



## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

As part of the International symposium organized by the Audain Chair for the Automatistes at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec

### A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF MEMORY REGIMES AND HERITAGE-BUILDING PROCESSES: THE CASE OF THE RIOPELLE CENTENNIAL

#### BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The celebrations marking the 100th anniversary of Jean Paul Riopelle's birth have so far consisted of more than fifty cultural events<sup>i</sup>, including interdisciplinary activities and some twenty national and international exhibitions<sup>ii</sup>. The rollout of this extensive program, initiated by the Riopelle Foundation<sup>iii</sup>, is set to conclude with the opening of the Espace Riopelle at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) in the fall of 2026, a pavilion within this museum complex dedicated to the history of art in Québec that will be specifically devoted to the preservation and promotion of this artist's work<sup>iv</sup>.

In the wake of these events, the research and creative communities are now invited to a major scientific, cultural, and public gathering aimed at critically analyzing the regimes of memory applied to artists, using the case of the celebrations marking the centennial of Jean Paul Riopelle's birth (1923–2002). The objectives of the Symposium are structured around a historiographical and epistemological approach, with the critical aim of:

- (1) Questioning the mechanisms for celebrating artists and heritage-izing their works, in order to examine the paradigms that structure artistic memory;
- (2) Analyzing the challenges and reconfigurations that this monographic legacy poses to museological practices and regimes of visibility;
- (3) Promoting the circulation of knowledge and the development of critical and innovative methodologies for the promotion of marginalized bodies of work.

#### THREE OVERARCHING AXES

The papers presented at the Symposium should contribute to discussions related to one or more of the following three overarching axes:

1. **The Creative Dimension:** This dimension invites us to examine the criteria and mechanisms that lead to the selection of certain artists as subjects of celebration, taking into account Riopelle's place in national and international art history and, more broadly, situating him within the broader context of Québec and Canada's cultural heritage. It also aims to question the place and role of contemporary creators—across

all disciplines—in the design and implementation of programs celebrating the memory of their peers<sup>v</sup>. Furthermore, it seeks to engage Riopelle’s work with the discourses and creations of contemporary artists across all disciplines;

2. **The Institutional Perspective:** This perspective focuses on the role of museums in implementing such commemorative programs and in positioning such a monographic legacy<sup>vi</sup>. It examines the institutional strategies to prioritize for disseminating the body of work, the curatorial choices likely to ensure the work’s relevance and continued impact, as well as the means to maintain and renew public interest—including the integration of their codes and discourses, as well as the outreach practices to employ for raising awareness and educating the public about the work. This research area also aims to examine the role of various actors—beyond the museum (patrons, collectors, public authorities, art dealers, artists’ foundations, etc.) in the construction of artists’ legacies and the preservation of their works as cultural heritage<sup>vii</sup>;
3. **The Knowledge Track:** This track focuses on the knowledge, archives, and research tools produced in connection with or resulting from the centennial of Riopelle’s birth. The aim is to examine the nature of this knowledge, its potential uses, and the epistemological and methodological frameworks underpinning it<sup>viii</sup>. It also explores how the celebration of artists already established in national and international art histories can or should open up new perspectives capable of addressing blind spots in research, including marginalized artists and bodies of work.

## SIX THEMES FOR EXPLORING THE THREE OVERARCHING AXES

To further explore these three overarching axes, six themes have been identified to organize the presentations at the Symposium:

1. **Artists:** The celebrations marking Riopelle’s centennial have, in particular, brought renewed attention to female artists who were Riopelle’s contemporaries—artists who not only shared a studio with him but also actively collaborated with him on certain major series within his body of work<sup>ix</sup>.

Access to the studio as a space for exchange, alliances, and transactions may prompt the following questions: What relational and power dynamics do these various forms of cooperation bring to the fore? With reference to the Riopelle case, in what ways could the celebration of an artist lead to the opening of spaces and opportunities for women and artists from minority backgrounds?<sup>x</sup>

2. **Expertise:** Focused on research and the reinvention of his own practice through constant experimentation with various mediums of expression<sup>xi</sup>, Riopelle works across two continents, coordinating multiple techniques simultaneously, often in several studios where he also manages professional relationships<sup>xii</sup>.

What role do craftsmanship and the revival of artistic traditions play in Riopelle’s body of work? When, through material studies, we examine the practical knowledge that enabled the creation of these works, how does this affect our perception of the artist’s role and persona? Does the fusion of innovation and ancestral techniques—the driving force behind creation and renewal in Riopelle’s work—blur the line between fine art and craft? Several practices in contemporary art—including, notably but not exclusively, those of Indigenous artists—revisit ancestral know-how and techniques traditionally perceived in the West as craft. Beyond Riopelle’s case, what are the issues raised by this choice?

3. **Territories:** Territory, as both a geographical space for artistic creation and a cultural and social construct, shapes the identity of Riopelle and his works<sup>xiii</sup>. Mobility and rootedness structure the artist’s ceaseless trajectories, granting him access to resources that enable him to forge connections with a multitude of places of attachment imbued with imaginaries and artistic traditions that provide him with the material to renew his artistic practice<sup>xiv</sup>.

What do Riopelle’s identity, art, and reputation owe to this interplay of mobility and rootedness, as well as to his borrowings and his culture of transnational networks?

How does one move from a unilateral relationship between the artist and Indigenous cultures to a reciprocity of contributions, as well as to a genuine “circular dialogue”<sup>xv</sup> with Indigenous artists? More broadly, how does this territorial issue relate to local, community, and diasporic cultures?

**4. Bestiary:** The prevalence and consistency of animal motifs throughout Riopelle’s body of work make bestiary a central and defining component of his practice<sup>xvi</sup>. The artist goes so far as to identify himself with the animal<sup>xvii</sup>. Bestiary is at times a collection of animals appearing successively in different works, and at other times a singular, monumental work simultaneously representing a variety of animals.

What constitutes Riopelle’s relationship with the living beings in the environments he inhabits, and how is his interaction with various ecosystems decisive in his work? What might be the contributions—both historical and contemporary—of the study and promotion of Riopelle’s works to the knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cosmologies? How can the artist’s relationship with animals be reconciled with an ecological perspective that seeks to integrate contemporary issues? Beyond Riopelle, within the broader framework of animal studies, what other case studies might illustrate such a relationship between the artist and animals?

**5. Heritage Status and Institutionalization:** The opening of the Espace Riopelle at the MNBAQ marks the culmination of a process of (re)heritagization of the artist’s works, recognizing them as cultural assets worthy of preservation, restoration, and transmission. It stems from a societal choice aimed at promoting and highlighting this artist, but also from a sociocultural and political process involving multiple actors beyond creators and cultural professionals: patrons, collectors, and foundations; public authorities; cultural institutions; and art dealers.

What is the role of these actors in elevating artists and their works within our collective memory? Since (re)heritagization is a social construct, what values of contemporary society does the Riopelle case reflect? How can current issues such as migration and globalization be integrated into the memory regimes of artists? How can processes of heritage-building be initiated and guided? In what ways can the Riopelle case challenge cultural and heritage policies when applied to the celebration of an artist?

**6. Audiences and the Celebration of Artists:** In 2023 alone, more than 50 events of all kinds were held in Québec, Canada, and abroad as part of the Riopelle Centennial. Nearly half consisted of museum exhibitions held in Québec, Canada, and Europe. Several interdisciplinary events bringing together the fields of theater, music, circus, and documentary film were organized. Public art installations and a Canada-wide outreach program were also implemented.

Between engaging with the works and the artist’s life, art appreciation and openness to creativity, how did the activities of the Riopelle Centennial impact the issue of the public’s role in celebrating artists? How does the Riopelle case address the challenges of the democratization of culture and cultural democracy? What role do cultural mediators play? What educational strategies have engaged or could engage young people in school settings to discover the world of art through major figures in Québec and Canadian art?

## TYPES OF PRESENTATIONS ACCEPTED

The International Symposium invites researchers and creators from all disciplines—including visual artists and craftspeople, professionals, and students.

Anyone interested in the Symposium’s theme (either directly or indirectly) is invited to submit a proposal for a presentation in one of the following formats:

- 1. Presentations:**
  - Oral presentations (full-length or short)
  - Scientific presentations

- Presentations of ongoing research-creation projects
- Presentations of works or artifacts

## 2. Events and other presentation formats:

- Panel discussions
- Roundtables
- Interactive workshops
- Performances

The expected duration of presentations is 25 minutes (except for short presentations, which may be 10 to 15 minutes). However, the allotted time is subject to change depending on the number and nature of the proposed presentations.

Please note that expanded versions of the presentations may be published as scientific articles in partnership with the journal *Le Carnet. Histoires de l'art*. Their relevance will be determined based on the scope and content of the proposals, following evaluation by the symposium's scientific committee.

In addition, communications, events, or other forms of presentations may be recorded on audiovisual media and subsequently broadcast by the MNBAQ and its partners.

### CALL FOR PROPOSALS:

Proposals for presentations or events must be submitted by completing the designated form, available on the MNBAQ website via the following link: [SOUSSION DE PROPOSITIONS](#)

For any questions, the completed form must be sent to the following email address: [symposiumriopelle@mnbaq.org](mailto:symposiumriopelle@mnbaq.org)

The proposal must include:

- A title
- A 250-word abstract (to be published in the program) outlining the research question, objectives, and methodology or main line of inquiry in relation to the symposium's themes and/or topics
- The name(s) and affiliations of the author(s);
- Audio-visual requirements
- A brief bio-bibliography of the lead author (200 words)

Only abstracts submitted in French and English will be evaluated.

For oral presentations delivered in a language other than French, the MNBAQ will ensure that the content of the presentation is available in French. Only translations from other languages into French will be carried out.

The deadline for submitting a presentation proposal is **June 19, 2026**.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

Financial support may be provided to assist in the development of creative initiatives by artists in all disciplines.

The MNBAQ may also offer financial support to participants (researchers and creators) from outside Québec.

In both cases, the terms of the financial support will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### GENERAL RULES

#### General Rules:

- The eligibility and evaluation criteria are the same for both oral presentations and other forms of communication and presentation;

- Please note that the decisions of the Scientific Committee, as ratified by the Steering Committee, are final;
- By submitting a proposal, the author of a presentation agrees to the program to be developed by the Scientific Committee. Consequently, the choice of topic in your proposal is of the utmost importance;
- Presentation abstracts will be published on the symposium website. It is therefore recommended that you take particular care in drafting your abstract;
- In addition to the proposals received following the launch of this call for papers, the full program of the Symposium may be supplemented by targeted invitations issued upon the recommendation of the Scientific Committee. This is to ensure a balanced representation of the various topics and areas comprising the Symposium's theme.

### **Evaluation Criteria:**

The Scientific Committee's evaluation of proposals is based on the following criteria:

- Clarity of the research question and objectives;
- Clarity of the methodology;
- Alignment of the topic with the six themes proposed by the Scientific Committee and relevance of the research question to the Symposium's three main areas of focus;
- Contribution to the expansion of research or creative fields.

### **Symposium Guidelines:**

- The paper must be presented by at least one of the authors listed in the proposal;
- Authors agree to notify the symposium organizers of any withdrawal as soon as possible;
- In-person participation is preferred;
- During the symposium, out of respect for other presenters, the author must be present for the entire duration of the session in which they are presenting.

### **SCHEDULE:**

**April 20, 2026:** Call for papers launched

**June 19, 2026:** Deadline for submitting paper proposals

**Summer 2026:** Scientific committee feedback sent to authors and finalization of the program

**January 27, 28 and 29, 2027:** Symposium held at the MNBAQ in Québec City

**June 15, 2027:** Deadline for submitting full texts, if applicable, for the publication of scientific articles resulting from the Symposium

**January 2028:** Publication of scientific articles in *Le Carnet. Histoires de l'art*

### **CONTACT:**

If you have any questions, please contact the organizing committee at the following address:  
[symposiumriopelle@mnbaq.org](mailto:symposiumriopelle@mnbaq.org)

### **SYMPOSIUM GOVERNANCE**

#### **Steering Committee:**

- Annie Gérin – Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at Concordia University
- Joanne Lalonde – Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Québec in Montreal (UQAM)
- Manon Gauthier – Executive Director of the Audain Foundation and Curator of the Jean Paul Riopelle Centennial Celebrations
- Guillaume Savard – Director of the Audain Museum Chair for the Automatistes at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ)

#### **Scientific Committee:**

- Fiona Annis – Multidisciplinary Artist and Assistant Professor, Department of Art History, Cinema and Audiovisual Media, Université de Montréal
- Philippe U. Del Drago – Executive and Artistic Director, International Festival of Films on Art (Le FIFA)
- Caroline Nepton Hotte – Professor, Department of Art History, UQAM

- Lea Kabiljo – Assistant Professor, Planning, Architecture, Art, and Design, School of Art, Laval University
- Edith-Anne Pageot – Professor, Department of Art History, UQAM
- Jean-Philippe Warren – Professor (Sociology and Anthropology), Concordia University

<sup>i</sup> For more information, see the detailed Centennial program: 2023: The Centennial - Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation [2023: Le Centenaire - Fondation Jean Paul Riopelle](#)

<sup>ii</sup> Of all the activities included in the program of events marking Riopelle’s centennial, nearly half consisted of exhibitions dedicated to his works. These were held in Montreal, Ottawa, Quebec City, Fredericton, Winnipeg, and Vancouver, in various locations across Quebec, and later in Saint-Paul-de-Vence, Paris, and Bucharest. The Centennial program was not limited exclusively to the museum sphere. Several interdisciplinary events were organized, notably in the following disciplines: music (Riopelle symphonic: <http://www.riopellesymphonique.com>); theater (The Riopelle Project, <http://www.exmachina.ca/creation/2880/le-projet-riopelle%20>), film (Riopelle en courts: <https://www.lefifa.com/>). The circus production Riopelle Grandeur Nature by Les 7 Doigts brought the artist’s centennial celebrations to a close in February 2024. The production utilized 360-degree video projection, infrared motion capture, and spatial audio technologies to create an immersive environment evoking Riopelle’s studio, the regions he frequented, as well as representations of several of his monumental works.

<sup>iii</sup> The Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation was established in 2018 to develop a multi-year commemorative program consisting of a multidisciplinary mosaic of artistic and cultural projects, events, recognitions, and exhibitions, which will continue through the fall of 2026, coinciding with the opening of the Espace Riopelle at the MNBAQ. The components of this program, most of which are being implemented under the leadership and auspices of the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation, have been geographically distributed across Quebec, the Canadian provinces, and Europe in honor of the artist. This program and its rollout, grouped under the name “Riopelle Centennial,” constitute what may be called the “Riopelle case.” The creation of the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation resulted from the collaboration and contributions of six founding members (2018–2024), including Canadian collectors and patrons. Its mission is “to inspire future generations of artists and visual art enthusiasts so that they may develop their full creative potential, while gaining a deeper appreciation of Jean Paul Riopelle’s significance in the history of Canadian and international art.” See The Foundation - Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation [2023 : Le Centenaire - Fondation Jean Paul Riopelle](#)

<sup>iv</sup> Pursuant to Section 23 of the Act respecting the National Museums, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) is tasked with raising awareness of, promoting, and preserving Quebec art from all periods—from ancient to contemporary—through acquisitions, exhibitions, and other outreach activities. The Espace Riopelle, described as the “highlight” of the program celebrating Riopelle’s centennial by the Riopelle Foundation, will be housed in a new, custom-built monographic pavilion at the heart of the MNBAQ museum complex, scheduled to open in the fall of 2026.

<sup>v</sup> For example, in the visual arts alone: visual artists, including Indigenous artists, were invited to contribute essays to various exhibition catalogs related to Riopelle, published as part of or in conjunction with the celebrations marking the centennial of his birth, including ROY (2021) and LACERTE (2023). Contemporary visual artists exhibited their work in this exhibition, based on formal, iconographic, conceptual, or other affinities with Riopelle’s work. Public space was also engaged through a mural by Marc Séguin, titled *L’art magnétique (hommage à Jean Paul Riopelle)*, on one of the facades of 625 Milton Street in Montreal. See [MU » L’art magnétique \(Hommage à Jean Paul Riopelle\)](#). Creators from other disciplines, such as the circus, also participated in the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation’s commemorative program. In fact, the circus troupe Les 7 doigts, in collaboration with the Foundation, presented Riopelle grandeur nature, the official closing performance of the Centennial celebrations, from February 13 to March 10, 2024, exploring the theme of the encounter between two forms of movement.

<sup>vi</sup> Since 2021, the year in which the Espace Riopelle was announced and the partnership between the government and the FJPR was formalized, 63 works have been donated to the MNBAQ by the foundation’s founding patrons. These 63 paintings, including 43 by Riopelle, have a combined fair market value estimated at over \$125 million. The other works are primarily by Automatist artists with whom Riopelle collaborated.

<sup>vii</sup> What we seek to understand is how these actors help shape artistic conventions and, in doing so, retrospectively establish recognition for certain artists (WARREN, 2025)

<sup>viii</sup> Indeed, the series of events that marked the centennial celebrations of Riopelle led to the publication of a considerable number of monographs and exhibition catalogs, alongside the creation of new digital oral archives. These works have brought to the fore—either directly or, at times, more peripherally—a considerable number of themes that lie at the intersection of issues and concerns closely resonating with very current questions being raised within the many disciplines interested in art and its history. See in particular: ROY (2021); LACERTE (2023); HÉNAULT (2023); LANDRY (2025).

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<sup>ix</sup> Bonnie Baxter’s engravings and her collaboration with Jean Paul Riopelle were the subject of an exhibition at the Sherbrooke Museum of Fine Arts to mark the Centennial, titled ([Jean Paul Riopelle / Bonnie Baxter. Apprivoiser la bête - Musée des beaux-arts de Sherbrooke](#) . As early as 2010, Bonnie Baxter herself had provided an exhaustive account of her collaborative relationship with Riopelle (BAXTER, 2010). Martine Delvaux wrote an account of her personal research on the painter Hollis Jeffcoat (1952–2018) and her relationship with Jean Paul Riopelle and Joan Mitchell (DELVAUX, 2024). As early as 2017, the MNBAQ presented a unique juxtaposition of the work of American painter Joan Mitchell (1925–1992) with that of Jean Paul Riopelle (MORENCY, 2008).

<sup>x</sup> A feminist approach to art and creativity at Riopelle should not only allow us to explore in greater depth or rediscover artists who have been overlooked by history, but also to construct a narrative that reflects and celebrates diversity and the intersecting nature of social struggles.

<sup>xi</sup> Riopelle’s body of work, which currently comprises nearly 7,000 pieces, spans 50 years and encompasses virtually all the visual art disciplines of his time, in addition to numerous forays into the decorative arts, graphic design, and stage design. See the Catalogue Raisonné of Jean Paul Riopelle. See Yseult Riopelle. Jean Paul Riopelle. Catalogue Raisonné. Montreal, Hibou Éditeurs, 6 volumes.

<sup>xii</sup> HÉNAUT, 2023, pp. 11-15.

<sup>xiii</sup> VIGNEAULT, 2011.

<sup>xiv</sup> Furthermore, linked by the concept of territory, “northernness” and “indigenusness” have been portrayed as major sources of inspiration for the artist’s work, which increasingly drew upon the imaginations and artistic traditions of the northern territories during the 1970s (ROY, 2021). Pierre B. Landry’s biographical chronicle on Riopelle provides extensive documentation of Riopelle’s numerous geographical relocations and the various contexts of his artistic production (LANDRY, 2025).

<sup>xv</sup> The phrase referring to Riopelle’s relationship with Indigenous art is taken from MONNET, 2023.

<sup>xvi</sup> RIOPELLE, 2014.

<sup>xvii</sup> SAVARD, 2025.

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