

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

**Collective actions.
A feminist view of the collection**

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Although they remain underrepresented in the dominant narratives of art history, women artists have been present in the collection of the Musée d'art de Joliette (MAJ) since its inception. This exhibition offers a new look at the Museum's legacy, highlighting the richness and uniqueness of artistic practices.

This initiative takes on special meaning in the current context, as it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the MAJ's construction and the 25th anniversary of the World March of Women. This concurrence invites us to reflect on the social impact of art and the importance of giving visibility to trajectories that are often marginalized. This exhibition reaffirms the Museum's role as a space for recognition, dialogue, and transmission.

As an institution anchored in its community, the MAJ is proud of its collection and its commitment to equity. It sees this exhibition as a means of furthering this mission, while offering present and future generations inspiring models of artistic creation, freedom, and leadership.

Today, presenting a history of art through the work of women reminds us that they have always been there—inventive, daring, and groundbreaking—and that their contributions deserve to be fully recognized, shared, and celebrated.

The gallery exhibition is presented with the generous support of Power Corporation of Canada.

The research, conducted for the virtual exhibition, was funded by Digital Museums Canada, an investment program managed by the Canadian Museum of History.

This gallery exhibition is a reconfiguration of a virtual exhibition of the same name which, in its original form, offers a feminist reading of the MAJ's 80-year history (1942-2022) through 80 works from its permanent collection. This more intimate presentation at the Museum serves as a counterbalance to the institution's current holdings, only 12 % of which are works by women.

Without claiming to be exhaustive or representative of the full scope of women's art history, the exhibition offers a selective survey in which each work presented is linked to a specific year and to one of three sections that guide its interpretation.

The first section explores the aesthetic choices women artists have made throughout the history of art. The second section highlights certain major changes in women's social and political conditions, as well as the political engagement of artists from Québec and elsewhere. The third outlines the history of women's involvement with the MAJ.

Some works are linked to their year of creation, while others are associated with an external event such as a political demonstration, an important exhibition, or the moment of their acquisition. This contextualization provides a broader view of the works, considering the intersection of the social, the aesthetic, and the political.

Drawing on works of all kinds, from preparatory studies to late-career pieces, the exhibition brings to light stories that are sometimes little known. Revealing underrepresented aspects and absences, the research carried out will inform the development of the MAJ's collection in the years to come, towards a richer and more diverse representation of women artists' production.

Women have gained ground over the years by fighting for recognition and exposing the injustices they face. Communities have mobilized, and women have come together to gain collective strength in the socio-political sphere as well as in the arts. They have changed perceptions and asserted their rights. This exhibition and the history of the collection it unveils bring to light decades of collective work in celebration of women's art-an ongoing project, as nothing can be taken for granted.

For the full experience of the original exhibition, please refer to the screen in the gallery or visit: actionscollectivesmaj.org/en

Julie Alary Lavallée, Collections Curator and Renée Filbey, Project Manager

1. New acquisition

Leïla Zelli

Tehran, Iran, 1981

***Femmes-oiseaux 3*, 2024**

Print, ink and acrylic on raw canvas, 196.8 × 154.9 cm

Acquired thanks to the René-Malo Fund on the occasion
of the museum's 50th anniversary

2025.001

Leïla Zelli's politically charged artistic practice is articulated, among other things, through site-specific digital installations created from images, videos and texts found on social media. Her work examines humanity and its relationship with the Other.

Femmes-oiseaux 3 is part of a reflection on the Iranian revolution of 2022, following the death of Mahsa Amini in Tehran after she opposed the authoritarian regime. This tragic event dominated global news and strongly influenced the artist's approach. The series presents hybrid representations of birds and women in struggle, evoking freedom, courage, collective strength and sacrifice. A member of the Iranian diaspora, Zelli shines a light on women who are often relegated to the margins.

Redefining Art

Women artists were long confined to certain pictorial genres, such as still life, portraiture, and domestic scenes. This section looks at artistic contributions by women that have led to new strategies and avenues of personal expression. While they are not feminist in the strictest sense, the works in this section showcase the techniques, subjects, trends, and artistic movements that have contributed to the diversity of women's art history.

Most of the works are linked to the year they were made and therefore positioned according to their context of production. This section highlights the historical contributions of women artists as well as recent efforts to bring to light those that have long been overlooked.

2. A new look at the Beaver Hall Group - 2015

Lilias Torrance Newton

Lachine, Québec, 1896 – Cowansville, Québec, 1980

Portrait d'enfant, about 1940

Oil on canvas, 38.2 × 33.4 cm

Gift of Jacqueline Brien

1985.053

Named after the street where its studios were located, the Beaver Hall Group is often considered Montréal's answer to Toronto's Group of Seven, both of which were established in 1920. Active from 1920 to 1922, the Montréal group brought together some twenty artists who shared common interests, though they did not share a cohesive ideology. These artists expressed their conception of modernity through representations of urbanity and the human figure. The group was distinguished by the gender parity of its members.

A founding member of the group, Lilias Torrance Newton was known for her portraits, characterized by their colour, texture, and the casual nature of her subjects' poses. The exhibition *1920s Modernism in Montreal: The Beaver Hall Group*, presented at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts in 2015, shed light on this group of artists, many of whom remain little known today.

3. Ambiguous mundane spaces - 2003

Lynne Cohen

Racine, United States, 1944 – Montréal, Québec, 2014

Untitled (Waves), 2003

Chromogenic print, 3/5, 102.5 × 128.3 cm

Anonymous gift

2022.548

Unique in their originality and formal intelligence, Lynn Cohen's photographs occupy an unparalleled position in the history of contemporary photography from the second half of the twentieth century and demonstrate the artist's rigorous and innovative approach. From the 1970s on, Cohen focused almost exclusively on interior

spaces, captured as they exist, much like ready-mades waiting to be photographed.

Demonstrating all of Cohen's self-imposed parameters—neutral subject, clarity of form, and direct lighting—*Untitled (Waves)* shows the interior of a shower room that is difficult to identify. The artist sought to take advantage of the reflections in this symmetrically framed work, intending to create a sense of doubt as to their origin, namely, whether they were actually part of the image or caused by the glass of the photograph's frame.

4. Towards a new figuration - 1963

Kittie Bruneau

Montréal, Québec, 1929 – Calgary, Alberta, 2021

One Eye Suzy, 1963

Oil on canvas, 131.5 × 165.2 cm

Gift of Georges Delrue

1983.011

Having never adhered to any particular art movement or theory, Kittie Bruneau forged her own figurative and richly symbolic universe outside of the dominant aesthetic discourses. Her seemingly naïve or childlike graphic universe contains a subversive dimension. Bruneau anticipated the figurative style that young artists would gravitate towards in the 1970s, as they moved away from geometric abstraction to embrace the spirit of Pop Art.

One Eye Suzy, filled with human and animal figures both real and mythological, is typical of her work from the early 1960s. The composition centers on a circle, a common element in her early paintings. Using vivid colours and precise forms, Bruneau creates a flat pictorial space, reaffirming the two-dimensional nature of the canvas in a figurative style all her own.

5. Protocolary journeys - 2008

Renée Lavallante

Montréal, Québec, 1947

***À tes dépens si tu te perds. Du lac de Vinça
au prieuré de Marcevol (récit de Dominique)***, 2008

Pencil on Herculene drafting film, 91.5 × 114 cm

Gift of the artist

2020.024

Renée Lavallante's approach to drawing is based on protocols. *À tes dépens si tu te perds*, a series of fifteen drawings, is the result of a research residency at the Musée d'art moderne de Collioure in France, in 2006. During her stay, the artist invited hikers to describe, from memory, routes they had taken in the area. Facing away from the hikers, she transcribed the information they recounted onto a sheet of paper on the floor.

These tracings later served as the raw material for drawings Lavallante began in her Montréal studio, not really knowing where they would lead her. She eventually decided to isolate each of the lines collected onto tracing paper, then reproduced them repeatedly in different ways onto another sheet of paper. The final result resembles a topographical map or a geological cross-section.

6. Simplified bodies - 1950

Anne Kahane

Vienna, Austria, 1924 – Mont-Royal, Québec, 2023

Blue Seated Figure, 1977

Painted aluminum, 152.4 × 106.7 × 76.5 cm

Donation Maurice Forget

2010.020

Anne Kahane's career, which began in the late 1940s, made her a leading figure in Canadian sculpture and public art, with a particular interest for the human form. She became the first Canadian female sculptor to take part in the Venice Biennale in 1958.

In the early 1950s, Kahane worked with copper tubing, which led her to

work with aluminum sheets in the late 1970s. To avoid welding, she made use of the metal's relative pliability, cutting and folding the sheets into human-like forms. Compared with her work from the 1950s and 1960s, she limited the volume of her sculptures to a bare minimum in the 1970s. *Blue Seated Figure* reflects the importance Kahane placed on the relationship between flat planes which, together, create a human figure reduced to its simplest expression.

7. Experimenting with the fourth dimension - 2016

Bécharud Hudon

Catherine Bécharud, Sept-Îles, Québec, 1962

Sabin Hudon, Lesage, Québec, 1964

***Mécanismes de dessaisissement (triangle)*, 2021**

Wood, aluminum, inkjet prints on acrylic, LEDs, electromechanical systems, motion sensor, wires, power supply, vinyl triangle on wall.

Program duration: approximately 30 minutes. 244 × 244 × 76 cm

Gift of the artists

T.2024.168

Catherine Bécharud and Sabin Hudon, the duo known as Bécharud Hudon, have become known for their sensitive and engaged practice inspired by notions of active listening, interstitial spaces, alternative temporalities, and a renewed perception of natural and urban environments.

Mécanisme de dessaisissement, a series of three works, functions based on kinematic programming, exploring movements that are possible in relation to time. The series is part of a body of work begun in 2016 and based on spiritual research into the fourth dimension, in dialogue with the work of pioneering artists of modern abstraction. Research into the fourth dimension seeks to reveal qualities that cannot be explained scientifically, leading to a total understanding of the universe. This piece brings together variations in geometric form, colour, light, spatialization, and the temporality of movement.

8. On the threshold of modernity - 1945

Raymonde Gravel

Montréal, Québec, 1913 – Sainte-Foy, Québec, 1993

***Portrait de mon père*, 1945**

Charcoal on paper, 65 × 50.5 cm

Gift of the Honourable Serge Joyal, PC OC

2023.038

Beginning in the 1930s, Raymonde Gravel favoured landscape, still life and portrait painting. The identity of the model in *Portrait de mon père*—a gift to the MAJ from one of its founding members, Senator Serge Joyal—was for the longest time unknown. Then, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) published a catalogue that featured two of Gravel's portraits from its collection, painted toward the end of the 1930s. One depicts the artist's mother in her domestic world, and the other shows her father, a dentist, at work. This second painting made it possible to identify the model of the portrait in the MAJ's collection.

While the paintings in the MNBAQ publication seem to illustrate a traditional vision of men's and women's roles, discernible in Gravel's choice of setting for her subjects and their individual attributes, her work is distinguished by a bold touch and an emphasis on the effects of light.

This drawing was restored thanks to Power Corporation of Canada.

9. Double image in sculpture - 2009

Valérie Blass

Montréal, Québec, 1967

***Untitled (ladder)*, 2009**

Wood, paint, moss, running shoe, 102 × 30 × 20.5 cm

Gift of François Roy

2021.011.1-2

Valérie Blass revisits representations of the body and abstraction, subverting the aesthetic codes and traditional forms of sculptural expression. She seeks to hold the viewer's gaze, creating confusion

through a back-and-forth between two interpretations or two possible images within the same piece.

As its title indicates, *Untitled (ladder)* takes the form of a small ladder. With a running shoe on one foot, the structure immediately recalls the human body. Standing precariously upright, this body-ladder is camouflaged under a coat of green moss. The work centres on a play of opposites and contrasts that is characteristic of Blass's work, present here in the rigidity of the support and the organic nature of the material that camouflages it, blurring the boundary between the living and the inanimate.

10. Art and socialism - 1954

Ghitta Caiserman

Montréal, Québec, 1923 – Montréal, Québec, 2005

Celebration, 1954

Oil on board, 91 × 121.5 cm

Gift of Jacqueline Brien

1984.022

Ghitta Caiserman was born into an affluent environment that nurtured the growth of her artistic vocation. Her family was influential in Montréal's Jewish community, and she inherited their strong socialist values. Throughout her life, her social engagement was reflected in her art, her teaching, and her involvement in the various leftist organizations she gravitated towards.

Over the decades, Caiserman explored figurative art through different themes, all linked to the human condition and the principles of a modern experimentation with painting. The 1950s were devoted to domestic scenes, including still lifes and portraits. Painted in 1954, *Celebration* illustrates a scene reminiscent of the end of an evening, with its dense composition of crowded planes.

This painting was restored thanks to Power Corporation of Canada.

11. Art during times of war - 1945

Claire Fauteux

Montréal, Québec, 1890 – Montréal, Québec, 1988

Cuisine de chambrée, Besançon, 1941

Oil on panel, 30.4 × 22.5 cm

Gift of the Fondation des arts et métiers d'art du Québec, L'Artothèque 2022.573

When the Second World War broke out, Montréal artist Claire Fauteux was living and working in Paris. In 1940, unable to leave Paris under German occupation, she was arrested along with other British subjects. Held for months at an internment camp in Besançon, she passed the time by sketching. Her drawings illustrate daily life for the detainees: chores, lining up at the canteen, and moments of rest in the barracks, as seen in this painting in the MAJ's collection.

Freed in May 1941, Fauteux smuggled her drawings out of the camp by sewing them into the lining of her suitcase. She later made paintings from these drawings, and illustrations for a book recounting her experience of the war. Her artistic production, which includes portraits, landscapes and still lifes, remains relatively unknown.

Changing Society

Even before the term “feminist” was coined, women were claiming their place in politics and society as in the art world. From the first Suffragette campaigns of the late 1800s to the rise of feminism in the 1960s, which coincided with the Quiet Revolution, women fought for emancipation on many fronts. The activism of lesbian, Indigenous, and racialized women challenged white, heterosexual, middle-class feminism. Today, intersectional and plural feminisms are central to the discussion.

Linked by a critical and political discourse, the works featured in this section are anchored to particular historical moments. While some of them address a specific cause from a feminist perspective, others are associated with events that impacted the status of women more broadly. This section also highlights historical exhibitions that played a considerable role in giving women's art greater visibility

12. Cutting down founding narratives - 2004

Cynthia G. Renard

Montréal, Québec, 1969

***Le triangle impossible*, 2004**

Acrylic on canvas, 195.4 × 217 cm

Gift of the artist

2017.038

Cynthia G. Renard uses humour and irony to question popular stereotypes and myths. Exemplary of their artistic engagement on aesthetic, conceptual, and political levels, *Le triangle impossible* addresses logging, an industry associated with the founding of Québec and a cornerstone of its economic development.

The image of the felled tree is central to the painting, which presents the optical illusion of a wooden Penrose triangle floating in a monochromatic blue space. An eye in the middle of the triangle brings to mind the Eye of Providence associated with Freemasonry, a symbol of judgement and, in terms of ecological awareness, the consequences of overconsumption. The painting questions the founding myth of the lumberjack as the pioneer who cleared the land and built Québec society, as well as the narratives surrounding modern painting and its masters, combining the characteristics of modernist painting with popular figurative imagery.

13. International Women's Year - 1975

Leslie Reid

Ottawa, Ontario, 1947

***Ucluelet II*, 1979**

Acrylic on linen canvas, 141.8 × 187.8 cm

Gift of Lise Nicole

2023.137

The rise of the women's movement was recognised by the United Nations, which declared 1975 International Women's Year. The Canadian art scene, in keeping with the times, rallied accordingly. The National Gallery of Canada presented *Some Canadian Women Artists*, an exhibition featuring the work of seven living women artists. Among the seven artists

selected was Leslie Reid, interested in the tradition of landscape painting and light. This penchant is evident in her vast, luminous and atmospheric landscapes, which border on abstraction and are rendered in barely perceptible gradations.

In 1976, Reid traveled across Canada and down the Pacific coast of the United States. Her travels led to a series of ten lithographs and eight paintings, including *Ucluelet II*, based on photographs she took along the way. The painting explores isolated territories, and the traces left behind by human beings.

14. The rise of public art - 1961

Mariette Rousseau-Vermette

Trois-Pistoles, Québec, 1926 – Montréal, Québec, 2006

Lycaena, 1980

Wool tapestry with aluminum, 152 × 244 cm

Gift of Monique et Robert Parizeau

2023.121

In the early 1960s, Québec experienced an economic and cultural boom in the wake of the Quiet Revolution. The establishment of the Ministère des Affaires Culturelles du Québec in 1961 led to support for modern art through, among other things, the Policy for integrating the arts into architecture and the environment, commonly referred to as the 1% Policy, which stipulates that the construction of any new public building must incorporate a work of public art. The integration of art and architecture interested a generation of young artists, including Mariette Rousseau-Vermette, who experimented with new industrial materials and pushed traditional craft techniques beyond disciplinary boundaries.

Interested in three-dimensional relief, Rousseau-Vermette incorporated materials such as fur and metallic supports into her weavings. *Lycaena* is punctuated by volumes that divide the surface. Referred to as “bourrelets” by the artist, these protuberances were created by inserting aluminum tubes or woven rolls into folds.

15. Transgressive performance - 1988

Carolee Schneemann

Fox Chase, United States, 1939 – New Paltz, United States, 2019

Untitled (Infinity Kisses series), 1988

Chromogenic print, 124.6 × 105.3 cm

Gift of Manon Blanchette

2016.008

Carolee Schneeman began her career as a painter before turning to performance. She regularly provoked controversy by exploring her own sexuality and domestic life through performance and video. She confronted taboos and rejected the dominant social and aesthetic conventions of the day, projecting private, intimate, and often explicit images into the public sphere.

This *Untitled* photograph was part of the first iteration of *Infinity Kisses*, a series of 140 candid photographs taken by the artist herself over a seven-year period as she kissed her cat Cluny each day. A fragment of photographic documentation and performance, the image depicts an unexpected moment of tenderness. Its aesthetic quality reflects the spontaneity of the gesture and is a direct consequence of Cluny's sudden and unpredictable actions

16. Denouncing gender-based violence - 2005

Alicia Framis

Barcelona, Spain, 1967

Secret Strike (Lleida, 2005), 2005

Video, 1/5, 3 min 54 s

Anonymous gift

2022.552

In the video *Secret Strike (Lleida, 2005)*, by internationally renowned Dutch and Catalan artist Alicia Framis, the camera weaves through one hundred immobile women in protest against gender-based violence, including violence against women. The participants have taken over a crosswalk on a busy street in Lleida, a city in Catalonia, remaining completely still for several minutes, stopping traffic as car horns blare on.

As the work's title suggests, this is a secret, unexpected strike. Organized by Framis with support from the Centre d'Art la Panera in Lleida, the event was presented as part of the International Day Against Gender-Based Violence in 2005 to denounce government inaction, preceding the #MeToo movement by a few years.

17. *Art et féminisme* at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal - 1978

Sorel Cohen

Montréal, Québec, 1936

***The Camera Can Obliterate the Reality it Records*, 1978**

Chromogenic print, 15/100, 55.7 × 68.5 cm

Gift of Luc LaRochelle

1996.019

Sorel Cohen distinguished herself in the 1970s as one of the first Montréal artists to adopt a feminist and conceptual approach to photography. She turned to photography and self-portraiture to examine the status of women in society and the codes of Western art history that have conferred a subordinate role upon them.

Cohen took part in major exhibitions featuring the work of Québec women artists, including *Art et féminisme*, presented at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal in 1982, curated by Rose-Marie Arbour.

This work from the MAJ collection, created in 1978, is representative of a body of work in which the artist captured her movements using a long exposure and a slow shutter speed, transforming them into blurred, undefined streaks of colour. Organizing her images in a grid pattern, she borrowed this formal principle of Modernism and subverted its association with a history of art defined by men.

18. Visual Indigenization - 2000

Joane Cardinal-Schubert

Red Deer, Alberta, 1942 – Calgary, Alberta, 2009

***Birch Bark Blanket*, 2000**

Acrylic and gold leaf on canvas, 122 × 91.5 cm

Gift of Vincent Fortier

2021.068

Created by Joane Cardinal-Schubert, an artist of Kainai (Blood) descent, *Birch Bark Blanket* draws on an ancestral tradition dating back to the prehistoric era. Its flat, frontal composition is marked by handprints that recall the cave paintings at Lascaux and Chauvet, but Cardinal-Schubert does not reference the iconography of European prehistoric art. Instead, she points to the petroglyphs at Writing-on-Stone, in southern Alberta, which are among the oldest made by Indigenous peoples in North America.

Cardinal-Schubert critiques the practices of Western art institutions, which often relegate Indigenous art to the realm of ethnographic artifacts, contributing to the erasure of the history and culture of Indigenous peoples. She emphasizes the vitality and contemporaneity of the First Nations, contesting the colonial construction that envisages Indigenous cultures as frozen in a distant past.

19. New acquisition

Shannon Bool

Comox, British Columbia, 1972

***Planes Gatherer*, 2015**

Wool tapestry with embroidery accents, 227.8 × 183.3 cm

Gift of François Roy

2024.018

Shannon Bool's practice combines tapestry, photography, sculpture, installation and painting. Her work offers a critical look at modernism and addresses the ways in which ethnology, psychoanalysis and architecture have represented women in the 20th century.

Planes Gatherer is part of a body of work linked to the history of the

representation of women in the Pavillon de l'Élégance, presented at the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris. This series includes tapestries and photograms depicting women in fictional spaces, playing both the role of analyst and subject of analysis. Bool draws on fashion documents from the 1920s, including images taken inside the Parisian pavilion. She reproduces the silhouettes and poses of female models from the company Siegel & Stockman, frozen in the exhibition rooms, wearing the latest fashions.

20. New acquisition

Karen Trask

Fergus, Ontario, 1954

***45°37'58.20" N, 74°19'02.27" O (L'orme)*, 2014**

Inkjet printing on Japanese paper, weaving, mounted on wooden rod
305 × 154.5 cm

Gift of the artist

2024.042

Known for her explorations of language and her use of paper, Karen Trask works to redefine the boundaries of conceptual art by integrating traditional craft techniques into contemporary works.

45°37'58.20" N, 74°19'02.27" O (L'orme) refers to the exact coordinates of the tree depicted, the longitude and latitude of its location between Montréal and Lachute. American elms have been widely attacked by Dutch elm disease. However, some, including this one, have resisted the disease. To create this work, the artist printed two identical images, which she then cut into strips. Through a meticulous weaving process, she assembled two different images of the tree, one faithful to the original and the second blurred and inverted. For Trask, the elm symbolises the artist in society.

21. Ephemeral site-specific installation - 1992

Fleming & Lapointe

Martha Fleming, Toronto, 1958

Lyne Lapointe, Montréal, 1957

***Cléopâtre*, 1992**

Oil and China paper collage on wood, 213.5 × 122 × 4.5 cm

Gift of the Fusaro-Lanctôt family

2024.040

Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe, working as a duo, sought to revitalise abandoned buildings – libraries, barracks, churches and theatres – while taking into account their history and significance in the neighbourhood in which they were located.

Cléopâtre comes from a site-specific installation entitled *Matière Première*, which the artists presented in 1994 at the São Paulo Biennial. Their intervention took shape at the residence of Dona Sebastiana de Mello Freire. Doctors had ordered this woman to remain at home, which she did for 41 years, living under constant medical surveillance.

This piece depicts the legend surrounding the suicide of Cleopatra and her two servants. The painting symbolises the parallels between the extreme isolation of Brazilian women due to illness, and that of Cleopatra, who, faced with the Roman invasion, chose death rather than the humiliation of defeat.

22. The Fonds René-Malo - 2021

Beatrice (Bea) Parsons

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, 1981

***Four eyes distance between the trees*, 2020**

Monotype print on Stonehenge paper, 56.5 × 71 cm

Acquired thanks to the Fonds René-Malo

2021.002

In 2007, for the MAJ's 40th anniversary as a secular institution, René Malo, a well-known filmmaker from Joliette, worked with the Museum to develop an unprecedented fund for the acquisition of contemporary artworks created in the past ten years. In 2012,

the Fonds René-Malo enabled the purchase of eleven pieces for the permanent collection, from artists Yann Pocreau, Pascal Grandmaison, Chris Kline, Kent Monkman, and Ed Pien.

In 2021, nearly ten years after the first wave of purchases, the MAJ acquired a twelfth piece thanks to the Fund. This time, the work was by a woman artist: Bea Parsons, an artist of Cree, Scottish, and French descent. Her black and white monotypes are characterized by a graphic style that straddles abstract and figurative art. *Four eyes distance between the trees* revisits several recurring elements in the artist's personal iconography, including references to nature and the cosmos.

23. Producing a historical exhibition - 2022

Marian Dale Scott

Montréal, Québec, 1906 – Montréal, Québec, 1993

Untitled, about 1970

Acrylic on canvas, 86.6 × 91.5 cm

Gift of Esther Trépanier

2022.566

Research by art historian Esther Trépanier led the MAJ to produce an ambitious historical exhibition in 2022, examining Modernity through little-studied artistic avenues. *Forgotten! Scott, Brandtner, Eveleigh, Webber: Revisiting Montreal Abstraction of the 1940s* showcased nearly one hundred works by anglophone artists Marian Dale Scott, Fritz Brandtner, Henry Eveleigh, and Gordon Webber.

Dale Scott was a friend of Trépanier's and gifted several of her works to the art historian during her lifetime, including this *Untitled* piece. For nearly forty years, Dale Scott explored the potential of figurative work before turning to abstraction in the late 1960s. In 1967 certain paintings, such as this one in the MAJ collection, were organised into flat areas of colour with hard edges, featuring a tangle of precisely defined coloured triangles that create the illusion of volume.

24. Maurice Forget Donation - 1995

Liz Magor

Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1948

Fish Taken from Tazawa Ko, December 1945, 1988

Lead, jute and wood, 53.1 × 35.3 cm

Maurice Forget Donation

1995.192

Throughout the 1980s, the MAJ's collection grew at a steady rate. In December 1995, Maurice Forget donated over 300 works from his personal collection. It was at this time that the work of several emerging, mid-career and established women artists entered the Museum's collection. Of the 247 artists represented in this donation, 75 were women.

Among these works was *Fish Taken from Tazawa Ko, December 1945*, an early piece by Liz Magor. The artist's early work used natural materials, incorporating bird nests, shells, bones, and even compost. Recalling natural science specimens, this piece materialises the tragedy of a lake polluted by the construction of an electric power plant in Japan in 1940.

25. A place for women administrators - 1979

Jeanne Rhéaume

Montréal, Québec, 1915 – Montréal, Québec, 2000

Fiesole, 1950

Oil on canvas, 41.3 × 51.5 cm

Gift of Madeleine Rocheleau-Boyer

1979.276

In 1967, at the height of Québec's Quiet Revolution, the Clerics of Saint Viator entrusted the management of their collection to a secular organization, founding the MAJ. The following decade saw the arrival of women among the institution's administration and staff. Two women, Cécile Martin-Masse and Madeleine Rocheleau-Boyer, were the first to join the Museum's board of directors in 1979. That same year, Madeleine Rocheleau-Boyer donated Jeanne Rhéaume's painting *Fiesole* to the collection.

Jeanne Rhéaume occupied a central place in the Montréal art world of the 1940s. In 1948, a grant from the Québec government allowed her to travel to Italy, where she was deeply inspired by the Tuscan landscapes. In *Fiesole*, Rhéaume's formal concerns, in line with those of the École de Paris, are reflected in the simplified volumes, fragmented surfaces, and accentuated contours.

This painting was restored thanks to Power Corporation of Canada.

26. Investing in abstraction - 1960

Rita Letendre

Drummondville, Québec, 1928 – Toronto, Ontario, 2021

Étincelles, 1959

Oil on canvas, 82.2 × 153.9 cm

Wilfrid Corbeil collection. Gift of the Clerics of Saint Viator of Canada 2012.108

Over the course of the MAJ's first few decades, the development of its collection remained closely tied to the interests of Father Wilfrid Corbeil, CSV, the Museum's director and president of its administrative board until 1977. He was interested in the formal research that artists were engaged with at the time, whether in the realm of secular or religious art. This interest was also evident in his personal collection, which included *Étincelles*, purchased directly from the artist Rita Letendre in 1960.

A key figure in non-figurative painting in Québec, Rita Letendre made a name for herself at a time when Montréal's art scene was distancing itself from the unified vision of the Automatistes. Composed of thick, spontaneously applied impastos, *Étincelles* reflects the influence of the Automatistes' gestural style on her practice before she turned to hard edge and geometric forms.

Women of Collective Actions

The fundraising campaign, Women of Collective Actions, aims to pay tribute to the women who have supported the MAJ over the years. These women are, for example, donors, employees, and administrators,

but they are also the women in our lives who have instilled in us values that include art and culture.

Join the movement and become a woman of Collective Actions, or honor the presence or memory of a woman in your life who opened your eyes and heart to the importance of art. Add a name to the space of this exhibition by visiting this link:

<https://www.jedonneenligne.org/fondationmaj/FEM2025/>

All funds raised through this campaign will be invested in the preventive conservation, restoration, and acquisition of works of art created by women.

Extend your visit online

Touch the screen to learn more about *Collective actions: A feminist view of the collection*—the virtual exhibition. Explore 80 works by women artists, untold stories, rarely seen works and texts that shed light on the history of the Museum's collection. A rich and accessible experience, the result of three years of research.

The virtual exhibition is also available at any time from the comfort of your own home!

27. *The School of Women* - 2004

Irène Senécal

Montréal, Québec, 1901 – Montréal, Québec, 1978

Rue sous le Cap, Québec, 1937

Oil on wood, 32 × 26.8 cm

Gift of Chantal Laberge

1989.010

From 2003 to 2004, the MAJ presented *The School of Women*, an exhibition of work by women artists drawn exclusively from its collection. The first exhibition of its kind in the history of the institution, it offered a thematic exploration of women artists' presence in Canadian art since the beginning of the 20th century.

Rue sous le Cap, Québec, by Irène Senécal, was shown for the first time at the MAJ during this exhibition. Although there are no people in this modest-looking street scene of Old Québec, it sheds light on a working-class neighbourhood and mundane, everyday tasks like doing laundry. This painting reflects the emergence of modernity in its break with realism and its choice of subject, its composition, and chromatic palette.

28. First painting acquired from a female artist - 1943

Agnès Lefort

Saint-Rémy-de-Napierville, Québec, 1891 – Montréal, Québec, 1973

Nature morte, about 1943

Oil on canvas, 54 × 44 cm

Séminaire de Joliette collection. Gift of the Clerics of Saint Viator of Canada

2012.038

The establishment of an art museum at the Séminaire de Joliette began in 1943 with the acquisition of eight paintings, including *Nature morte* by Agnès Lefort. This painting was purchased for the collection in the wake of her exhibition at the Seminary—the first solo exhibition granted to a woman artist at the institution.

According to available documentation, although women were included in the Museum's programming, this piece and a painting by the artist Rita Mount, acquired in 1944, were the only two works by women artists in the collection until the 1960s.

Following a trip through Europe in 1937, Lefort adopted Fauvist and Cubist techniques. In *Nature morte*, the gestural quality of the brush strokes, the flat planes of saturated colour, and the accentuation of contour lines reflect a certain distancing from academic principles. Lefort eventually abandoned painting to open her own gallery in Montréal in 1950.

29. Exposition des maîtres de la peinture moderne - 1942

Louise Gadbois

Montréal, Québec, 1896 – Montréal, Québec, 1985

Problème, 1945-1950

Oil on canvas, 64 × 50.9 cm

Gift of Kathryn Anne Gadbois

2018.001

In January 1942, *Exposition des maîtres de la peinture moderne* was presented at the Séminaire de Joliette, an educational institution run by the Clerics of Saint Viator and the origins of the MAJ. This exhibition brought together six avant-garde artists from Montréal: Paul-Émile Borduas, Marc-Aurèle Fortin, John Lyman, Alfred Pellán, Goodridge Roberts, and Louise Gadbois. This presentation of modern, non-academic art at the Seminary was surprising for the time, was the inclusion of a woman among these “masters of modern painting.”

This first presentation of a woman artist at the Seminary was followed by solo exhibitions featuring painters Agnès Lefort in 1943, Rita Mount in 1944, and Louise Gadbois in 1945 and 1956. An intimist painter known for her portraits, Gadbois often portrayed her friends, including the artist and critic Géraldine Bourbeau, the subject of *Problème*. Like many of her colleagues, Gadbois explored a modern figurative style without venturing into complete abstraction.

Building the Museum

The Musée d’art de Joliette’s permanent collection, its programming, and its successive administrations together tell the story of the institution’s work to increase women’s visibility on the aesthetic, social, and political levels. Women artists first entered the Museum in 1942, through an exhibition of modern avant-garde art. Over time, their presence grew through many other initiatives.

This section focuses on major donations, acquisitions, and exhibitions that highlight the history of women at the MAJ. This history spans from the institution's first years as the Musée d'art du Séminaire, through its transformation into a secular institution in 1967, to the MAJ as we know it today. The works assembled here, which are significant for their means of entry into the collection or through their link to an important event, provide an opportunity to learn more about the people who played a key role in the inclusion of women artists in the MAJ collection.

30. Les Ateliers convertibles - 1993

Jocelyne Tremblay

Saint-Urbain, Québec, 1946

***Bois de coffrage et cire*, 1991**

Wood and wax, 95 × 268 × 27.5 cm

Gift of the artist

1993.022

In the 1980s, artists rallied in response to the lack of exhibition spaces for contemporary art in the Lanaudière region. First known as the Ateliers communautaires d'en bas, a collective of artists, largely women, founded a community space in 1983, where artists could work, meet, and exhibit. For more than a decade the group, renamed Les Ateliers convertibles in 1991, brought together members such as Suzanne Joly, Sylvie Tourangeau, Louise Paillé, and Josée Fafard, organizing artistic interventions outside of traditional venues as a means of democratizing art.

Jocelyne Tremblay joined the collective in the early 1990s, a time during which she was interested in transforming materials, particularly wood. *Bois de coffrage et cire*, acquired by the MAJ in 1993, is one of the artist's first major works in this material, which for her, represents a rootedness in nature.

Steinway grand piano

Hamburg, 1916

Model A

Donated by the Gilles Crépeau family, 2015

Founded in New York in 1853, Steinway & Sons quickly became a household name in piano manufacturing. To meet growing demand, the company opened a factory in Hamburg, Germany, in 1880.

The piano presented here, acquired by the Musée d'art de Joliette in 2015 thanks to the initiative of Michel Dionne, then president of the Museum's choir, was manufactured during the First World War. As bronze and brass were reserved for the army, craftsmen used substitute materials, making this instrument unique.

After its delivery to a Steinway retailer in Austria, the piano disappeared for several decades. Its journey remains a mystery to this day. The piano was found in Québec in 2007, in poor condition, at an estate sale. Artisan restorer Daniel Farah, based in Joliette, acquired the instrument and restored it completely, reviving its voice and presence.

Today, this piano is part of the Museum's permanent collection. Installed in the gallery, it is used for intimate concerts, in direct dialogue with the works that surround it.

Sylvie Bouchard

With the renewal of the second-floor exhibition spaces, the MAJ is presenting recently acquired works by Sylvie Bouchard in this space dedicated to temporary programming, including Installation, which is part of the exhibition *Collective actions: A feminist view of the collection*.

Sylvie Bouchard made her mark on postmodern art in Quebec through her contribution to the development of installation art and the new figurative movement in painting. These works, created in the 1980s and 1990s, attest to the lasting influence of theatre, surrealism and the new image painting movement on her practice.

31. Dawn of pictorial installation - 1983

Sylvie Bouchard

Montréal, Québec, 1959

Installation, 1983

Installation, mixed media: two chairs, a bench and eight salvaged window frames, variable dimensions

Gift of the artist

2024.030.1-10

Installation embodies Sylvie Bouchard's response to those who, in the early 1980s, had declared the death of painting. Renewing pictorial language by transposing drawing and painting into the universe of installation, she opened unexpected new directions.

This piece is the artist's first ever painting installation. Following its presentation at La Centrale Galerie Powerhouse in 1983, Bouchard created similar works in Québec and abroad over the course of two years. Composed of found objects, mainly window frames of various sizes, *Installation* contains glass surfaces that act as the site of Bouchard's painting intervention. Even today, Bouchard's work contains areas of imprecision and spatial contradictions that create a sense of disquiet in an otherwise measured work.

32. New acquisition

Sylvie Bouchard

Montréal, Québec, 1959

Motifs sur fond de damier, 1983

Acrylic and metallic pigments on paper, 101 × 66 cm each

Gift of the artist

2024.031

This series of five graphic works follows a rhomboid shape with a checkerboard pattern in which a different symbol is painted each time, including a flag, a house, and a tent. These symbols herald the imaginary world that Bouchard has developed over a forty-year career, which today manifests itself principally in the form of dreamlike landscapes.

33. New acquisition

Sylvie Bouchard

Montréal, Québec, 1959

L'informe, 1998

Oil on canvas, 45 × 51 cm

Gift of the artist

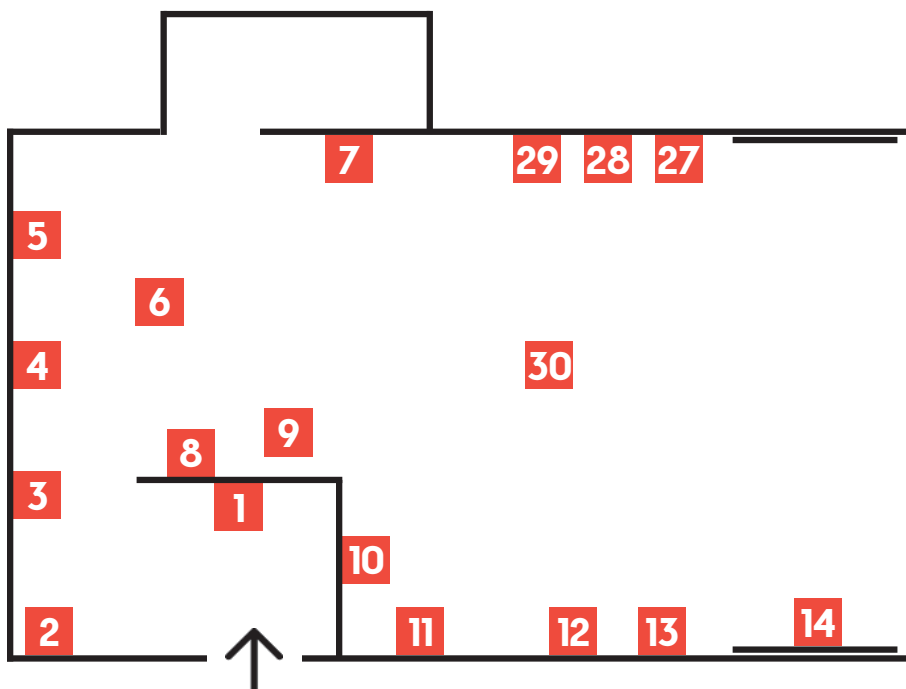
2024.032

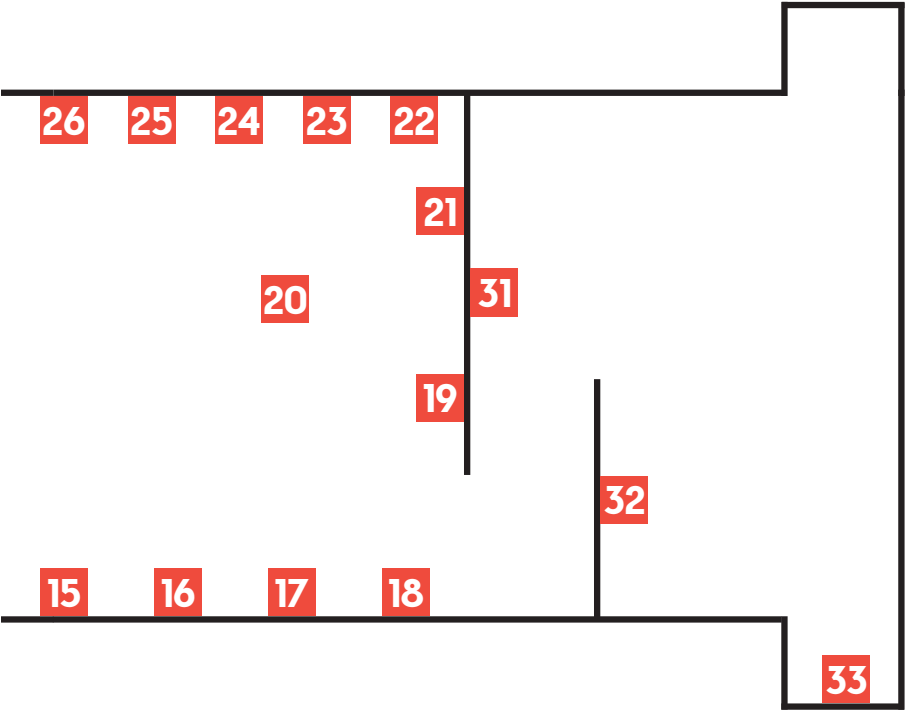
Sylvie Bouchard's work is self-referential. The artist plays with *mise-en-abîme* and the repetition of symbols from one work to another. As such, the work *L'informe* depicts part of the work *Installation* produced fifteen years earlier.

FLOOR PLAN

2nd floor

Salle Marie-Éveline Prévile et Luc Ratelle
and Salle Harnois Énergies





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