

Press release
Special event

The Demers-Mesnard duo signs the ninth edition of *Lumière sur l'art*

*“The Gatherers of Light,” the new circuit,
will dazzle the sky over Avenue Cartier*

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Québec City, Wednesday, November 15, 2023 ✕ The illumination of Avenue Cartier has been an outstanding fall event in Québec City since 2015. The duo of multidisciplinary artists Demers-Mesnard (Isabelle Demers and Fanny Mesnard) has created “The Gatherers of Light,” this year’s edition of *Lumière sur l’art*. Their lavish compositions propose 34 fantastic universes inhabited by strange half-marine, half-terrestrial creatures that float in landscapes that alternate between abyssal zones and the boreal forest. A unique circuit of light shines brightly in the Quartier des arts.

For the 2023 event, the two artists designed and directed a series of workshops with students from the **École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault** situated in the Quartier des arts, thus enabling young people to get to the heart of their creative process and produce inspired motifs.

“Spurred by a desire to anchor the project in its community, *Lumière sur l’art* renews itself from one edition to the next through the receptiveness

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of businesspeople from the SDC Montcalm—Quartier des arts. Participation by students from the École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault in the workshops of the Demers-Mesnard artists’ group led to memorable encounters. The young people will never perceive creation in the same way, a valuable experience!” noted **Josée Duhaime, Director of Mediation and Visitor Experience at the MNBAQ**. “This initiative supports the MNBAQ’s inclusive perspective and creates a unique link between Avenue Cartier and the MNBAQ, between residents and their museum, and between art and the numerous passersby,” she added.

Produced in collaboration with the Société de développement commercial de Montcalm-Quartier des arts (SDC Montcalm-Quartier des arts), *Lumière sur l’art* is a unifying project that proposes the renewal of the 34 giant lamps overlooking the commercial thoroughfare near the MNBAQ, thereby enabling Québec artists to raise their profile and, above all, to work with their community to the delight of strollers.

An illuminated circuit that is emblematic of a neighbourhood

“The Gatherers of Light” *as a symbol of hope*



The new illuminated circuit draws inspiration from the dioramas that the Demers-Mesnard artists’ group loves to find in natural history museums when they travel together. This device simultaneously reveals a cross-section of the marine and terrestrial worlds. The encounter between the earth, with its diurnal elements, and the sea, with its nocturnal components, is at the root of the duo’s creations, evoking in a phantasmagorical manner the notions of ecosystem, balanced forces, and bioluminescence.

The works proposed are collages that comprise digital drawings, pyrography, engravings, and photographs. Isabelle Demers and Fanny Mesnard have incorporated textures stemming from the young people’s works that also include vestiges of their visit to the Aquarium du Québec and the discovery of collections of objects and specimens from Université Laval.

The new circuit being proposed attempts day and night to maintain a beacon of hope by inviting passersby to imagine a future in which humankind and nature cohabitate harmoniously.

“This project is our second experience as a duo in two-dimensional creation, since our joint practice usually focuses on sculptural works in the public arena. Our 2D creative method is more personal and individual, which is why we decided to rely on collages. By assembling our drawings, which dialogue with transformed photographs taken at the Aquarium du Québec or in the collections of Université Laval, we have created open narratives which individuals are invited to interpret in their own way,” the artists noted.

Share, and inspire young people

Under the direction of Anik Sauvé, a visual arts teacher at the École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault, students Iris Monna-Beaudry, Flavie Bérubé, Samuel Brooks, Florence Cantin, Eugénie Delisle, Laurent Fréchette, Jeannelle Gagnon-Jones, Adèle Grant, Béatrice Jean, Alice Lachance, Mathilde Simard-Lamonde, and Philippe Langlois participated in Demers-Mesnard’s inspiring workshops.

“The astonishingly talented students were already drawn to the arts and volunteered to participate in the project. We proposed that they explore different techniques, in particular the diorama. We took advantage of the opportunity to share with them our experience of the artist’s craft to bring them to an artists’ centre and heighten their awareness of artistic practice centred on collaboration and sharing,” Demers-Mesnard added.



Demers-Mesnard, in a nutshell

Isabelle Demers and Fanny Mesnard are multidisciplinary artists from Québec City whose practices mingle through a fascination with the poetic, expressive nature of the animal and plant components of the boreal forest. Their association in the realm of public art enables them to promote their environmental concerns by striving to create generous animistic projects that foster nature’s place in the public domain and seek to initiate a dialogue between individuals, the urban space, and nature through artistic



creation. The duo has worked from time to time on joint projects since 2014. At the same time, the two artists engage in independent artistic production.

The Demers-Mesnard duo's public art projects include an initial short-lived floating installation produced in Québec City in conjunction with *Passages insolites* in 2018, which has subsequently been presented in Longueuil, Philadelphia, Örebro, Sweden, at Open Art, and Gatineau for *Les sentiers culturels*. Several permanent sculptures have been installed in public spaces in Québec, in particular at the Grand Marché de Québec, near the Pavillon polyvalent de Rimouski, and more recently on the Promenade Rivia in Drummondville. A mediation project with Secondary I students from the École L'Odysée resulted in a public art work in the Parc de La Chanterelle in Val-Bélair in 2021. The 2023 edition of *Lumière sur l'art* marks the second time that the duo has drawn inspiration from workshops conducted with young people to design a project, which will occupy a key position in their everyday environment.

Works by Pellan, Leduc, and Demers-Mesnard

Initiated in 2015, the circuit of giant lampshades began with the presentation of works by Alfred Pellan and Fernand Leduc in 2015-2016, Rita Letendre and Jacques Hurtubise in 2016-2017, and Pierre Ayot in 2017-2018. In 2018-2019, works by Manon De Pauw illuminated Avenue Cartier, those of Jocelyn Robert in 2019-2020, *Les Paysages révolutionnaires* by Pierre&Marie in 2020-2021, and the blending of the characters of Diane Obomsawin with photos from the MNBAQ collection in 2021-2022. The 2022-2023 edition created by photographer Débora Flor was produced in collaboration with artists from *Vincent et moi*. Lastly, "The Gatherers of Light," produced in 2023 by the Demers-Mesnard artists' group, features phantasmagorical universes between land and sea also inspired by the participation in their workshops of students from the École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault.

Information sheets

Giant lamps

Designed considering the golden number, which best respects the formats of the composition of the works, each of the 34 glossy semi-transparent vinyl paintings measures 942 cm long by 200 cm high. Three layers of ink were necessary to obtain optimum printing quality and ensure durability. The structure of the lamps, made of welded aluminum, weighs 56 kg and measures 1.6 m high and 2.4 m in diameter. City streetlamps provide lighting through five LED strip lights.

Self-supporting structures

The 17 self-supporting structures, each one equipped with two lamps, comprise three steel tubes with a diameter of 127 mm. Their height of 4.9 m and weight of 705 kg are equally impressive. They are painted brown like the city streetlamps and are mounted on the sidewalks on Avenue Cartier.

The Lumière sur l'art circuit is a lighting concept of LightEmotion, under the direction of a strategic committee comprising the Destination Québec City, the Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec, and Québec City. It was implemented by Scène Éthique under the direction of the SDC Montcalm-Quartier des arts and its partners. The project was made possible initially through financial support from Québec City, the Entente de partenariat régional en tourisme de la région de Québec (EPRTRQ) between the Ministère du Tourisme, the Destination Québec City and the Secrétariat à la Capitale-Nationale, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) and the advisory role of the Commission de la capitale nationale du Québec. Financial contributions from Québec City, the MNBAQ and the SDC Montcalm-Quartier des arts have made this edition possible.

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

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Lumière sur l'art, 2023 Edition

Avenue Cartier, Quartier des arts, Québec City

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Pages 1 et 2 – Demers-Mesnard, works or details from the 2023 Lumière sur l'art circuit inspired by students from the École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault.

Page 3 – Top from bottom: Students from the École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault visit the Aquarium du Québec with artists Isabelle Demers and Fanny Mesnard. Photo: Fanny Mesnard // Ateliers directed by Isabelle Demers and Fanny Mesnard for students from the École secondaire Joseph-François-Perrault. Photos: Fanny Mesnard

Page 4 – Isabelle Demers et Fanny Mesnard. Photo: © Charles Frederick Ouellet