

Fiona Annis will produce the public artwork at the Espace Riopelle *A Tale of Sources will celebrate Québec nature and culture*

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Québec City, Tuesday, May 6, 2025 ✕ In the wake of a rigorous process launched in the spring of 2024, **Jean-Luc Murray**, Director General of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, and **Eve-Lyne Beaudry**, Director of Collections and Research, are pleased to announce the artist selected in the context of a province-wide competition to integrate the arts into architecture and the environment of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec. Multidisciplinary artist **Fiona Annis**, a native of Glasgow who has lived and worked in Montréal for 20 years, is the winner of the competition.

A Tale of Sources is the title of the work that the artist has imagined. The installation exhibited in four scenes that are integrated into the landscaping of the future Espace Riopelle. The work will punctuate the pedestrian corridor that will link the front and rear courtyards of the new building. It will act as a poetic link between the past and the future and urbanity and the park.

“We were seeking a work to be exhibited on the entire site, thereby creating a dialogue with architecture. Her sculpture will significantly mark the arrival of visitors to the Espace Riopelle by perfectly integrating into the landscaped environment of the new pavilion designed by Les architectes fabg. In addition to meeting all our expectations, we were charmed by the depth of Fiona Annis’ creative approach, her ecological choices, and the striking links established with the works of Jean Paul Riopelle. Her poetry and sensitivity will undoubtedly touch the hearts and minds of visitors,” jointly noted Jean-Luc Murray, Director General of the MNBAQ, and Eve-Lyne Beaudry, Director of Collections and Research at the MNBAQ.

An emblematic work at the heart of a highly significant site

“I sought to produce an original work that tells multiple stories and also honours the heritage of a renowned Québec artist who constantly explored his territory of origin. I want to produce a visual, poetic reference point that will mark the physical and social landscape of the MNBAQ and create a celebration of nature and culture.”

Fiona Annis



A Tale of Sources will celebrate Québec nature and culture

Fiona Annis has imagined a series of four cast-bronze scenes that include elements in marble and steel. The vibrant, dynamic colours will evoke *Perce-neige* (1956), the first painting by Jean Paul Riopelle that the MNBAQ acquired.

The Invitation features a ladder and a circular gate, elements that invite us to jump and dash. They also propose a poetic reflection on impermanence or perpetual transformation. The interplay of the bronze ring’s texture brings to mind the visual vocabulary of Riopelle’s works.

The Convergence of Time proposes three imaginary figures pierced with a hole that represent transmission and encounters between eras. Their configuration will evoke story circles and the spirit of campfires.



The Encounter with Territory will present three creatures grouped together around a suspended full moon. They will evoke the crane, a recurring motif in Riopelle's work, in particular in *Homage to Rosa Luxemburg*, to which will be added yellow birch bark and roots, emblematic symbols of Québec. Yellow birch, a species native to Québec, becomes a metaphor to illustrate the resilience of Québec's inhabitants.



The Connection of Knowledge will be represented by an inviting raft that evokes travel and adventure. The fourth scene conjures up the rafts used by log drivers to transport timber on Québec's river system, an apposite historic allusion.



Ecology at the heart of creativity

Aside from the inspired concept of Fiona Annis' work, the ecological dimension of her approach enhances her project. The production of the sculpture hinges on environmental ethics that respect the materials and produce a minimum of residues. The use of organic materials prior to casting the bronze and the lost-wax technique will make this sculpture a unique work while avoiding the residues that the moulds engender.

Production in June 2026

Fiona Annis will direct the work's production, which entails demanding technical requirements. The artist will collaborate with the Inverness Bronze Workshop to produce (casting, assembly), finish, transport, and install the elements of the sculpture. The overall project budget is \$309 233. The four sculptural scenes are slated for installation on the site of the future Espace Riopelle in the spring of 2026.

Fiona Annis, in a nutshell

Fiona Annis was born in Glasgow in 1983 and raised in Manitoba. She lives and works in Tiohtià:ke (Montréal). The artist has a sustained



commitment to analogical materials and processes and melds historical and deeply contemporary perspectives. She has exhibited her work in artists' centres, galleries, and museums in Canada and abroad, including the Fondation Guido Molinari in Montréal, the Institut AC in New York, the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal, Goldsmiths, University of London, the Museo Novecento in Naples, VU Photo in Québec City, and The Art Gallery of Alberta in Edmonton. Her works are found in the collections of the Musée de la civilisation de Québec, the City of Ottawa Public Art Collection, and the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Fiona Annis has received several national and international grants, including the Brucebo Foundation travel award with a residency at the Observatoire de Capodimonte in Naples; the Jarislowsky Award, with a residency at the Banff Centre for the Arts; and the Fonds de recherche québécois pour la société et la culture, with a residency at the Penumbra Foundation in New York. The artist holds a master's degree from the Glasgow School of Art and an interdisciplinary doctorate from Concordia University. She is the co-founder of the artists' collective The Society of Affective Archives.

The competition in a nutshell

The Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec launched a province-wide competition in April 2024 in the context of the Politique d'intégration des arts à l'architecture et à l'environnement des bâtiments et des sites gouvernementaux et publics for the creation of the public artwork outside the future Espace Riopelle of the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

The selection committee comprising representatives of the Ministère de la Culture et des Communication, the MNBAQ, Les architectes fabg, and visual arts specialists, selected five finalists: Fiona Annis, Marie-France Brière, Marc-Antoine Côté, Luca Fortin, and Gilles Mihalcean. Each finalist received \$15 000 to design a mock-up. **Fiona Annis** won this competition. In late spring 2026, the public will discover *A Tale of Sources*, to be installed in the pedestrian corridor of the future Espace Riopelle.

The Espace Riopelle has a budget of \$84 million, with contributions from several public and private partners, i.e., the Québec government, Québec City, the founding members of 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 all art enthusiasts. It will permanently house the world's biggest public collection of Riopelle's works, enhanced by donations and historic loans from collectors and patrons including Michael Audain, Pierre Lassonde, France Chrétien Desmarais, André Desmarais, and Yseult Riopelle.

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

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Page 1 – Fiona Annis. Photo credit : Chris Bricker, Ville d'Ottawa

Page 2 – Photo : Fiona Annis, *A Tale of Sources*, view showing the tableau *The Invitation*. Work in bronze, steel, granite and marble, in progress.

Page 3 – Photos de haut en bas : Fiona Annis, *A Tale of Sources*, view showing the tableau *The Convergence of Time*. Work in bronze, steel, granite and marble, in progress. // Fiona Annis, *A Tale of Sources*, view showing the tableau *The Encounter with Territory*. Work in bronze, steel, granite and marble, in progress. // Fiona Annis, *A Tale of Sources*, view showing the tableau *The Connection of Knowledge*. Work in bronze, steel, granite and marble, in progress.

Page 4 – Fiona Annis in her Montreal workshop. Photo credit : Isabelle Darveau et Geneviève Philippon.