

ESPACE RIOPELLE – PAVILLON MICHAEL AUDAIN NEARING INAUGURATION



MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC CELEBRATES THE FIRST PHASE OF DELIVERY OF THE HOME OF THE FUTURE ESPACE RIOPELLE

Québec City, May 2, 2026 — Today, the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) celebrated the start of the **handover process for the building that will house the space dedicated to the work of Jean Paul Riopelle**. The event brought together the key stakeholders in this historic project: the **Government of Québec**, the **City of Québec**, the **Fondation du MNBAQ**, the **Audain Foundation**, the **Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation**, and **Yseult Riopelle**, as well as **France Chrétien Desmarais** and **André Desmarais** (*in absentia*).

Many of these partners were in Québec City to attend the Bal national, a major fundraising event organized by the Fondation du Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec to benefit the Museum.

Two years after the groundbreaking ceremony for one of Québec's most significant cultural projects, the building was symbolically handed over to **Christine Fréchette**, Premier of Québec, and **Jean-Luc Murray**, Director General of the MNBAQ, by the project's **general contractor, Tisseur** (the result of a merger between Tisseur and CONCREA), represented by its president, **Yannick Tisseur**.

The ceremony took place in the central hall of the Espace Riopelle – Pavillon Michael Audain, under the impressive 17-metre-high wooden ceiling. In attendance were **Mathieu Lacombe**, Québec's Minister of Culture and Communications; **Jean-François Simard**, Québec's Minister of Employment and Minister responsible for the Capitale-Nationale Region; and **Bruno Marchand**, Mayor of Québec City. **Christiane Germain**, CM, OQ, Chair of the MNBAQ's Board of Director, was accompanied by **Julie-Anne Vien**, Chair of the Fondation du MNBAQ's Board of Directors, and **Fabrice Alcayde**, its President and CEO.

The event also brought together the initiators of the project: **Michael Audain**, OC, OBC, accompanied by **Yoshiko Karasawa** and **Manon Gauthier** (Commissioner of the Riopelle Centenary Celebrations), respectively President, board member, and Executive Director of the Audain Foundation; **Pierre Lassonde**, OC, GOQ, President of the Pierre Lassonde Family Foundation; **France Chrétien Desmarais**, Executive Chair of TES Canada H2 Inc.; **Yseult Riopelle**, President of the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation and daughter of the artist; and **John R. Porter**, Honorary Director of the MNBAQ.

The Espace Riopelle – Pavillon Michael Audain is the major legacy of the Jean Paul Riopelle Centenary Celebrations. This event marks an important milestone towards the completion of **an exceptional location designed to preserve and promote the legacy of this outstanding Québec artist**.

THE MUSÉE AT WORK DESIGNING SPACES

Since work began in May 2024, the team from the general contractor, Tisseur, has been constructing the steel, wood, and concrete framework that will give shape to the future space.

The Musée has already taken possession of several areas. Its teams have been hard at work in the storerooms and some of the exhibition rooms. The next steps include preparing the surfaces for displaying the art, setting up the reception and service areas, and completing the outdoor landscaping to welcome visitors this fall.

As the operator and owner, the Musée will finalize preparations for the **official opening of the Espace Riopelle – Pavillon Michael Audain in October**. Every effort will be made to offer visitors a unique and memorable museum experience.

The Espace Riopelle – Pavillon Michael Audain marks a new chapter in the Musée’s history, forming a significant architectural and cultural legacy for the citizens of Québec City in the wake of the artist’s centenary celebrations. This world-class venue is set to become a must-see destination for visitors from around the world, not to mention a source of pride for Quebecers. Festivities surrounding the official opening will be held in October.

“As a Québec company, Tisseur is honoured to have brought this iconic building to life. Just as Jean Paul Riopelle’s important oeuvre has stood the test of time, this project is sure to be one that our team will be proud of for decades to come. I want to thank the 300 people whose commitment and professionalism helped bring this major project to life, and the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec for their trust,” said **Yannick Tisseur**, President of Tisseur.

“With its distinctive architecture, exceptional location, and high-quality museology, the Espace Riopelle will pay fitting tribute to Jean Paul Riopelle, a giant of the local and international art world. Drawing inspiration from the boldness and intensity of the artist’s work, it will offer visitors a unique and memorable sensory and emotional experience,” said **Jean-Luc Murray**, Director General of the Musée National des Beaux-Arts du Québec.

“It is a great joy to welcome the first phase of this building, dedicated to showcasing the work of Jean Paul Riopelle, one of the most distinguished Quebec artists on the national and international scene. This is the result of a significant investment by our government and the expertise of local companies, this iconic venue, located in the heart of the nation’s capital, will benefit all Quebecers and contribute to the global reach of our culture,” said **Christine Fréchette**, Premier of Quebec.

AN EXCEPTIONAL SETTING FOR RIOPELLE’S WORK

Designed by the Québec-based firm **Les architectes fabg**, the Espace Riopelle – Pavillon Michael Audain will offer visitors breathtaking views of the St. Lawrence River and the Plains of Abraham. Its sleek interior, plentiful windows, and terraces will create an unprecedented dialogue between art and nature, from which Riopelle drew endless inspiration. The new three-storey building in the heart of the museum complex will house the world’s largest public collection of Riopelle’s works. Its bright, open space was designed to be accessible and encourage both contemplation and personal encounters with the artworks.

A HISTORIC PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTION

With a **budget of \$84 million**, the Espace Riopelle is the result of an **unparalleled collaboration between the government and philanthropic organizations**. Through the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, the Government of Québec has invested \$44 million in this project to celebrate one of the most important Québec artists of the 20th century. The City of Québec has also contributed

generously, awarding a \$5 million grant to create a room for *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* (1992), giving the public the chance to experience this monumental masterpiece anew.

The patrons behind the Jean Paul Riopelle Foundation—Michael Audain, André Desmarais, France Chrétien Desmarais, and Pierre Lassonde—were driven by the desire to realize Riopelle’s dream of establishing a foundation at the Musée, an idea he first attempted in the 1980s. They have generously offered a contribution of \$20 million, which could increase to \$25 million depending on the final cost of the project. In addition, Michael Audain, Yoshiko Karasawa, and Pierre Lassonde have made an invaluable donation of over 60 significant pieces by Riopelle and his contemporaries. Finally, the Fondation du Musée is making a decisive contribution to the project through its major +D’ART DANS NOS VIES campaign, with a commitment of \$10 million.

FOUR INAUGURAL EXHIBITIONS

The internationally renowned painter, engraver, and sculptor **Jean Paul Riopelle (1923–2002)** made his mark on the history of modern art through his powerful body of work, which drew deeply on the natural world of Québec. The **Espace Riopelle** at the Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec celebrates the exceptional career and protean work of an artist who never stopped reinventing himself throughout his almost sixty-year career.

When it opens in October 2026, the [Riopelle exhibition](#) will feature around 130 paintings, sculptures, and works on paper, showcasing his work from all periods of his career spanning over fifty years.

The impressive fresco *Tribute to Rosa Luxemburg* (1992) will be displayed in a luminous circular room, and a huge glass wall will offer visitors a view of the river alongside which the work was created. This presentation will be enhanced by an olfactory experience developed by sommelier François Chartier of the Chartier World Lab. Visitors will also be able to explore a new presentation of the [national modern art collection](#), which provides a journey through the history of modern art in Québec and Canada, with a particular focus on the work of the Automatistes.

Meanwhile, an [immersive, emotion-driven exhibition](#) will showcase works by Riopelle alongside video testimonials from people who worked with the artist. The presentation will also feature an innovative research project, conducted in partnership with the Co-DOT laboratory at Université Laval’s School of Psychology, which aims to improve our understanding of the emotional responses evoked by art.

To learn more: <https://www.mnbaq.org/en/about/the-musee/espace-riopelle>

ABOUT

THE MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC

The Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec (MNBAQ) is the living memory of Québec art and artists. With a rich collection of over 42,500 works, its functions are to make known, promote, and preserve Québec art of all periods, from ancient art to contemporary art, and to ensure a place for international art through acquisitions, exhibitions, and other cultural activities. Its raison d'être is **to bring people together through art.**

THE FONDATION DU MUSÉE NATIONAL DES BEAUX-ARTS DU QUÉBEC

The foundation's mission is to promote and support the MNBAQ's work by fostering the development of collections, the financing of exhibitions, and the accessibility of educational and cultural programs. It contributes to the MNBAQ's growth through creative projects, fundraising campaigns, and strategic acquisitions, and it also supports its special programs and projects, including the future Espace Riopelle. Its ultimate goal is **to give people more ways to access art.**

PHOTO CREDITS

Left to right: **Julie-Anne Vien**, Chair of the Fondation du MNBAQ's Board of Directors; **Michael Audain**, Chair of the Audain Foundation; **Christiane Germain**, Chair of the MNBAQ's Board of Director; **Mathieu Lacombe**, Québec's Minister of Culture and Communications; **Christine Fréchette**, Premier of Québec; **Jean-François Simard**, Québec's Minister of Employment and Minister responsible for the Capitale-Nationale Region; **Jean-Luc Murray**, Director General of the MNBAQ; **Bruno Marchand**, Mayor of Québec City; and **Yannick Tisseur**, President of Tisseur// Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec, May 2, 2026. Photo Stéphane Bourgeois

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