

# Official Groundbreaking of the Espace Riopelle Pavilion\*

*Grand opening slated for 2026*



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Québec City, Saturday, May 4, 2024 - The groundbreaking for the Espace Riopelle pavilion\*, a visionary expansion of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ), took place in Québec City today.

The \$84M project is inspired by one of Québec's most renowned and beloved artists, Jean Paul Riopelle, who captured the attention of Canada and the world with his fearless creativity and iconic artworks. Last year Canada celebrated Riopelle's 100th anniversary with initiatives and events across the world, including the announcement of the new pavilion at the MNBAQ.

The pavilion dedicated to Riopelle's legacy is one of the largest cultural infrastructure projects in Québec since the inauguration of the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion in 2016.

The Espace Riopelle\* groundbreaking took place just prior to the annual fundraising gala, the Bal National OUTREMER, organized by the MNBAQ Foundation.

The groundbreaking ceremony marks the start of construction, and was attended by the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications, Youth, and Minister Responsible for the Outaouais Region Mathieu Lacombe; Mayor of Québec City Bruno Marchand; members of the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation including Michael J. Audain; members of the MNBAQ and the Fondation du MNBAQ Jean-Luc Murray and Julie-Anne Vien; architect Éric Gauthier from the architectural firm fabg; Darren Bolduc, President of CONCREA; and Yseult Riopelle, Jean Paul Riopelle’s daughter.

The MNBAQ also wishes to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the engineering team from AtkinsRéalis and the project manager CIMA+, that will bring this exceptional project to life in the coming years.

Construction of the bright and elegant Espace Riopelle pavilion\* is scheduled to be complete in 2026. Six months prior to the official inauguration, a selection of Jean Paul Riopelle’s most exciting works will be installed as part of the MNBAQ’s permanent collection. The new public spaces will be prepared for the official opening as well.

When it opens in 2026, Espace Riopelle\* promises to be a dynamic audience experience, allowing visitors to rediscover one of Quebec and Canada’s most acclaimed artists. The pavilion will fuse themes of art and nature, which defined Riopelle’s life and work, and it will seamlessly connect the MNBAQ to the famed park it is situated on, the Plains of Abraham. In addition, digital art and the outdoor installations will make this meeting place an indispensable attraction to the region of Québec City.

The Riopelle pavilion\* has a budget of \$84 million, with contributions from several public and private partners, including the Québec government, Québec City, the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation, and the Fondation du MNBAQ. It will meld perfectly with the existing museum complex and become a harmonious link between the Gérard Morisset Pavilion, the Charles Baillairgé Pavilion, and the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion in addition to enhancing the experience of visitors and art enthusiasts.

### *Light, innovation, and distinctive architecture are the project’s hallmarks*

Carefully selected materials will be utilized to construct the contemporary, luminous pavilion, where light, innovation, and distinctive architecture serve as the project’s hallmarks. Its technological and innovative features promise to surprise and delight the public.

Beyond the architectural features, this major project reflects a vision of inclusion and accessibility that shapes the entire MNBAQ museum complex by becoming the gateway to a space devoted to research and education that will incorporate educational programs for the general public, students, and researchers aimed at heightening awareness of the importance of art in society.

### *A decisive, unifying project*

“The official launching today of the Espace Riopelle construction site affords us an opportunity to express our delight with this unifying, innovative project. Our government is proud to support this major project, a genuine legacy for the community. What is more, it is indeed poetic to conclude the festivities surrounding Riopelle’s centenary with the opening of the pavilion planned in 2026.”

- **Mathieu Lacombe**

Minister of Culture and Communications, Minister Responsible for Youth, and Minister Responsible for the Outaouais Region

“Québec city is a city of culture and history. A new page of history is being written today through this institution that will highlight an outstanding artist and standard bearer of visual art. It is a privilege to be able to build this major cultural facility in Québec City. Riopelle’s masterpiece *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* could not have a finer showcase. Thank you to the numerous partners and visionary art-loving patrons who are contributing to this valuable legacy.”

- **Bruno Marchand**

Mayor of Québec City

“With this great legacy of the Riopelle centenary celebrations, we honour the memory of one of the most illustrious artists of all time and a formidable cultural hero. Let us remember that it is on this site that Riopelle aspired in the 1980s to establish his foundation. Here we are, at last, almost half a century later. We anchor an important part of his artistic legacy here, where the land meets the river overlooking the natural landscape he so revered. By dedicating this exceptional building to Riopelle, we are creating a real springboard here and internationally for not only Riopelle's work, but of all Quebec and Canadian art. The Riopelle Foundation would like to express our gratitude to the Government of Quebec, the City of Quebec and the MNBAQ for this wonderful partnership.”

**Michael Audain**

Chair and Co-Founder, Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation



“We have reached this turning point in a major project, in which the building will take shape and draw us in practical terms to its opening. This new building will evidently forever alter the face of the MNBAQ by making art more accessible to everyone and by consolidating the MNBAQ’s status as a major establishment and a cultural hub in Québec.”

- **Frédéric Gascon**

Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the MNBAQ

“As we begin construction, we are also launching our fundraising campaign, the biggest and most imposing in our history. We believe that the enthusiasm surrounding the construction of the Espace Riopelle will be reflected in the funds collected, which will give us the necessary momentum to add to the MNBAQ a fourth signature building that will be noteworthy at the international level.”

- **Julie-Anne Vien**

Chair of the Board of Directors, Fondation du MNBAQ



“Much more than a new pavilion, the Espace Riopelle promises our museum complex a glowing future. It sets in motion a project that transcends Riopelle’s work and will also incorporate an educational project in the arts and make our establishment even more attractive to local and international visitors. I would like to thank the MNBAQ’s teams, who are already contributing to making this adventure a resounding success.”

- **Jean-Luc Murray**

Director General of the MNBAQ

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*The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is a government corporation subsidized by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec.*

Québec 

*\* The Espace Riopelle Pavilion is the provisional name. The official name will be announced when it is chosen.*

Page 1: Photo from left to right: Darren Bolduc, chairman of CONCREA, Julie-Anne Vien, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Fondation du MNBAQ, Jean-Luc Murray, Executive Director of MNBAQ, Bruno Marchand, Mayor of Quebec city, Manon Gauthier, Executive Director and General Commissioner of the Centenary Celebrations, Yseult Riopelle, Jean Paul Riopelle's daughter, Yoshiko Karasawa, Michael J. Audain's wife, Frédéric Gascon, Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors of the MNBAQ, Fabrice Alcayde, Interim CEO of the Fondation MNBAQ, Mathieu Lacombe, Minister of Culture and Communications, Minister Responsible for Youth, and Minister Responsible for the Outaouais Region, Michael J. Audain, OC, OBC., Chair and CO-Founder of the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation, Éric Gauthier, architect, architect firm fabg, Chantale Shah, Executive Director of the Audain Foundation and Mathieu Rivest, Government Assistant to the Minister of Culture and Communications and Member of Parliament for Côte-du-Sud Photo: © Stéphane Bourgeois

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