

Press release

New exhibition

October 10, 2019 to January 5, 2020

**COZIC — Over to You:
From 1967 to Now**

*A must-see first-ever
museum retrospective*

Parc des Champs-de-Bataille
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Québec City, Wednesday, October 9, 2019 ✕ Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) is proud to shine a spotlight on Québec artists who have made their mark on Canadian art history. With *COZIC—Over to You: From 1967 to Now*, from **October 10, 2019, to January 5, 2020**, MNBAQ presents the first-ever COZIC retrospective by a major public art gallery.

COZIC is an intriguing name. It stands out. Who is this COZIC? The artistic entity was dreamed up by Monic Brassard (born in Québec in 1944) and Yvon Cozic (born in France in 1942), who met at École des beaux-arts de Montréal in the 1960s. It's a two-headed creation for four hands, a slap in the face of the myth of the individual artist as *sine qua non*. COZIC is also key figure in Québec contemporary art.



COZIC emerged with the counterculture and the generation of artists associated with the Quiet Revolution, playing a pivotal role in breaking down the walls between visual art disciplines in the province. COZIC broke free of the traditional media that are painting and sculpture to disrupt the very idea of a work of art, reflecting changing practices in Québec, Canadian, and international contemporary art. COZIC has staked out an artistic turf all its own with its playful approach and the use of novel, quirky materials.

MNBAQ pays tribute to 50 years of bold and unbridled fantasy with this major retrospective of COZIC’s timeless oeuvre in the temporary exhibit halls of the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion. A hundred essential works from 1967 to the present day have been gathered together for the public to discover and explore, including a number of participative pieces to touch, go through, decode or feel. A world that’s off its rocker in a flood-tide of creativity to embrace. Over to us!

COZIC, or Bringing Art and Life Together

COZIC’s work is mind-bogglingly multifaceted. Year in, year out, it has revealed a fascinating ability to reinvent itself. Series of works emerge from “obsessions,” marked by major shifts in aesthetic direction. COZIC never seems to be where you expected.

Unlike so many artists, who pick one medium and spend their whole careers on it, COZIC shook off all constraints early on to enthusiastically embrace a multidisciplinary approach. There came works in fabric, plinthless sculpture of mixed materials, and elaborate origami in paper and vinyl. The use of lowbrow and commonplace materials like fleece, vinyl, lumber, cardboard, Styrofoam, and feathers—all assembled by hand—gives this polymorphous body of work a solid anchorage in the everyday. The notion of play so close to COZIC’s heart opens its work up to multiple levels of interpretation. The senses are challenged, as is the status of the work of art itself. Does a created object have to cultivate distance with its audience to be considered a work of art? Does a monochrome in fabric have less artistic value than a painting on canvas? Can a work in an art gallery appeal to senses other than that of sight? Over to us for those questions as well.

COZIC: A Rich, Flamboyant World

The exhibition, which is laid out chronologically, retraces the main cycles of COZIC’s creativity. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the tandem’s seminal works, from soft art to folding and origami—marked by the celebrated *Cocotte*—to the Code Couronne (“Crown Code”) project.

The first section presents a number of series produced in the 1960s and 70s, establishing the duo’s avant-garde credentials in those days of artistic ferment and transformation. The works here are *sewn*—a technique largely snubbed by the fine arts—using flexible materials such as vinyl, fabric, and fake fur. They break with convention in their occupation of space, abandoning the rigidity of painting and sculpture. With their brightly coloured industrial materials, they show affinities with the pop art and anti-form movements contemporary with these works. *Complexe mammaire* (“mammary complex,” 1970), *Surface qui vous prend dans ses bras* (“surface that takes you in its arms,” 1972) and the *Surface versus Cylinder* series (1973-1976) are some eloquent pieces from this period.

The second section takes the audience back to the late 1970s and early 1980s, when COZIC turned away from soft art to explore something new: the technique of appropriation. The accidental rediscovery of the simple origami hens, or *cocottes*, they had made as children led the duo in a new direction. COZIC spent an entire year making “cocottes” out of found pieces of paper—including the emblematic *A Cocotte a Day Keeps the Obsession on the Way* (1978)—eventually building an entire catalogue based on this form, which became a kind of artistic signature. COZIC’s fascination with folding continued through the 1980s and yielded astonishing results. *Grand pliage in situ* (“great in situ folding”) was created specially for the *Over to You* retrospective and its audience. In a nod to history, this ephemeral mural recalls an art performance held 40 years ago at the former Musée du Québec, now MNBAQ.

The third section is made up of sculpture, mainly created in the early 1990s, and highlights COZIC’s interest in the occupation of space, recovered materials, and manual production. A series of lighted works and balanced installations in metal, wood, feathers, fabric, and other materials seem to float in the exhibition space. These include *Le Grand Arc* (1994), *Objects in the Mirror Are Closer Than They Appear* (1991), and *Mise en plis* (1991). Another series on the act of looking—a favourite



subject of COZIC’s from the beginning—rounds out the striking experience of this space.

The last section of *Over to You* presents works from the last two decades. Other than the major Code Couronne series—a chromatic experiment exploring the idea of the codification of written language—the works tackle themes such as spirituality, metaphysics, and the mysteries of the universe, raising fundamental questions that belie the kitsch-inflected surface appearance, as in *La Forêt de Brocéliande* (“Brocéliande forest,” 2004), *Le Trou noir* (2016) or *VOLCANOS* (2018).

Another space, inspired by COZIC’s studio, has been set up to provide a glimpse into Brassard and Cozic’s teeming creative imagination. A hundred-odd small statues, curiosities, found objects, assemblies, posters, and archival materials, all on loan from the artists, are scattered about, immersing audiences in COZIC’s fascinating world.



New: an audio visit with COZIC

An original audio visit, in French only, will also be available to enhance the visitor experience at *COZIC—Over to You: From 1967 to Now*. Join Brassard and Cozic to explore the exhibition and the overarching themes of their artistic practice. Their colourful stories and accounts are both spontaneous and thoughtful, providing an inimitable ringside perspective on half a century of life in art—and a deeper understanding of just how much COZIC has contributed to contemporary art in Québec.

Credits

COZIC — Over to You: From 1967 to Now runs October 10, 2019, to January 5, 2020. A production of MNBAQ, Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Project Manager
Annie Gauthier

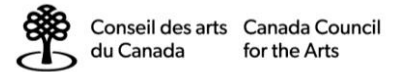
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Québec

COZIC - Over to You: From 1967 to Now
Pierre Lassonde Pavilion of the MNBAQ
October 10, 2019 to January 5, 2020

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

Page 1 – Left to right, top to bottom. Photo: COZIC, *Mot caché* (“word search”), 2018. Wood, paper, Prismacolor pencil, about 250 x 300 cm © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019. Photo: © MNBAQ, Denis Legendre // COZIC, *D’amour tendre* (“of tender love”), 1973. Plush, cotton-wool, interfacing, 164 x 400 x 100 cm Giverny Capital Collection © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019. Photo: © Guy L’Heureux // COZIC, *Cocotte en peluche* (“plush hen”), 1978. Paperboard, plush, satin, 43 x 41 x 18 cm © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019. Photo: © MNBAQ, Denis Legendre

Page 2 – COZIC, *Le Grand Saut* (“the big jump”), 2004. Wood, vinyl, leather, mirror, 272 x 180 x 155 cm © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019. Photo: © MNBAQ, Denis Legendre

Page 3 – COZIC, *Surface qui vous prend dans ses bras* (“surface that takes you in its arms”), 1972. Plush, cotton-wool, interfacing, painted stool, 245 x 150 x 50 cm © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019. Photo: © MNBAQ, Denis Legendre // COZIC, Monic Brassard, b.1944, Nicolet, Québec and Yvon Cozic, b. 1942, Beyries, France, *A Cocotte a Day Keeps the Obsession on the Way* (detail), 1978. Folded paper, pins. Montréal Museum of Fine Arts, purchase, Horsley and Annie Townsend Bequest and the Canada Council of the Arts. Photo: MBAM

Page 4 – Photos: COZIC, *Le Trou noir* (“the black hole”), 2016. Paperboard, vinyl, fabric, acrylic, 20 dolls, 185 x 185 x 24 cm © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019. Photo: © Alexandre Sergejewski // COZIC, PAR EN THÈSE, 2012. Wood, sand, fabric, acrylic, 120 x 230 x 75 cm © COZIC/SOCAN, 2019 // Monic Brassard and Yvon Cozic in their studio. Photo: © MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 6 – Monic Brassard and Yvon Cozic. Photo: © Charlotte Rosshandler

COZIC: Monic Brassard and Yvon Cozic, biographical notes



1942

Birth of Yvon Cozic on August 4 in Beyries, southwestern France.

1944

Birth of Monique Brassard on March 20 in Nicolet, Québec.

1954

Cozic, now age 12, moves to Canada with his parents and sister. They settle in Montréal.

1959–1960

Cozic enters École des beaux-arts de Montréal in 1959. Brassard arrives the following year. They meet and fall in love.

1963

Brassard and Cozic are married. Brassard adds “Cozic” to her name, styling herself Monique Brassard Cozic.

1964

Birth of their daughter Nadja.

Brassard legally changes the spelling of her first name to Monic.

1966

The family moves to Longueuil. Brassard and Cozic set up a studio in their home there.

1967

Birth of COZIC. The two artists build on a common interest in sewing, which Brassard masters.

1970

Brassard stops using the name Cozic in daily life.

Jongle-Nouilles (“juggle noodles”), an immersive installation, is exhibited at Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal.

1978

Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal presents *Surfactres*, an exhibition featuring a series of fabric and vinyl works of the same name.

COZIC joins Galerie Graff in 1978. Graff represents the duo until it closes in 2016.

1981

COZIC exhibits alongside Pierre Ayot, Gilles Boisvert, Serge Lemoyne, and Serge Tousignant at Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal as part of *5 attitudes/1963-1980*.

1988

COZIC creates a fountain-sculpture in honour of René Lévesque for the City of Longueil.

1989

The two artists relocate their studio to Sainte-Anne-de-la-Rochelle in the Eastern Townships, part of a gradual move there.

1991

Brassard and Cozic found L'Ordre du Compas dans l'œil ("the order of the good eye"), an award to honour the work of their peers. Recipients to date: Jocelyn Jean, Edmund Alleyn, Pierre Ayot, Luc Béland, Serge Tousignant, and Jean Noël.

1998

Longueil's Centre d'exposition Plein Sud mounts the first COZIC retrospective, entitled "COZIC: Structuring the Formless, Retrospective Fragments, 1967-1998" (*Cozic : architecturer l'informe, Fragments rétrospectifs 1967-1998*).

1999

COZIC are part of the exhibition *Déclics, art et société : le Québec des années 1960 et 1970* ("turning points: Quebec in the 60s and 70s") at Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal and Québec City's Musée de la civilisation.

2003

Brassard and Cozic are elected to the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts.

2012-2013

Brassard and Cozic receive the Jean-Paul-Riopelle Career Award from Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

2014

The event “Un dimanche à la campagne” (A Sunday in the Country) is held on the woodlot where Brassard and Cozic’s studio is located, celebrating five decades of artistic collaboration with a walk-through exhibition of 17 site-specific works.

The Guido Molinari Foundation presents *COZIC/Moli: The Seventies, a Complicit Allusion*, an exhibition highlighting the formal connections between COZIC’s work and that of Molinari.

2015

Brassard and Cozic receive Québec’s Paul-Émile Borduas Award.

2019

Brassard and Cozic receive the Governor General of Canada’s in Visual and Media Arts.

Book from Éditions du passage and Plein sud édition

The book *COZIC*, published by Éditions du passage and Plein sud éditions in 2017, retraces COZIC’S 50+ year art practice and delves into the myriad facets of its work. Included are close to 200 reproductions and images, an illustrated chronology, and a bibliography. The book is the work of four respected authors: Jérôme Delgado, Laurier Lacroix, Gilles Lapointe, and Adriane De Blois, guest curator of *COZIC—Over to You: From 1967 to Now*. The book is in a bilingual, 308-page hardcover format published by Plein sud édition. Available in bookstores, it is also sold at the MNBAQ bookstore for \$69.95. ISBN 978-2-924397-34-3



General Information

OPENING
HOURS OF THE
MUSEUM COMPLEX

Until May 31, 2020

Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Wednesdays till 9:00 p.m.

Closed Mondays (except October 14, December 30, 2019, March 2, April 13 and May 18, 2020)

Closed December 25

ADMISSION

Adults: 22 \$

Seniors (65 and Over): 20 \$

Ages 18 to 30: 12 \$

Ages 13 to 17: 7 \$

Families (2 adults and 3 children
13 to 17): 48 \$

Families (1 adult and 3 children
13 to 17): 26 \$

Children 12 and under: free

Members: free

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

Reduced rates for groups

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Parking, Librairie-Boutique,
café, restaurant, free Wi-Fi and
Cloakroom

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