

THE HERITAGE OF THE REMAINS

The notion of the monument lies at the heart of this exhibition of works from the Museum's permanent collection. Its title is inspired by the definition of sites of memory developed by the French historian Pierre Nora, which encompasses monuments: " These *lieux de mémoire* are fundamentally remains, the ultimate embodiments of a memorial consciousness that has barely survived in a historical age that calls out for memory because it has abandoned it."

The exhibition provides a journey through the artistic practices of the past century, delving into subjects associated with the realm of monuments: the sculptural, the architectural, permanence, commemoration and memory. It sheds light on key issues linked to the history of sculpture from the 20th century to the present day.

In the earliest works, public monuments served as models for artists, who reproduced them for commercial purposes. In more recent works, artists have defied realistic architectural rendering, treating the monument in an abstract manner. Some challenge the very notion of mimesis, the faithful representation of reality, suggesting that ultimately, everything is an image and a construction.

The representation of reality is linked to the subjective construction of History. The more recent the works, the more they assert themselves as antimonuments. They present an aesthetic counter-narrative, drawing

on alternative stories rooted in the mundane aspects of daily life, rather than on unifying collective myths. These sculptures offer a new perspective on the monument, whether through poetic interpretation, the complete flattening of volume, or the rendering of public sites and the people around them invisible.

Associated with public space in urban environments, the monument also serves to commemorate the past and death, be it through tombstones, steles or megaliths. These various forms of monument are manifestations of a distant, bygone past that has survived to the present day.

While monuments have long served to commemorate events and individuals, some artists seek to reposition marginalized subjects within in a History written by and for men. The exhibition features busts of two female artists, shedding light on the hierarchical structures prevalent within societal groups. Ultimately, the exhibition beckons towards a future that empowers Indigenous peoples as central protagonists, reshaping the dynamics of power.

Julie Alary Lavallée, Collections Curator

Artists : Jocelyne Allouche, David Altmejd, Pierre Ayot, Carl Beam, Gabriel Brun-Buisson, Pierre Gauvreau, Alfred Laliberté, Ernst Neumann, Alice Nolin, Royden Rabinowitch, Morton Rosengarten, Karen Elaine Spencer and Bill Vazan.

THE HERITAGE OF THE REMAINS

1. GABRIEL BRUN-BUISSON

Voiron, France, 1883 – Nice, France, 1959

Monument de Jeanne d'Arc à la place des Pyramides, undated

[Joan of Arc Monument at the Place des Pyramides]

Graphite and watercolour on paper, 56.2 x 42.5 cm

Gift of the Clerics of St. Viator of Canada

2022.263

Awareness of the importance of architectural heritage began to take shape in France during the 18th century. Numerous initiatives were implemented by the government to preserve historic buildings and works of art, including the Commission for Historic Monuments, established in 1837. The position Chief Architect of Historic Monuments (ACMH) was created, and these architects continue to protect, conserve, and promote French architectural heritage to this day.

The MAJ holds seven works by French watercolor painter Gabriel Brun-Buisson, who was appointed Chief Architect of Historic Monuments in 1925. These watercolors depict the interiors of Catholic places of worship and other building exteriors, emphasizing detail, light, and contrast. This focus on the built environment aligns with his role as a state architect. The work exhibited here depicts an equestrian monument to Joan of Arc, evoking the reconquest. The monument, created in 1872 by sculptor Emmanuel Frémillet (1824-1910), was commissioned by the French government following the country's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870.

2. ERNST NEUMANN

Budapest, Hungary, 1907 – Vence, France, 1956

Maisonneuve, about 1945

Etching, 24 x 16.1 cm

1983.163

Nelson Monument, about 1945

Etching, 24 x 15.9 cm

1983.164

Gift of M^e Claude Laberge

The MAJ collection contains over 140 works by Ernst Neumann, an artist affiliated with the Jewish painters of Montréal. Neumann focussed predominantly on individuals marginalized by the Great Depression, but also produced commercial engravings executed in a rigorous academic style. To sustain himself, Neumann turned his attention to the streets of Montréal, capturing its architecture and public spaces in his work.

Here, Neumann presents two historical monuments emblematic of Old Montréal, linked to the history of the colonization of America. The first, the Nelson Monument, is the work of early 18th-century Scottish architect Robert Mitchell. Situated north of Place Jacques-Cartier, in the heart of historic Montréal, this monument holds the distinction of being the city's oldest. It commemorates the triumphs of Admiral Horatio Nelson (1758-1805) and British naval supremacy. The second, commemorating Maisonneuve, is the work of artist Louis-Philippe Hébert. Erected in 1875 at the heart of Place d'Armes, it celebrates the 250th anniversary of the founding of the City of Montréal.

3. PIERRE GAUVREAU

Montréal, Québec, 1922 – Montréal, Québec, 2011

Les monuments rentrent dans l'ombre, 1950

[Monuments Retreat into the Shadows]

Graphite, ink and watercolor on paper, 37.3 x 27 cm

Gift of Madeleine Arbour

1986.068

Avant-garde painter and *Refus global* signatory, Pierre Gauvreau was long

associated with the automatist group. He broke away during the 1950s and 1960s when he began a career as a writer, director and producer for Québec television. In 1975, he returned to painting and never gave it up again. Spontaneous writing and the non-interference of reason maintained a central role in his work, continuing in the automatist spirit. Recognized for his skill as a colorist, Gauvreau created in 1950, in his small home on rue de la Montagne in Montréal, the work *Monuments Retreat into the Shadows*, from a series bearing the same title. We can make out a historic monument in a whirlwind of colors, rocked by the wind in the urban space.

4. ALFRED LALIBERTÉ

Sainte-Élisabeth-de-Warwick, Québec, 1877 – Montréal, Québec, 1953

Maquette du monument à Dollard des Ormeaux, between 1911-1918

[Model of the Monument to Dollard des Ormeaux]

Plaster, 203 x 94 x 77 cm

Gift of M^e Claude Laberge

1976.030

Adam Dollard des Ormeaux (1635-1660), an emblematic figure of New France, left his mark on the collective memory and has been the subject of a remarkable patriotic cult in Québec. The myth erected around his memory is linked to the battle of Long-Sault, which he led in 1660 together with a handful of men – some French, some Huron and some Algonquin – against an Onondaga army. The celebrations surrounding this feat were at their height between the 1920s and 1960s. Since then, his consecration has been called into question. Long considered a hero and a martyr, having sacrificed himself in the defense of Ville-Marie, Dollard des Ormeaux would also later be considered a traitor and a thief.

The erection of a monument to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Long-Sault was proposed in 1910 by the Catholic Association of French-Canadian Youth. Alfred Laliberté reportedly suggested that a competition be held among Canadian artists. Although the project was initially abandoned, it resurfaced in 1914. Laliberté won the competition. His monument was officially unveiled in 1920 at La Fontaine Park in Montréal. The piece showcased here is a model crafted by Laliberté as a preliminary study. It was displayed in an incomplete state in the Spring Salon of 1920, at the Art Association of Montréal, the precursor to the Montréal Museum of Fine Arts.

The sculpture depicts Dollard des Ormeaux in a standing position, brandishing a sword. Behind him stands a female figure adorned in fabric patterned with fleur-de-lys motifs, symbolizing victory and France.

5. DAVID ALTMEJD

Montréal, Québec, 1974

***Untitled 5 (Bodybuilders)*, 2013**

Plaster, burlap, foam and wood, 199.5 x 55.9 x 86.4 cm

Anonymous gift

2023.131

Untitled 5 (Bodybuilders) by David Altmejd is part of a series bearing the same title, in which bodies appear to build themselves. The work is entirely covered with hands that join, sculpt, remove, and move material. The subject of this piece is the human being, continually constructing and deconstructing itself. The work evokes an ancient fascination with the representation of the body and the commemorative monument. This reading offers insights into the construction of History and the myths surrounding heroic figures as historical markers of memory. Here, memory simultaneously disappears and reappears. This paradoxical nature is also reflected in the choice of material. While statues are typically made from durable materials like stone to ensure longevity, this piece uses crumbling plaster. At a time in which figures elevated to the level of myth and canon are being debunked, and works of art looted and vandalised during colonization reclaimed, this antimonument addresses the role of the statuary in History and what it symbolises.

6. BILL VAZAN

Toronto, Ontario, 1933

***Stone Burst*, 1980**

54 black and white photographs mounted on cardboard

228.2 x 568.8 cm

Gift of Monique Giroux

2023.122.1-54

Stone Burst emerges from a deliberate and rigorous combination of photographic images taken at three significant megalithic sites across the United Kingdom: Callanish in Scotland, alongside Stonehenge and

Avebury in England. In 1976, Vazan began *Globe*, a mosaic production in which he challenged the inherent flatness of the photographic medium and erected spherical compositions, crafted from an amalgam of various perspectives. His artistic approach has found its anchor points in the exploration of sites of memory and monuments scattered across the globe. The places he photographed serve as material for exploring the energy that emanates from the traces of the past left by humans, but also the temporal and spatial fissures that explain the long-standing relationship that humans maintain with the Universe. History, archaeology, topography, ethnography, science, and cosmogony intersect in Vazan works, weaving a tapestry that links the viewer's present with the distant origins of these places steeped in memory.

7. ROYDEN RABINOWITCH

Toronto, Ontario, 1943

Sans titre, about 1975

[Untitled]

Sandblasted and oiled steel, 3 x 241.5 x 45 cm

Gift of Martin Champagne

2023.126

In the 1970s, Royden Rabinowitch introduced his audiences to a radical reorientation of his artistic approach. His sculptures, from then on purely abstract, were reduced to flat planes in space. Traditionally, sculpture is associated with volume and the creation of monuments, including busts and statues. Here, Rabinowitch proposes a new sculptural experience that minimizes mass in space as much as possible.

An internationally renowned Canadian post-minimalist, Royden Rabinowitch is one of the pioneers of modern sculpture. *Untitled* is a complex work in its minimalism. It can be viewed from different angles, never revealing itself in the same way due to the multiple plates and irregular angles that shift depending on the viewer's position. This piece exemplifies the artist's profound and reflective approach to sculpture, drawing on natural history, architecture, science, and mathematics.

8. JOCELYNE ALLOUCHERIE

Québec, Québec, 1947

From the series *Monuments du funambule*

[The Tightrope Walker's Monuments]

***Monument 4*, 2002**

Light wood, plaster and black sand of natural origin, 186 x 210 x 56 cm

In acquisition

T.2024.088

***Monument 6*, 2003**

Inkjet print on neutral Plexi-laminated support with wood and gesso frame, 221.2 x 189.6 x 6.9 cm

Gift of the artist

2016.002

***Monument 8*, 2003**

Inkjet print on neutral Plexi-laminated support with wood and gesso frame, 221.2 x 189.6 x 6.9 cm

Gift of the artist

2016.004

Jocelyne Alloucherie, both photographer and sculptor, merges these two disciplines to craft thoughtful and poetic works in which image, object, and place intertwine. *Monument 6* and *Monument 8* are part of a series of four monumental photographs. They capture the shadows of tree branches cast upon the ground. The massive white U-shaped structures, which define the boundaries of the images, render the role of the frames ambiguous. The monument in the titles of the work is not represented directly. A reference to the tree or to an absent building, it evokes our memory and imagination.

The sand arranged on the white structure of *Monument 4* recalls a landscape. Due to its ambivalent character, the work evokes both nature and architecture through the fragmentation of the landscape and elements of the built world. Since the 1970s, Jocelyne Alloucherie has incorporated sand into her work in a variety of configurations and materials. It is sometimes worn down, crushed or represented in a way that generates new images. For Alloucherie, sand is very similar to photographic material, light, fluid and malleable.

9. CARL BEAM

M'Chigeeng, Ontario, 1943 – Ottawa, Ontario, 2005

Becoming Currency, about 2001

Mixed media on paper, 76 x 57.3 cm

Gift of Vincent Fortier

2021.065

Becoming Currency is part of the *Crossroads* series, an unfinished project that Carl Beam worked on for several years before his death. The series is inspired by the song *Cross Road Blues* by African-American musician Robert Johnson. With this series, Beam reflects on his own hybrid identity and creates compositions in which portraits of popular musicians, historical figures, or scientists appear alongside images of wildlife and text. The result is a politicized amalgam whose themes and events, drawn from various historical periods, highlight the tensions between white and Indigenous people. *Becoming Currency* is a striking composition that interweaves iconography and text. It includes the transferred image of an American one-dollar bill overlaid with the head of a First Nations man and the word "Ojibwe." The work critiques the discriminatory hierarchy between Western and non-Western traditions, repositioning Indigenous people at the heart of the economy to rebalance the distribution of power.

10. karen elaine spencer

Nelson, British Columbia, 1960

sittin' with cabot square, 2012-2017

Performance

2021.001.1-190

orange peels, 2012-2013

Digital photographs, variable dimensions

2021.001.35 – 2021.001.186

journaux, 2012-2013

[newspapers]

Newspapers, variable dimensions

2021.001.187.1-152

***ambient sound*, 2016**

Sound, 1 h 6 min

2021.001.188

Gift of the artist

This project developed as Karen Elaine Spencer visited Cabot Square in Montréal regularly over several months, in the summers of 2012 and 2013. There, she reflected on the disparity between the medications prescribed in hospitals and the needs of the transient population who often gather in this public space, just a few steps from the Atwater metro station. Incognito, she would sometimes sit in the park, picking up a daily newspaper and bringing a clementine, carefully preserving the peels. Upon returning home, she photographed the remnants of the citrus fruit, meticulously noting the date. She would then select a news article of the day and record daily weather conditions, which she compiled on her blog. A personal, multifaceted, and discreet artwork, *sittin' with cabot square*, which unfolded over a five-year span (2012-2017), delves into the fragility of the individual against a backdrop that is both poetic and political. Through the tranquility and routine of everyday actions, the work takes form in the tumultuous and clamorous context of the student crisis and the redevelopment of Cabot Square, orchestrated to displace the vulnerable population that inhabits it.

This QR code leads to her blog :



11. MORTON ROSENGARTEN

Montréal, Québec, 1933

***Kittie [Bruneau]*, 1961**

Bronze and wood, 68 x 20 x 20 cm

Gift of Yolande Dubé

2021.019

Morton Rosengarten remained faithful to the sculpted figure, even when most of his contemporaries rejected the figurative in favour of more conceptual and abstract approaches. The search for the origins of figurative sculpture has been a central focus of his work, which he continually repositions within a contemporary context using traditional materials like metal, stone, and wood.

Through his exploration of sculpture, he draws from the repertoires of ancient cultures and regions beyond Europe and white America. His aim is to contribute to a broader understanding of human creative possibilities.

This work is part of his *Heads* series, which began in the 1960s. Rosengarten is fascinated by the personalities he represents, particularly women, and seeks to capture their individual character. This bronze piece represents his friend, the artist Kittie Bruneau, who passed away in 2021, and to whom we pay a subtle tribute here. Like Rosengarten, she demonstrated tenacity in asserting the importance of figuration in art, even when contemporary trends favored other directions. Although the head appears eroded and marked by contact with an acidic environment, it remains highly expressive.

12. ALICE NOLIN

Sorel, Québec, 1896 – Montréal, Québec, 1967

Camille Bernard, about 1930

Bronze, 41 x 14.5 x 18.5 cm

Gift of a friend, Rachel Gauvreau-Jutras

1975.252

Alice Nolin was a sculptor, painter, and art teacher. As one of the first professional female sculptors in Québec, she was best known for her busts, including those of Alfred Laliberté and Édouard Montpetit, as well as a bronze medallion of Louis-Hippolyte Lafontaine. Between 1921 and 1935, she participated in numerous group exhibitions, including the Spring Salon of 1930, where she exhibited this bust of Camille Bernard.

The acquisition file for this work highlights the admiration for Camille Bernard (1898-1984), a talented singer originally from Joliette. Correspondence reveals the MAJ's interest in acquiring Nolin's bust of Bernard, not for its artistic value, but because it represented an important local personality. The museum pursued the acquisition of the sculpture and even supported Bernard's candidacy for the Order of Canada, an honor she received in 1981. During these proceedings, the focus shifted entirely to Bernard, overshadowing the sculptor herself—surprising for an art museum dedicated to showcasing artists and their work.

13. PIERRE AYOT

Montréal, Québec, 1943 – Saint-Jean-de-Matha, Québec, 1995

Heracles...?, 1984

Acrylic, canvas, fiberglass and wood, 134 x 66 x 73.5 cm

Gift of Galerie Graff

1989.051

Recognized in Québec for his significant contribution to the graphic arts, Pierre Ayot's critical practice combines various media in order to blur their boundaries. He draws inspiration primarily from the iconography of everyday life, but also integrates references from academic culture. Ayot's creations are always slightly disorienting, providing an alternative way of seeing things.

Heracles...? consists of a pseudobust depicting Heracles, the son of the god Zeus and the mortal Alcmene, later granted immortality by the gods. A pleated veil covers the figure's head, obscuring the sculptural representation that lies beneath. The two-dimensional face of the hero is printed on the veil, but can be seen only in part, due to the creases and the flattening of the figure's features. The artist employs various techniques to accentuate the illusion of the image, intentionally highlighting the disparity between reproduction and reality. Did the demigod Heracles really have the calibre of a hero? Should we conceal certain aspects of his character? The story of this figure from Greek mythology, with his violent and tortuous past, has undergone countless adaptations to reflect changing social mores and values.

FLOOR PLAN

1st floor

Salle EBI

