

# The 2nd MNBAQ Contemporary Art Award Goes to Carl Trahan

*A one-of-a-kind award in Canada  
totalling \$100,000*

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Québec City, Tuesday 19 April 2016 ▫ The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ), in collaboration with its funding partner RBC, is proud to announce that the second biennial MNBAQ Contemporary Art Award, the only one of its kind in Canada, has been awarded to the artist **Carl Trahan**. This prestigious prize includes a \$10,000 grant, a solo exhibition at the Musée, a retrospective publication and the acquisition of works by the artist for the MNBAQ collection to a value of \$50,000, giving the award a value of \$100,000.

This generous contribution by RBC, who makes a point of supporting and contributing to the professional development of the award winner – as does the MNBAQ – will give fresh impetus to the artist’s career. “RBC is proud to partner with the MNBAQ for the second edition of this award. The Contemporary Art Award encourages the emergence of new talent in Québec and lets us discover often little-known artistic worlds. We are very pleased to participate in the award as funding partner,” remarked André Labbé, Vice-President of RBC.

**Carl Trahan** was in the running with the finalists **Jean-Pierre Aubé, Aude Moreau, karen e. spencer\*** and **Karen Tam**, whose remarkable work gave rise to lively discussions amongst the members of the selection committee. But the work of Carl Trahan stood out for the way it has reinvented itself with aplomb the past few years by taking up questions around history, language and translation while at the same time addressing Europe’s dark past. Through writing and drawing, for the most part, Trahan has extended his exploration of “the staggering effects of modernity,” as a critic has described it, through the work of scientists such as Samuel Morse and Cromwell Varley and of poets such as Goethe, whose aphorism to the effect that “where there is much light, the shadows are deepest” he has adopted. The critical force of Trahan’s work over the past decade and more persuaded the jury.

“The MNBAQ is proud to host Carl Trahan, who was able to take his work in significant new directions through contact with an effervescent city such as Berlin, where he lived for more than six years. He has brought back a stimulating reflection on his encounter with another culture by revisiting, in a unique manner, topics in history and science using a structured artistic vocabulary, but one which reveals the overthrow of reason. We will thus enable visitors to the Musée to discover an artist with truly solid ideas,” the Director and Chief Curator of the MNBAQ, Line Ouellet, remarked enthusiastically.

**Carl Trahan** will benefit from his first monograph and first solo exhibition in a museum, thanks to an award which seeks to encourage and support the career of an artist, who gains from the greater recognition of the quality and relevance of his artistic project.

The initial jury for the award, which determined the five finalists, was made up of Jonathan Demers, executive director of the Musée d’art contemporain des Laurentides; **jake moore\***, an artist and a curator and

course instructor at Concordia University; Véronique Leblanc, independent curator and course instructor at the Université du Québec à Montréal; Marie Perrault, author and independent curator; Jocelyn Robert, artist and director of the École d'art at Université Laval; and Bernard Lamarche, curator of present-day art (2000 to today) at the MNBAQ.

The second jury, which met on April 5, was made up of Annie Gauthier, director of collections and research at the MNBAQ; Loren Leport, director of exhibitions and arts outreach at the MNBAQ; Jocelyn Robert, artist and director of the École d'art at Université Laval; and Bernard Lamarche. Mr. Lamarche will act as curator for the artist's solo exhibition, scheduled for spring 2017 at the MNBAQ. The monograph that forms part of the award will be launched at that time.

In spring 2013, the MNBAQ and its Fondation announced a major gift of \$400,000 from RBC for the creation of the MNBAQ Contemporary Art Award for Québec artists. The first edition of this award recognized the work of the artist Diane Morin, whose exhibition and accompanying monograph were presented in April 2015.

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## Biography of Carl Trahan

Over the past nearly twenty years, Carl Trahan's work has been presented at numerous artist-run centres and art galleries in Québec, the rest of Canada and Europe. He has taken up residencies at venues such as the Québec Studios in Rome (2012) and Paris (2007) and, in 2005, at Pilotprojekt Gropiusstadt, GEHAG and Kulturnetzwerk Neukölln in Berlin and at the Finnish Artists Studio Foundation (FASF) in Espoo, Finland. From 2005 to 2012 he explored translation and its transposition to the visual arts. In his recent work, Trahan has used drawing, similar to the act of writing, to depict concepts connected to translation, but he does not restrict himself to this technique. In the past, he has used the object, photography and installation. His most recent exhibition in Montréal, at Battat Contemporary, extended his exploration of Europe's dark past, focusing on the period from the second industrial revolution to the First World War. In it, he addressed "both the excitement and the fear provoked by the technical and scientific innovations of the era, as well as the new lifestyle they imposed."

\*These artists prefer their names to be written in lower case

*The MNBAQ Contemporary Art Award is given every two years to a Québec artist. The remarkable partnership between the MNBAQ and RBC represents a commitment until 2021. 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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