



## THE MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC LAUNCHES THE AUDAIN CHAIR

### AN UNPRECEDENTED INITIATIVE IN QUÉBEC AND CANADIAN MUSEUM HISTORY MADE POSSIBLE BY AN EXCEPTIONAL \$2M DONATION

Québec City, Tuesday, October 14, 2025

The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ), in collaboration with the Audain Foundation and the Fondation du MNBAQ (FMNBAQ), is pleased to announce the launch of the Audain Chair thanks to a \$2 million founding gift from philanthropist, visionary, patron, and collector Michael J. Audain. The initiative, which follows in the wake of Jean Paul Riopelle's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1948 *Refus global* (*Total Refusal*) manifesto, aims to perpetuate the Automatistes' legacy and further cement their place in Québec, Canadian, and international art history.

This chair for research, promotion, and innovation, supported by a state museum, is a first in Québec. It will be dedicated to the legacy of those who signed the *Refus global* and the artists who shaped the Automatiste movement. Multidisciplinary artist Françoise Sullivan, a signatory of the famous

manifesto, took part in the launch event to read the Chair's founding declaration, an official document co-signed by several partners supporting the creation of the Audain Chair. Signatories of the declaration include several government corporations from the portfolio of Québec's Ministry of Culture and Communications, as well as national associations that represent the disciplines in which the Automatistes worked. "We are bound to feel, towards this group and those who collaborated with it, a duty of memory that we must collectively honour. As such, we postulate the moral obligation to keep alive the memory of the creations, writings and values that they have passed on to us, in order to preserve them, transmit them and disseminate them for the benefit of those who will follow us, in perpetuity," reads the declaration.

The Audain Chair is decentralized; while it is anchored at the MNBAQ, it will be built around close collaboration with the major Québec and Canadian museums whose collections form the national Automatiste collection. Universities in Québec and Canada will also be involved in the projects. This decentralization, combined with partnerships with universities and the cultural scene, is testament to the MNBAQ's national vocation.

## A DUTY TO REMEMBER AND A LEGACY TO PASS ON

The Automatiste movement had a profound influence on the cultural, social, and political modernization of Québec. The Automatistes helped Québec art take its place in the global trends of the time while asserting a distinct identity.

"I am delighted with this museum chair initiative, which perpetuates the legacy of the Automatistes and demonstrates the innovative strength and spirit of partnership that drive our national museums. It is with great pride that in 2023, I designated the launch of the *Refus global* manifesto in 1948 as a historic event within the meaning of the Cultural Heritage Act. I am convinced that the work of the Chair will increase our efforts to disseminate and promote the immense artistic legacy of the Automatistes and will ensure our collective duty of remembrance towards them," said Mathieu Lacombe, Minister of Culture and Communications.

"The creation of this chair is a momentous occasion for the MNBAQ. We are asserting our role as a scientific and cultural catalyst, while honouring the memory of the Automatistes. It is absolutely our responsibility to better enshrine not only the signatories of the *Refus global* in our collective memory, but also the artists involved in this major artistic movement. A huge thank you to Michael J. Audain for this new drive he is giving our museum institution," said MNBAQ Director General Jean-Luc Murray.

"The Audain Foundation strongly believes that the legacy of the Automatistes must be better known, celebrated, and passed on. This initiative is a call to collective action by our museums and cultural institutions—an appeal to our duty of memory to our obligation to pass on art and knowledge. With this Chair, we are taking a decisive step towards their lasting influence, both here and abroad," declared Michael J. Audain, philanthropist and Chair of the Audain Foundation.

“Thanks to the generosity, enlightened vision, and exceptional dedication of a great patron like Michael J. Audain, this research chair has been given the impetus and resources it needs to flourish. Our foundation, ever true to its mission, is once again at the MNBAQ’s side to support it in achieving its greatest ambitions,” added Fabrice Alcayde, President and CEO of the Fondation du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec.

Under the direction of Guillaume Savard, current Director of Content for the Espace Riopelle, the Audain Chair will become a global reference point and showcase for the advancement of research on the Automatistes and the promotion of their artistic legacy. It will be responsible for numerous projects, including:

- The organization of an international symposium on Jean Paul Riopelle and the Automatistes in November 2026
- Honouring of the movement’s female artists, including Marcelle Ferron
- The creation of a permanent Automatiste gallery in the Espace Riopelle (scheduled to open in the fall of 2026)
- The inclusion of works by Automatiste artists in exhibitions on international bodies of work where formal or thematic relationships can be established
- The development of research and promotion programs in collaboration with universities and museums in Québec, Canada, and abroad

“In recognition of the values of emancipation, creativity and experimentation, social awareness and engagement, subjectivity and freedom that the Automatistes proclaimed—values that live on today—the Chair will have a duty to vouch for the full influence and the widest possible promotion of these artists’ legacy. I fully embrace this mandate,” concluded Guillaume Savard.

## ADDITIONAL LINKS

Dedicated section to the Audain Chair and the full founding declaration :

[Access the link](#)

Répertoire du patrimoine culturel (Cultural heritage directory) file on the Automatistes :

[Les Automatistes - Répertoire du patrimoine culturel du Québec](#)

## MEDIA RELATIONS

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## PHOTO CREDITS

Page 1 – Photo : Maurice Perron, *Seconde Exposition des automatistes au 75, rue Sherbrooke Ouest, chez les Gauvreau*, February 1947. Negative, MNBAQ Collection, Maurice Perron Archive (P35.S7.Pb) © Courtesy of Line-Sylvie Perron.

### *Partners*



THE | **AUDAIN** FOUNDATION

*The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec is a government corporation funded by the Government of Québec.*



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## MNBAQ OPENING HOURS\*

**As of September 8, 2025**

Tuesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Wednesday until 9 p.m.

*\* Only the Pierre Lassonde Pavilion is open during construction on the Espace Riopelle.*

## ADMISSION\*

Adults aged 31 to 64: \$25

Seniors (65+): \$24

Adults aged 18 to 31: \$18

Children aged 13 to 17: \$8

Family package (2 adults and up to  
5 children aged 17 and under): \$54

Children aged 12 and under: Free

Members: Free

Wednesdays 5–9 p.m.: Half-price

First Sunday of the month: Free | 19 and under

Indigenous communities: Free

*\* Save when you buy a ticket online.*

## AVAILABLE SERVICES

Parking, Librairie-Boutique, WiFi, free wheelchairs,  
cloakroom, and nursing room

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