

Presse release
New exhibition
June 12 to September 12, 2021

Opening a Dialogue About Body Liberation *an exhibition to accompany Picasso. Figures*



Parc des Champs-de-Bataille
Québec (Québec) G1R 5H3

418 643-2150
1 866 220-2150

mnbaq.org

Press Contact

Linda Tremblay
Media Relations Officer

418 644-6460, ext. 5532
linda.tremblay@mnbaq.org



Québec City, Friday, June 11, 2021 ✕ The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) is committed and wishes to participate in practical terms in current social issues and is taking advantage of the organization of the *Picasso. Figures* exhibition presented by Quebecor from June 12 to September 12, 2021, to reflect on the links between the works of this major 20th century artist and key contemporary concerns.

Throughout his career, Picasso relentlessly pursued his desire to deconstruct the aesthetic canons related to the representation of the human figure, which has spurred the MNBAQ's teams to imagine a complementary group exhibition, *Opening a Dialogue About Body Liberation*, to inspire relevant, thoughtful reflection on this question.

A contribution from outstanding collaborators

To organize and enrich this exhibition and ensure the appropriateness of the avenues for reflection proposed, the MNBAQ established an advisory committee on body diversity comprising journalist and author Mickaël Bergeron, Cassandra Cacheiro and Sara Hini, cofounders of *The Womanhood Project*, and cultural content creator Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt.

Sustained by discussions with the four generous partners, a selection was quickly established to round out the initial collection of *The Womanhood Project*. Nearly 40 works have been assembled that highlight the work of 10 contemporary artists: Marion Wagschal, Arianne Clément, Haley Morris-Cafiero, Alain Benoit, Chason Yeboah, Fred Laforge, Kamissa Ma Koïta, Kezna Dalz, and *Les folies passagères* (Maude Bergeron).

Opening a Dialogue thus links works from the MNBAQ collection and those of the guest artists from varied backgrounds who work in mediums such as painting, sculpture, photography, textiles, illustration, and drawing, all of whom are interested in their practice in the representation of the body.

The works are highlighted in Marie-Renée Bourget Harvey's flowing, uncluttered staging. They defy the stereotypes linked to gender, speak of fattism, and are concerned with the presence of non-standard bodies. The *Opening a Dialogue About Body Liberation* exhibition is an invitation to look beyond physical ideals. Every effort has been made to surprise, engage, move, and perhaps also contribute to shaping a better world.

A definition of body diversity

The expression “body diversity” or “body liberation” stems from a social movement that fosters inclusion, acceptance, an appreciation of, and respect for all body types, whether they are big, of different origins, handicapped or in a state that affects appearance, different expressions of gender, or old. The movement seeks to promote bodies that are under-represented in popular media such as film, advertising, the social networks, magazines, and so on, to offer different models with which to identify. It also allows for enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence, and is a significant lever to alter social norms, demystify prejudices, and foster inclusive practices.

Much more than an audio guide

The audio guide devoted to the *Picasso. Figures* and *Opening a Dialogue About Body Liberation* exhibitions is unique. It enables visitors to not only travel in Picasso's universe but also to foster dialogue on questions such as the relationship between the artist and his muses, cultural boycotts, the representation of non-gendered bodies, or the notion of inner beauty. Mickaël Bergeron, Sara Hini and Cassandra Cacheiro, the MNBAQ's collaborators, share with visitors their astute observations and personal experience. They create bridges between Picasso's work and crucial questions in our society to encourage sensitive, intelligent reflection.

Visitors can download the audio guide on their cell phones to listen to excerpts from their exchanges. The full version of their discussion is also available on the MNBAQ website.

Sara Hini and Cassandra Cacheiro, in a nutshell

Sara Hini was born in Algeria and settled in Montréal at a young age. For a long time, she believed that her life would be easier if she was a blue-eyed blonde. In adolescence, she stood out for her tall stature, dark skin, and long, curly black hair. Cassandra Cacheiro was an extremely timid adolescent who was bullied because of her weight. She gained confidence and took her place behind a camera. Photography is a genuine passion for both young women, who met during a celebration at which they set out to solve the world's problems. It is a world that they are continuing to transform with *The Womanhood Project*, with Sara responsible for artistic direction and Cassandra in charge of photography, by smashing barriers and taboos and breaking stereotypes related to femininity.

Mickaël Bergeron, in a nutshell

Mickaël Bergeron is self-taught and has constantly displayed a desire to give a voice to those who do not have a platform. He is a journalist, author, host, and director of projects that have arisen during his career. He has participated in conferences and advises communications organizations whose mission focuses on body diversity. For several years, he has engaged in literary projects with La Maison de la littérature, Rhizome, Le Mois de la poésie, or Le Jamais Lu. In 2019, he published his first essay, *La vie en gros. Regard sur la société et le poids*. His second book *Tombée médiatique : se réapproprier l'information*, was published in the fall of 2020.



Celebrate body diversity throughout the MNBAQ

*I do not accept my big body out of pique
I welcome it with the love of
not wanting to change it*
— Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt

The breadth and beauty of body diversity will be celebrated not only in the *Opening a Dialogue* exhibition but also throughout the MNBAQ, which is proud to display on its walls poems by author Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt. From the square in front of the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion to the area around the Central Pavilion, and including the Riopelle Passage by CGI, the author's words will stir and certainly engage visitors' sensitivity.



Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt, in a nutshell

It took Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt some time before she expressed her ideas publicly. She had first to accept the non-temporary status of her body and discover a community of activists who led her to realize the extent of the prejudices she had internalized. Inspired by women who take a stand against fat shaming every day, she chose to transform her disarray into good-willed and committed action. She conveys the reality of fat people in little poems that sometimes hit hard, sometimes caress. She speaks up to deconstruct dangerous fatphobic concepts. She celebrates the power of diversity and invites us to recognize our privileges. Education is the leitmotif of every word she chooses.

The artists in the exhibition

The Womanhood Project

Cassandra Cacheiro, born in Montréal, Canada, in 1990

Sara Hini, born in Algiers, Algeria, in 1992



Through a series of photographic portraits and testimony made available on a digital platform, The Womanhood Project explores various aspects of sisterly solidarity, femininity and the taboos too often associated with them. With grace and goodwill, the artists meet with women volunteers willing to contribute to this reflection on womankind and the relationship women maintain with their bodies. The subjects discussed range from physical violence to mental health, abortion, rape, menstruation, body

hair, gender questions and motherhood. The women portrayed are photographed in the privacy of their own homes, which allows us to see them in a natural, unfiltered way. The project responds to the painfully obvious need to counter a constant flood of images that suggest only the desirability and objectification of the “perfect” woman. For the purposes of the present exhibition, these photographs, initially conceived to be distributed online, have been printed in large format, which heightens their sensitivity.

Marion Wagschal

Born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, Caribbean, in 1943



Marion Wagschal never idealizes the human body. Instead, she emphasizes the ephemeral aspect of human life and a deep reflection on the passage of time. The bodies offer themselves to the gaze in their vulnerability and without artifice. They show wrinkles, bruises, stretch marks and veins – traits visible on the skin’s surface that are rarely brought out on the social networks, where filters make it possible to control physical appearance, including the appearance of the skin. This camouflage fosters a discrepancy between reality and the perception we may have of our body, a discrepancy that can lead to a mental disorder of self-perception called BDD (body dysmorphic disorder). In her practice, Wagschal has never been bound by the canons of beauty in representing the body but has preferred the depiction of worn and aged bodies with a story to tell.

Arianne Clément

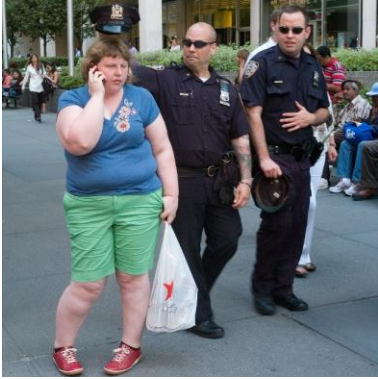
Born in Ville-Marie, Montréal, Canada, in 1980



The fact of growing old awaits everyone on Earth. Nonetheless, old people are almost entirely absent from images of the body in the popular media. The cult of youth dominates the flood of images that washes over us every day. And if we do not see, or seldom see, positive representations of old people, how can we change or adjust our own feelings about ageing? With humanity and sensitivity, photographer Arianne Clément captures knowing gazes imbued with wisdom, proud smiles and bodies etched by experience – a kind of beauty we are too rarely shown.

Haley Morris-Cafiero

Born in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, in 1976



In her series *Wait Watchers*, Haley Morris-Cafiero captures the gaze and the sometimes cruel mockery that strangers subject her to in public, fixing their intolerance in her photographs. We witness scenes intended to humiliate or at least cause discomfort. This photographic series is a good illustration of what Mickaël Bergeron describes in his book *La vie en gros, which takes a look at society and body weight*: “Nearly every day, a comment, a gesture or some norm or other reminds fat people they are pariah, undesirable and problematic creatures.” The hateful messages that accompany the photos provide in insight into the fatphobic comments Morris-Cafiero received when she posted the images of *Wait Watchers* on the social networks. This social experiment sheds light on the stigmatization of fat people in a society that worships the standardized body.

Alain Benoit

Born in Arthabaska (today Victoriaville), Canada, in 1967



This work by Alain Benoit takes a new look the traditions of the art of sculpture and the concept of aesthetic canons. *Étalon* is neither a hero nor a celebrity, but he is certainly an unusual model, rarely represented in the popular media. His proud, commanding pose makes him a positive example that differs from the stigmatizing images often associated with fat people. The firm assurance is shielded by the dull black material that absorbs light and prevents us from making out the model’s features. The sculpture cannot escape the viewer’s gaze, yet in the exhibition gallery, it makes its presence felt like a void.

Chason Yeboah

Born in Toronto, Canada, in 1991



Chason Yeboah is a sculptor, storyteller and doll-maker. When working with children, she realized that many of them did not identify with the dolls produced by the big toy manufacturers. With profound empathy, she started crocheting wool dolls in order to address questions of self-esteem, acceptance and being thankful for one’s body. Some of the dolls are quite small, have a handicap and can be seen as miniature representations of a person, while others, life-size, can be perceived as mothers, evoking security and comfort. These dolls with non-standard bodies celebrate body diversity and marginalized groups.

Fred Laforge

Born in Chicoutimi (today Saguenay), Canada, in 1976



Fred Laforge seeks to shed stereotypes by drawing inspiration from Antique statuary to represent bodies not in keeping with the norms. In his practice, the artist has had the opportunity to work with models who greatly inspired him and made him aware of issues of representation. Like the media, art history features few images of people with handicaps or a condition that affects their appearance, such as Down syndrome. When there is a representation, it is often the figure of a hero or heroine who transcends their condition, which can imply that in order to be worthy, a handicapped person must be exceptional, indeed heroic. How can someone build self-esteem when they seldom see themselves in representations, and such representations as there are often present an unattainable ideal?

Kamissa Ma Koïta

Born in Québec City, Canada, in 1985



Interested in sociology, Kamissa Ma Koïta uses art to reflect on social constructions. As a means of resistance, they* make collages in which they include their own image, in a process of affirmation as a trans man. This procedure serves as an opportunity to deconstruct, cut and move, then reglue so as to reconstruct in a different way. *Les Demoiselles_elles d'Avignon* is of course a reference to the famous painting by Picasso. In this reinterpretation, the use of pink and blue and the attributes and poses associated with the female or male gender are deconstructed to open a dialogue about different expressions of gender.

Kezna Dalz

Born in Montréal, Canada, in 1996



A painter and illustrator, Kezna Dalz shows great sensitivity in her concern for subjects rooted in feminist and anti-racist struggles. She is interested in the representation of girls and women with whom she can identify in order to counteract Eurocentric standards of beauty and whiteness as a social norm. Her production helps break down the taboos and stereotypes associated with the female gender by offering a positive image of Black women who are strong, sensitive, confident and proud of their bodies.

Les folies passagères

Maude Bergeron, born in Québec City, Canada, in 1991

An illustrator and author, Maude Bergeron was involved in the *project Les folies passagères* when it was inaugurated in 2016. It includes queer feminist artistic and literary creations, a publishing house and an online boutique. Through illustrations and writings, the artist campaigns actively to end social conditioning, whether by defying taboos, representing body diversity and different expressions of gender, or denouncing fatphobia and the culture of the weight-loss diet.

A cotton fleece for the benefit of Équilibre

*If there is one thing
that I no longer confine
it is my
grandiose body.*

– Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt



The collaboration with Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt has been enriching and has also led to the production of a cotton fleece bearing an evocative message to enable bodies to liberate themselves outside the MNBAQ. The poem calls for the uprooting of social norms linked to physical appearance, the demystification of prejudices, and the promotion of inclusiveness. Designed by Marie-Renée Bourget Harvey, the cotton fleece is printed by Le Coin créatif, a local enterprise. A limited quantity will be available for \$50 in sizes XS to 5XL.

The MNBAQ will make a donation to ÉquiLibre for each cotton fleece sold.

ÉquiLibre is a Québec non-profit organization that encourages and facilitates the development of a positive body image and the adoption of healthy lifestyles. equilibre.ca

Credits

Opening a Dialogue About Body Liberation is an exhibition organized by the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Curatorship

Maude LÉVESQUE
Curator of Exhibitions, MNBAQ

Management

Marie-Hélène AUDET
Head of Mediation, MNBAQ

Yasmée FAUCHER
Head of Museography, MNBAQ

Catherine GAUMOND
Head of Collections, MNBAQ

Pascal NORMANDIN
Head of Exhibitions and
Curatorial, MNBAQ

Advisory committee on body diversity - Guest Panellists

Mickaël BERGERON
Author and journalist

Cassandra CACHEIRO
Sara HINI
Co-founders *The Womanhood Project*

Elizabeth
CORDEAU RANCOURT
Creator of Cultural Content

In-house Members

Kasia BASTA
Annie BÉRUBÉ
Laurent DERVAUX
Andréanne LESAGE
Maude LÉVESQUE
Marie-Hélène RAYMOND

Design et graphisme

Marie-Renée
BOURGET HARVEY

*The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is a state corporation funded by the
Gouvernement du Québec.*

Québec 

Opening a Dialogue About Body Liberation
Pierre Lassonde Pavilion of the MNBAQ
June 12 et September 2021

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

Page 1 – Photo: Kezna Dalz, *Black Joy, Black Vulnerability, Black Support, Black Love*, 2021. Acrylic on canvas. Collection of the artist

Page 3 – Photo: Sara Hini and Cassandra Cacheiro *The Womanhood Project*. Photo: © Lawrence Fafard

Page 4 – From top to Bottom: Photos: Michaël Bergeron. Photo: © Jessica Garneau // Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt. Photo: © Elizabeth Cordeau Rancourt

Page 5 – Photos: *The Womanhood Project* – Cassandra Cacheiro and Sara Hini, Sandra, 2019. Digital ink jet print. Courtesy of artists © Cassandra Cacheiro © Sara Hini // Marion Wagschal, *Autoportrait*, 1975. Watercolour and pastel on paper, 108.2 x 74.8 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec Collection, donated by Rosalind Gliserman in memory of Irwin Gliserman. Restored by the Centre de conservation du Québec (2015.66) © Marion Wagschal Photo: MNBAQ, Idra Labrie

Page 6 – Photos: Arianne Clément, *Sans-titre (Marie-Berthe)*, of the serie *L'Art de vieillir*, 2017. Digital inkjet proof mounted on PVC, 30.5 x 45 cm. Collection of the artist © Arianne Clément // Haley Morris-Cafiero, *Cops*, of the serie *Wait Watchers*, 2010. Digital ink jet print, 60.9 x 60.9 cm. Courtesy of the artist © Haley Morris-Cafiero // Alain Benoit, *Étalon*, 2003. Urethane and metal, 1/3, 170 x 80 x 70 cm. Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec Collection, purchased with a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts (Operating Supplements Initiative) (2008.77) © Alain Benoit Photo: MNBAQ, Patrick Altman

Page 7 – Photo: Chason Yeboah, *Kosiwa*, 2019. Wool, acrylic, fibre and cotton, 33 x 8 cm. Collection of the artist © Chason Yeboah Photo: Chason Yeboah // Fred Laforge, *Homme trisomique*, 2009. Wax, 160 x 51 x 20 cm. Collection of the artist © Fred Laforge Photo: Jonathan Wenk

Page 8 – Photo: Kamissa Ma Koïta, *Les Demoiseaux, elles d'Avignon*, 2018. Digital photo-montage printed on self-adhesive vinyl, 121 x 182 cm. Courtesy of the artist © Kamissa Ma Koïta

General Information

OPENING HOURS OF THE
MUSEUM COMPLEX

Until September 6, 2021

Monday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Wednesdays and Fridays until 9 p.m.

ADMISSION

Featured exhibitions

Adults: 25 \$

Seniors (65 and Over): 23 \$

Ages 18 to 30: 15 \$

Ages 13 to 17: 7 \$

Families (2 adults accompanied
up to 5 children aged 17 and
under): 54 \$

Group rate (15 people or more)
for hotels, tour operators and
companies: 22 \$

12 years and under: **free**

Membres: **free**

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

MNBAQ National Collections

Adults: 16 \$

Seniors (65 and Over): 15 \$

Ages 18 to 30: 10 \$

Ages 13 to 17: 5 \$

Families (2 adults accompanied
up to 5 children aged 17 and
under): 36 \$

Group rate (15 people or more)
for hotels, tour operators and
companies: 13 \$

12 years and under: **free**

Membres: **free**

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

SERVICES AVAILABLE

Parking, Bookshop-Boutique,
Wi-Fi access, free wheelchairs,
self-service cloakroom and Baby
Changing Room

TO CONTACT US

418 643-2150 or 1 866 220-2150
mnbaq.org

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER AT MNBAQ.ORG

An excellent way to stay up to
date on news, events and
activities at the Musée!

FOLLOW US

