

Press Release
New Exhibition
Starting November 15, 2018

350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec



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Québec City, Wednesday, November 14, 2018 ✕ To mark the grand finale of its 85th anniversary celebrations, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) will reopen the Gérard Morisset Pavilion. In the wake of a highly successful revitalization that has made the building dating from 1933 more beautiful and luminous than ever, it will open to the public on **November 15, 2018** to present three new exhibitions: *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec*, *White Mirage* and *Where Do We Come From? What Are We? Where Are We Going?* The exhibitions are presented in the seven exhibition rooms of the original pavilion, which now harmonizes with the overall MNBAQ museum complex. They reflect the major reorganization of the museum’s collections of ancient and modern art and its recent acquisitions.

Teams from the MNBAQ have been at work for months to orchestrate an artistic panorama from the 17th century to the present encompassing nearly 700 paintings, sculptures, works by silversmiths and goldsmiths and furnishings, graphic art works and photographs, of which more than 400 have never been exhibited, celebrating more than 250 Québec

artists. The exhibition showcases Québec art as you have never before seen it.

350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec

A fresh look at the collections of ancient and modern art

The exhibition *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec* stems from deep-seated reflection on the national collection and reflects changes in museology and contemporary society's perception of its heritage. It proposes a bold panorama of the history of visual culture, from the period of New France to 1960s counterculture, through five key themes: Believing, Becoming, Imagining, Feeling and Challenging.

The exhibition occupies five of the seven exhibition rooms in the Gérard Morisset Pavilion. It highlights the individuals who have shaped the history of Québec art, the careers of women and men who have moulded contemporary Québec, from copyists to Les Automatistes, the beginnings of the market to the profusion of artistic currents. This major reorganization proposes a fresh perspective of several distinctive and sometimes little-known works from the MNBAQ's collections.

A renewed layout and creative, diversified reliance on mediation round out the multidimensional experience of this outstanding overview of the history of Québec art, in which emotions will be accorded a special place.

Five exhibition rooms and five rich and diverse themes

It should be noted that the MNBAQ has assembled its collection for 100 years, with New France as the starting point. While various cultures have been present in what is now Québec's territory over the millennia the preceded the arrival of the French, the colonial culture became the reference value some 500 years ago. The MNBAQ's collection reflects the fate of the Aboriginal peoples in the history of Québec.





Believing

The exhibition room devoted to the theme “Believe” offers visitors a selection of works that are evidence of emerging artistic practices in the 17th century, a period dominated by works imported from France. At that time, visitors will note, artistic output and, above all, religious output, satisfied the needs for ornamentation that monopolized commissions.

Between the early 18th century and the Conquest in 1759, New France became autonomous from the standpoint of sculpture and silversmithing and goldsmithing, although numerous paintings continued to arrive from the French capital.

The colony’s isolation in the post-Conquest period necessarily led to the development of its own art. Religious paintings and portraits appeared, produced by immigrant artists and the first artists born in Québec, all of them trained in Europe.

This exhibition room also presents the Desjardins collection, which arrived in Canada in 1817 and 1820. The paintings by French masters, seized in Paris churches during revolutionary raids, were acquired by the Desjardins brothers, shipped to Québec City and sent to several rapidly growing parishes.

Becoming



The exhibition room devoted to the theme “Become” begins with a collection of late-18th-century painted or photographic portraits of celebrated men and women, but also striking unknown individuals, thus highlighting the genre’s iconographic and stylistic diversity. At that time, religious commissions were still the focal point of artistic practices and developed in keeping with other needs for representation. Visitors can thus appreciate the works of a broad range of foreign, local, itinerant, self-taught artists trained in Europe or in the United States who were diversifying their output. Historical paintings, genre pictures and still lifes gradually appeared.

Through the works exhibited, visitors will note that the growing occupation of the territory went together with an interest in landscapes, which took into account picturesque viewpoints and the country’s natural

wonders, but also the image of cities and the events that occurred there. Landscape art, first linked to conventions governing topographical representation, evolved toward a more poetic technique.

Imagining



This exhibition room highlights the work of artists influenced during the second half of the 19th century by the establishment of numerous academic and artistic institutions, which shaped cultural life for nearly a century. Portraits, still lifes, genre paintings and history paintings emerged at that time.

In Québec, the period from 1880 to 1930 corresponds to the age of commemoration, during which successive subscriptions, public events, and domestic and international competitions paid tribute to the builders of our young country.

The exhibition room devoted to the theme “Imagine” presents artists who produced monumental work intended for public buildings. It also includes the studio of artist Napoléon Bourassa, a space at once political and religious, which illustrates the numerous forms that artistic practices linked to commemoration take.

Feeling



The exhibition room devoted to the theme “Feel” enables visitors to appreciate the experience of landscapes through the seasons. Landscape painting became an artistic genre that both critics and the public universally recognized and appreciated. Artists at that time emphasized their perception of light and colour as pretexts for freeing pictorial representation from the ascendancy of academicism. This emancipation led to the emergence of romantic, impressionist and post-impressionist landscapes, like a door opening up to the world of visual sensations. Photography, a full-fledged art form, also features prominently there. The presentation of numerous technical approaches highlights the strengths and constraints inherent in each medium in rendering landscapes in order to offer a comprehensive perspective of changes in this major artistic practice in the history of Québec art.

Challenging

In the exhibition room devoted to the theme “Claim,” visitors will realize to what extent the first half of the 20th century was marked by objection to academicism, regarded as retrograde, in institutions. This distancing helped to shape new cultural networks, which promoted their own conception of art, artistic experimentation and the artist’s independence.



Non-figurative painting took several forms. Alfred Pellán and the signatories of the *Prisme d’Yeux* artistic manifesto identified with a conception of pure art. Paul-Émile Borduas and the École du meuble de Montréal espoused political discourse on surrealism through their recourse to automatism by publishing *Refus global*. The Plasticians rejected the literary references of their predecessors and focused on the plastic gesture. Diversity also expressed itself in religious art, which experienced a remarkable revival, sustained both by artistic questioning and the increasingly free relationships with religious iconography and the expression of spirituality.

A spectacular installation



The MNBAQ design team has brilliantly addressed a daunting challenge, that of organizing the space in the exhibition rooms of the *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec* exhibition. To reflect the continuity of the design of the exhibition rooms of the collection in the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion, they adopted an uncluttered, ethereal style that emphasizes white, blond wood, metal elements and glass. In the exhibition room devoted to the theme “Believe,” the notion of anamorphosis, of the fragmented church, might surprise some visitors with the impressive suspension of sculptures, which make more visible than ever the elements normally hidden from view, either the bottoms of the works, breakage, changes and restorations.

Sophisticated hanging systems on glass panels in the exhibition room devoted to the theme “Become” allow paintings to be placed at eye level. In this way, visitors will have the impression that they are strolling among the inhabitants of different periods and origins. The gigantic paintings in the exhibition room devoted to the theme “Imagine” are striking indeed. The judicious use of carpets and the enhancement of the furnishings in

this exhibition room also contribute to the pleasure of discovering the different areas. In the exhibition room devoted to the theme “Feel,” the experience of landscapes expresses itself from season to season through a path that successively reveals the lights, colours and pictorial touches of the masterpieces from the collection. Numerous glass walls in the exhibition room devoted to the theme “Claim” offer visitors glimpses of all of the areas, in keeping with the two windows newly opened in the room, which reveal an urban landscapes and afford an unrestricted view of the river. Windows in all of the rooms highlight the works on paper that illuminate as visitors pass by. The numerous drawings, prints and photographs will be rotated regularly, thus ensuring the ongoing renewal of the national collection.

Spotlight on 10 remarkable stories

The elaboration of the *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec* exhibition was the ideal time to present works that had not previously been exhibited that have remained for decades in the MNBAQ’s reserves. Here are some of the major works, which occasionally reveal remarkable destinies.



Maître-autel de l’ancien Hôpital général de Montréal (between 1785 and 1788), by Philippe Liébert

To restore this large model of late-18th-century Québec sculpture to its state in 1830, prior to the expansion of the central niche of the tabernacle, 15 restorers devoted nearly 8 000 hours spread over 12 years, from 2002 to 2014, to the restoration of the high altar. It is the biggest restoration project carried out to date by the Centre de conservation du Québec on a single heritage item.

La Résurrection d’un mort par saint Antoine de Padoue afin d’innocenter ses parents (1794), by François Malepart de Beaucourt

Beaucourt’s painting was saved from the fire at the Église Saint-Martin on the Île Jésus and underwent an eventful journey before it reached the Musée du Québec in 1966. This newly restored major 18th century work is the artist’s first big religious painting to be included in a Canadian museum collection.

Docteur Louis-Philippe-Ferdinand Vincent (1847), artist unknown

The invention in 1827 by Nicéphore Niépce of photography and the marketing of the process by Louis Daguerre starting in 1839 sparked a genuine revolution. A handwritten inscription on the back of the daguerreotype plate indicates August 16, 1847. This photograph of Dr. Vincent is the oldest one preserved in the national collection.



Montréal vu du mont Royal (1853-1854), by Edwin Whitefield

From an iconographic standpoint, this is one of the last painted, drawn or engraved vestiges of a longstanding topographic tradition of viewpoints of Montréal from the mountain, which would be supplanted by nascent photography. This painting is a remarkable document on the pre-industrial city.



Madame Jules-Ernest Livernois, née Marie-Louise Larocque (circa 1885), by Jules-Ernest Livernois and Edith Hemming

This photograph, typical of the studios of the time, is in fact a photomontage that combines a portrait printed in a studio and an idyllic landscape from L'Ange-Gardien. The portrait produced by Jules-Ernest Livernois includes colour highlights attributed to Edith Hemming, a portrait painter, watercolourist and miniaturist of British origin, who resided for 25 years in Québec City. The practice of photographers and painters jointly producing portraits continued until the late 19th century.



Sofa néorococo (1872) by Louis Poiré

This sofa is noteworthy for its sculpted vegetal ornamentation. What is exceedingly rare for a piece of Victorian-era furniture is that the sofa bears the signature of its author, Louis Poiré, and is dated May 15, 1872.



Sainte Vierge (1888-1889), by Jean-Baptiste Côté

It was only in the late 19th century that Québec's harsh climate allowed for the installation of groups of wooden statues on the façades of buildings. This sculpture is part of a grouping, the most imposing ever delivered by Jean-Baptiste Côté, a Québec City wood sculptor, for the façade of the Église de Sainte Famille on the Île-d'Orléans. It is a

milestone in Québec in the realm of decorative and monumental ensembles intended for exterior use.

***À l'ombre du pommier* (1903), by William Brymner and Horatio Walker**

This striking work was apparently produced jointly by William Brymner and Horatio Walker in the summer of 1903 while Brymner was vacationing on the Île d'Orléans. This work by two painters explains, in part, the distinct aesthetic treatment of different elements of the composition, in which some seem more densely, firmly painted.

***La Serre* (1910), by Ludger Larose**

The subject of this surprising work is unique in the history of Québec art of the early 20th century. Larose painted potted flowers in a greenhouse rather than a still life ordinarily showing cut flowers arranged in a vase. The painting is noteworthy for its bold composition and vivid palette of colours. The work displays great decorative power.



***La résistance* (1943), by Ghitta Caiserman**

In the 1940s, Caiserman dared to explore through caricature and lithography used to illustrate newspaper articles social topics or topics drawn from current affairs, including the armed conflict then rampant in Europe, which was a significant source of inspiration for her. Produced in 1943 during the German occupation of France, *La résistance* shows the Nazi army and its victims perched on a tray in the shape of France.

An immense restoration project

The reorganization of the collections of ancient and modern art of the MNBAQ afforded a unique opportunity to draw an array of works unknown to the general public from the museum's reserves that could establish new dialogues between them in addition to illustrating the development of content on the history of Québec art. However, certain paintings, works on paper, sculptures and decorative arts items required major restoration work. Accordingly, 55 works, including 30 paintings, were restored, through outstanding collaboration with the Centre de conservation du Québec, our main partner, and the contribution of several private craftspeople and restorers, to regain their original lustre.

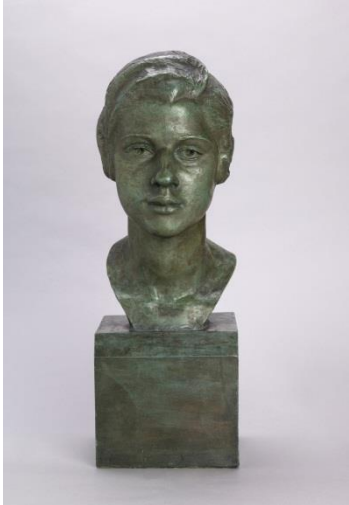
On November 15, 2018, 41 of the works will be presented in the *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec* exhibition and the remainder will be exhibited over time.



Among the remarkable works that warrant special attention, mention should be made of *Saint Joseph et l'Enfant Jésus* (between 1600 and 1699), a painting attributed to a French artist, undoubtedly brought from France because of its small size. The painting has been restored for its historic value.

Individuals saved *La Messe de saint Martin* (1819 or earlier), by Louis Dulongpré, in the manner of Eustache Le Sueur, when the Église Saint-Martin burned in 1942. The painting was rolled up, then was added to the museum's reserves in 1966. Its initial appearance has been restored and it is being presented at last to visitors two centuries after its creation.

La Vallée Saint-François, Île d'Orléans (1903), a painting by William Brymner, an influential 19th century Québec painter, displays remarkable lights as a result of the restorers' work.



Olé! (1906) by Clarence Gagnon, recognized above all for his landscapes, is a little-known painting by the artist produced in Paris. It is one of the restored masterpieces, after sustaining in turn water damage, the addition of wax, the repainting of certain parts, and several layers of yellowing varnish.

The plaster cast *Jacqueline Dupont* (1931) by the artist Alice Nolin, one of the first women to devote herself to sculpture in Québec, until then an exclusive male preserve, was also restored. This is an ideal opportunity to highlight the talent of women artists.

Philanthropy in the service of art



A financial contribution from the Canadian National Railway company (CN) and a crowdfunding campaign conducted by the Fondation du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec has enabled the MNBAQ to acquire three major artworks produced by artists from the Beaver Hall Group, founded in Montréal in 1920, which marked the history of Québec art. The seminal works of women linked to the Beaver Hall Group such as

Street Scene, Montreal (Horse and Sleigh in front of St. Joseph's Oratory) (1929) by Kathleen Moir Morris, *Autumn Landscape* (1930), by Henrietta Mabel May, and *Sunflowers Laurentians near Lake Wonish* (1935) by Anne Savage, have enriched the MNBAQ's collection and highlight the importance of the artistic creation of women in this influential group. Two of the painters can be admired for the very first time at the MNBAQ in the *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec* exhibition.

A magazine devoted to the collections

Believe, Become, Feel, Imagine, Claim *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec*



The exhibition that is boldly taking a new look at the collections of ancient and modern art of the MNBAQ calls for an extraordinary publication. Presented in tabloid format, the 60-page magazine proposes additional information that is essential for visitors in the five exhibition rooms of the *350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec* exhibition. Aside from the elaboration of the five themes, *Believe, Become, Feel, Imagine, Claim*, the presentation of seminal artists and key works, the publication proposes numerous texts signed by specialists on topics of common interest, for example, the Aboriginal presence in the national collection, the development of photography, the place of women artists in our society, Jewish artists in Montréal, the mobility of Canadian artists, and the notion of territory. They give a voice to those who are absent and attempt to explain the shortcomings of collecting over time because of the sociopolitical context. Several excerpts selected from works in the MNBAQ's literary collection round out this unique publication.

Believe, Become, Feel, Imagine, Claim. 350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec will be available at a cost of \$5 in mid-November in the two MNBAQ bookstores, the Librairie-Boutique in the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion, and the satellite bookstore located at the entrance of the Gérard Morisset Pavilion. ISBN: 978-2-551-26368-4

Credits

350 Years of Artistic Practices in Québec *is an exhibition developed by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.*

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Exhibition magazine

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FEED

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Gouvernement du Québec.

350 Years of Artistic Practices in Q Québec Beginning November 15, 2018 Gérard-Morisset Pavilion of the MNBAQ

INFORMATION: 418 643-2150 or 1 866 220-2150 /mnbaq.org

Page 1 – Photos: Left to right: Attribué à François Guernon dit Belleville, *Saint Martin partageant son manteau avec un pauvre*, vers 1796 ou vers 1809. Pin polychrome, 269,2 × 179,2 × 7,8 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1970.63) Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Théophile Hamel, *Olympe (1844-1855) et Flore (1842-1871) Chauveau*, 1851-1852. Huile sur toile, 74,8 × 89,3 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1970.95) Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Ozias Leduc, *La Ferme Choquette*, Beloeil, 1901. Huile sur toile, 61,2 × 91,8 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat (1978.93) Photo: MNBAQ, Jean-Guy Kérouac // Marian Dale Scott, *Escalier de secours*, 1939. Huile sur toile, 76,5 × 51,4 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat (1947.141) © Succession Marian Dale Scott Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 2 – Photos: From top to bottom: Rita Mount, *Percé*, vers 1923. Huile sur toile, 77 × 87,3 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat en ou avant 1930. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1934.465) Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Jules-Ernest Livernois, Edith Hemming, *Madame Jules-Ernest Livernois, née Marie-Louise Larocque*, vers 1885. Épreuve à l'albumine argentique et rehauts d'aquarelle, de gouache et de pastel, 40,3 × 26,5 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec Achat (1979.132) Photo: MNBAQ

Page 3 – Photos: From top to bottom: Inconnu, *Saint Joseph et l'Enfant Jésus*, entre 1600 et 1699. Huile sur cuivre, 17 × 12,5 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1970.92) Photo: CCQ, Jacques Beardsell // Zacharie Vincent, *Zacharie Vincent et son fils Cyprien*, 1852-1853. Huile sur toile, 48,5 × 41,2 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat (1947.156) Photo: MNBAQ, Patrick Altman

Page 4 – Photos: From top to bottom: Charles Alexander, *L'Assemblée des six comtés à Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu*, en 1837, 1891. Huile sur toile, 300,8 × 691,3 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Acquisition vers 1930 et transfert de l'hôtel du Parlement en 1937. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec grâce à une contribution des Amis du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (1937.54) Photo: MNBAQ, Jean-Guy Kérouac // Robert Scott Duncanson, *Le Lac Saint-Charles*, 1864. Huile sur toile, 41 × 70,5 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Don de William M. Connor. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1968.289). Photo: MNBAQ, Jean-Guy Kérouac

Page 5 – Photos: From top to bottom: Mimi Parent, *Autoportrait au chat*, 1945. Huile sur toile, 76 × 79 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (1947.170) © Succession Mimi Parent. Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Vue de la salle *Croire* Photo, MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Vue de la salle *Imaginer* Photo, MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 6 – Photos: From top to bottom: Philippe Liébert, *Maître-autel de l'ancien l'Hôpital général de Montréal*, entre 1785 et 1788. Pin, noyer et tilleul monochromes, avec parties dorées et polychromes (dorure d'origine sous les divers recouvrements), 266,5 × 272 × 83 cm (tabernacle), 102,2 × 260,2 × 131,7 cm (autel en tombeau). Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Don des Sœurs de la charité (Sœurs grises) de Montréal. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (2000.02) Photo: CCQ, Guy Couture/Jacques Beardsell

Page 7 – Photos: From top to bottom: Inconnu, *Docteur Louis-Philippe-Ferdinand Vincent*, 1847. Daguerrotypage et rehauts de couleur, 9,2 × 8,3 cm (boîtier); 8,2 × 7 cm (sixième de plaque). Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Achat (1982.38) Crédit photo: MNBAQ // Edwin Whitefield, *Montréal vu du mont Royal*, 1853-1854. Huile sur toile, 46,2 × 67,2 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Achat. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1997.112) Crédit photo: MNBAQ, Patrick Altman // Louis Poiré,

Sofa néorococo, 1872. Acajou, sangle de jute, ressorts en acier, corde à guinder en chanvre, toile forte en jute, crin végétal, toile d'embourrure en jute, ficelle à piquer, crin animal (queue de vache), toile de coton, ouate de coton, crin de cheval et galon, 111,8 x 203,8 x 76 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Don de Janine Gagnon-Dorion (2017.255) Crédit photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie // Jean-Baptiste Côté, *Sainte Vierge*, 1888-1889. Bois décapé (autrefois polychrome) et feuille de plomb, 195,8 x 60,3 x 48 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Achat en 1930-1931 (1934.274) Crédit photo: MNBAQ, Patrick Altman

Page 8 - Photos: Ludger Larose, *La Serre*, 1910. Huile sur toile, 125 x 87 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Don de Marcel Larose. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1963.78). Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 9 - Photos: From top to bottom: Clarence Gagnon, *Olé !*, 1906. Huile sur toile, 169,7 x 101,4 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Achat. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1949.84) Crédit photo: CCQ, Guy Couture // Alice Nolin, *Jacqueline Dupont*, 1931. Plâtre, 50,9 x 17,5 x 25,9 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, Achat. Restauration effectuée par le Centre de conservation du Québec (1978.333) Crédit photo: MNBAQ, Denis Legendre // Photo: Anne Savage, *Sunflowers, Laurentians, near Lake Wonish*, 1935. Huile sur panneau de bois, 40,5 x 43,2 cm. Collection du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Achat (2018.289) © Succession Anne Savage Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie.

General Information

OPENING
HOURS OF THE
MUSEUM COMPLEX

Until May 31, 2019

Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday till 9 p.m.

Closed Mondays (except December 31, 2018, March 4, April 1 and May 20, 2019)

Closed December 24 et 25

ADMISSION

Adults: **\$20**

Seniors (65 and Over): **\$18**

Ages 18 to 30: **\$11**

Ages 13 to 17: **\$6**

Families (2 adults and 3 children
13 to 17): **\$44**

Families (1 adult and 3 children
13 to 17): **\$24**

Children 12 and under: **free**

Members: **free**

Wednesdays from, 5 p.m. to
9 p.m.: **half-price**

Reduced rates for groups

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