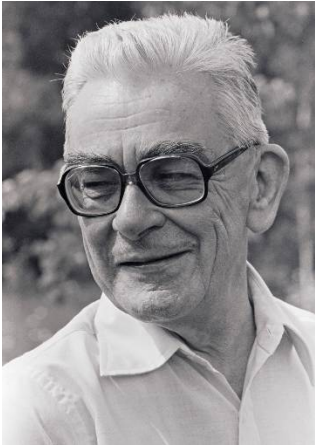
Lemieux is chosen to represent Canada at the Brussels World's Fair. Exhibitions of his work are held in Pittsburgh, Paris and Mexico City.

**1960**

Lemieux's work is included in the Canadian section of the Venice Biennale.

**1965**

This year is a turning point for Lemieux as he devotes himself entirely to painting.



### 1966-1985

A memorable period, during which Lemieux is elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts in 1966, receives the Canada Council Medal in 1967 and is named Companion of the Order of Canada in 1968. He goes on to receive the Philippe Hébert award from the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste in 1971 and the Molson Prize from the Canada Council for the Arts in 1973. He is also granted honorary degrees from Université Laval (1969), Bishop's University (1970), the Université de Montréal (1980) and Concordia University (1985).

### 1974-1975

The Québec Ministry of Cultural Affairs organizes an exhibition of his work in Moscow, Leningrad, Prague and Paris.

### 1990

Jean Paul Lemieux dies on 7 December at the age of 86 in Québec City.

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## Credits

The exhibition *Jean Paul Lemieux: Of Silence and Space* is an original production of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

#### Project Director

Paul Bourassa

#### Design and Graphic Design

Marie-France Grondin

#### Curator

Daniel Drouin

#### Technical Coordinator

André Sylvain

*The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is a government corporation which receives funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.*

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## General Information

### OPENING HOURS OF THE MUSÉE

#### Until 31 May 2014

Tuesday to Sunday,  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Wednesdays until 9:00 p.m.  
Closed Mondays

#### 1 June to

#### 1 September 2014

Daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
Wednesdays until 9:00 p.m.

### ADMISSION

Adults: **\$18**  
Seniors (65 years and over): **\$16**  
18 to 30 years: **\$10**  
13 to 17 years: **\$1**  
12 years and under: **free**  
Members: **free**  
Wednesdays from 5:00 p.m.  
to 9:00 p.m.: **half price**  
Reduced rates for groups

### CONTACT US

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[www.mnbaq.org](http://www.mnbaq.org)

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Jean Paul Lemieux, *L'Été de 1914 (Summer 1914)*, 1965. Oil on canvas, 79.2 x 175.5 cm. MNBAQ coll., conditional gift by Jean and Françoise Faucher

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Portrait of Jean Paul Lemieux by the photographer Jean-Marie Villeneuve, 1979